

Bures C of E (VC) Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124692
Local Authority	SUFFOLK LA
Inspection number	315022
Inspection date	4 October 2007
Reporting inspector	John Messer

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

Type of school	First
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	123
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Ian Gibbs
Headteacher	Mrs Christine Furniss
Date of previous school inspection	18 October 2004
School address	Nayland Road Bures Suffolk CO8 5BX
Telephone number	01787 227446
Fax number	01787 228544

Age group	4–9
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector, who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the progress made in literacy and numeracy and whether pupils have enough guidance about reaching the next stages in their learning. Evidence was gathered from classroom visits, discussions with staff and pupils and examination of school documents, especially assessment data. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation form, were not justified and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This village school is smaller than average. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is below average. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is average. Attainment on entry to the school is broadly average. The school has received the Basic Skills Quality Mark, the Silver Arts Mark, a Bronze Eco award and the National Healthy Schools award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school because the excellent leadership of the headteacher has encouraged staff to set high expectations for pupils' learning. Teaching is outstanding so pupils make excellent progress and reach exceptionally high standards. In the national assessments for pupils in Year 2 the school's performance is always exceptionally high in reading, writing and mathematics. By the end of Year 2 pupils are a year ahead of most pupils nationally in their learning. By Year 4 the gap has widened further and pupils are about two years ahead of the standard normally expected.

Teachers are particularly good at motivating pupils to learn. The highly skilled learning support assistants make a strong contribution to pupils' successes. The good number of adults per pupil in each class enhances the quality of teaching. Pupils thoroughly enjoy school and say that all lessons are fun. Throughout the school pupils are encouraged to become 'powerful learners' by developing a deep understanding of how to learn effectively. They are encouraged to build learning power through 'Resilience, Resourcefulness, Reflectiveness and Reciprocity'. Consequently they learn to persevere, become absorbed in their learning, reason, plan and revise, collaborate and listen acutely.

The curriculum sparkles with a myriad of exciting activities that enrich learning. One parent commented, 'Every week a different visitor, group or organisation comes into school to enhance children's learning and their perception of the real world.' There are also many visits to places of interest. Specialist teachers for music and French extend the curriculum effectively. Visitors support cultural development well, such as the Caribbean steel band and the awe inspiring Masai dance troupe. The school is aware that pupils have a limited understanding of different peoples, their traditions and cultures. It has made good links with a school in Bulgaria and is seeking to widen its international dimension in order to further broaden pupils' horizons.

There are great opportunities for pupils to experience learning by dressing up as evacuees and being evacuated to the country by train, or as Victorian children suffering harsh teaching. Grandparents' Day has become an annual treat when grandparents learn alongside their grandchildren. Art and design is an exceptional strength and pupils produce some stunning work. Music is well represented. Pupils learn to play instruments, compose and perform. Pupils use computers well and learn a wide range of skills. Extra activities, such as the popular games club, makes a good contribution to sport.

Pupils' personal development is