

Bungay Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124573
Local Authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	314968
Inspection dates	26–27 June 2008
Reporting inspector	Mary Summers

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	213
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Paul Cunningham
Headteacher	Mr Ian Owens
Date of previous school inspection	8 March 2004
School address	Wingfield Street Bungay Suffolk NR35 1HA
Telephone number	01986892209
Fax number	01986893046

Age group	3–9
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Most of the pupils who attend this school come from the immediate area, although a few travel from further afield. The vast majority come from White British families, with only a few from minority ethnic backgrounds. Very few speak English as an additional language. An average proportion have learning difficulties, mainly speech, language, behaviour and moderate learning difficulties. The number entitled to free school meals is also about average. The school roll has risen significantly over the past year as the school has become more popular in the locality. A new headteacher began in April 2008, following two terms when an interim headteacher had been in post.

Children start school in the Nursery at levels that are close to those expected for their age, although they are often lower in communication, language and literacy and in personal, social and emotional development.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Bungay Primary provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. Standards in Year 2 have improved in recent years from below average to broadly average. Pupils in Year 4 leave at levels that are in line with those expected for their age. Achievement is satisfactory throughout the school, although progress in writing is slower than in other subjects and the school has rightly identified this as a key area for improvement.

A few parents expressed concerns about pupils' behaviour but inspectors found this to be good. Pupils have positive relationships with each other. Most pupils enjoy school. They have a good understanding of how to keep safe and healthy. However, they do not have a secure understanding of different cultures or what it means to be part of a multicultural society. They make a sound contribution to their school and local community through their roles as school councillors and through their fund raising efforts for national charities. All these attributes, along with their average standards in basic skills, prepare them satisfactorily for their future education.

The ethos for learning is good. Pupils, parents and staff report a renewed vigour and excitement about learning and a commitment towards change and improvement. The headteacher and deputy have gained a clear picture of the school's current performance and made an effective start in addressing areas of weakness. There are already positive signs that action taken to reduce absence has had a marked effect. The school has a satisfactory capacity to improve in the future.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory but is improving rapidly because of the good levels of support and encouragement that teachers now receive. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour well. They track progress carefully but do not always use this information well enough to set tasks that help pupils move to the next level, especially in writing. The curriculum provides appropriately for pupils' academic and personal development but it often lacks real excitement and interest and this limits pupils' enjoyment and motivation.

Pupils are cared for and looked after well. All safeguarding procedures are in place. Pupils receive satisfactory academic guidance. Teachers do not always set clear targets for improvement to help pupils take the next steps in their learning.

Most parents are pleased with the school's work with their children. One parent echoed the views of many when she wrote, 'All the staff are approachable and friendly, which is why I feel my child is safe and well cared for at school.'

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children receive a sound start in the Nursery, where they are welcomed warmly and settle in quickly. A good system of home visits provides staff with useful information about children's development so they can plan appropriate activities to help them progress. A theme-based curriculum in Nursery and Reception makes learning relevant and interesting. Children in Nursery were preparing for a visit to a local park, for example, to learn more about minibeasts. The day before the visit, they learned words starting with 'm', made homes for pretend beetles and spiders in the sandpit and dug in the garden to see if they could find any. Adult-led activities are well planned and focus on teaching children specific skills and knowledge. However, those that children choose for themselves, although enjoyable, lack real focus and challenge.

Children make satisfactory progress through the Foundation Stage although, by the time they transfer to Year 1, many are still at levels below those expected for their age in communication, language and literacy.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve pupils' progress in writing by making better use of assessment information to set tasks that meet the full range of learners' needs.
- Set clear individual targets for pupils to give them focus and purpose to their work.
- Develop the curriculum to include more links between subjects, more interesting and stimulating activities and planned opportunities for multicultural education.

A small proportion of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next Section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils achieve satisfactorily in Key Stage 1. From previously below average standards at the end of Year 2, attainment has risen in the last three years to broadly average. The most recent assessments suggest that standards will be a little lower this year. However, this represents satisfactory achievement for this group of pupils, many of whom started school in the Nursery at slightly lower levels than is expected nationally.

School tracking systems show that pupils make satisfactory progress overall in Years 3 and 4 and reach broadly expected levels in reading, mathematics and science by the time they transfer to the middle school. Progress in writing is slower because lessons do not always meet the full range of learners' needs and pupils do not receive enough guidance about how to improve their work.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, and social development, is satisfactory. However, their experience and knowledge of other cultures is too limited.

Behaviour is good in class and around the school. Pupils feel very safe and know they can go to an adult if they need help with a problem. They are well aware of how to stay fit and healthy, many enjoying the well-cooked and well-presented healthy school lunches. 'We don't eat rubbish here!' commented one pupil. Pupils enjoy school, especially activities that are practical, like cooking and using the internet to do research. Attendance is broadly average and improving. However, a few parents persist in taking their children out of school during term time and this affects their progress and overall achievement. Pupils take their responsibilities as school councilors seriously. The oldest pupils describe how they provide a good example to younger children by sitting correctly during assembly. All these experiences, along with their broadly average basic skills, prepare pupils appropriately for the next stage in their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teachers enjoy good relationships with pupils, creating a calm and positive ethos for learning. Pupils feel confident to try out new things and are not afraid to make mistakes. They enjoy a good range of opportunities to work together to discuss activities and share ideas. Teaching assistants play an influential role in enhancing the progress of lower-attaining pupils.

Some lessons really stimulate pupils' interest and maintain their concentration. In a Year 1/2 mathematics lesson for example, the teacher used many different strategies, including an interactive whiteboard, to present the teaching point. A very brisk pace, with continuous challenges for pupils and high levels of expectation, resulted in rapid progress. However, lessons sometimes lack this level of engagement. Pupils occasionally spend too much time listening to teachers rather than doing things for themselves. Teachers track the pupils' progress carefully but do not always use this information well enough to plan tasks that meet pupils' different needs.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The satisfactory curriculum provides a broad range of learning experiences for pupils to develop personally and academically. Some stimulating activities gain pupils' imagination and provide high levels of motivation and interest. Pupils in Years 3 and 4, for example, thoroughly enjoyed cooking an Anglo-Saxon meal, weighing and measuring ingredients, learning more about this particular period of history and at the same time developing their understanding of healthy eating. These sorts of experiences are not the norm however, with much of the curriculum being taught in isolated subjects, so that it often lacks relevance and interest for pupils. There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to develop their knowledge about a range of cultures and life in multicultural Britain today.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school is a happy, friendly place, where pupils feel safe and the pastoral care is good. Partnerships with pupil referral units and local authority advisory staff to support pupils with behaviour, speech and moderate learning difficulties are satisfactory and growing stronger. Safeguarding procedures meet requirements. Health and safety systems are secure.

Academic guidance is satisfactory. Progress is monitored regularly and parents are kept well informed about their children's achievements. However, pupils do not have a clear enough idea of their current levels and their goals for improvement. Although marking is regular, pupils receive few helpful comments from teachers about how to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The new headteacher has made a positive start in his role and has quickly gained the confidence of pupils, parents, staff and governors. Parents appreciate many of the recent initiatives, for

example the weekly celebration assemblies and the 'Five Cool Rules' for behaviour. Through discussions with staff and pupils, analysis of standards and through visiting lessons, senior managers have gained an accurate picture of the school's current performance. They are now starting to use this information effectively to raise standards. Other staff with management positions are enthusiastic and are beginning to develop their roles.

Governance is satisfactory. Many governors are new but are undergoing training to help them carry out their responsibilities. The more established governors monitor the budget appropriately and have a sound knowledge of the school's work, gained through visits and reports from staff.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

30 June 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Bungay Primary School, Bungay, NR35 1HA

We really enjoyed visiting your school recently. Thank you for being so polite and friendly and telling us about what you do at school. Now it is my turn to write and tell you what we found out.

Your school is giving you a satisfactory education. All the adults look after you carefully so that you feel safe and happy. You work well together in class. You understand the importance of maintaining a healthy lifestyle, and we were pleased to see you enjoying school lunches, especially the vegetables! Your behaviour is good in lessons and in the playground. You know what to do if bullying occurs although you said that this is rare.

You are making reasonable progress in lessons, although we think you could do even better in writing. We have asked your teachers to make sure the work is challenging enough for all of you, and to set you some targets to motivate you to improve the weaker aspects of your writing.

It was good to hear that most of you like coming to school and attend regularly. However, a few of you take holidays during term time and this affects your progress and overall achievement. You told us that you enjoy most lessons. We have asked the teachers to try to make lessons even more interesting and fun so that you can enjoy them even more. We have asked them to include activities to help you learn more about all the different cultures in Britain today.

I know you will want to play your part in helping the school to improve by continuing to work hard and behave well. I wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Mrs M Summers

Lead inspector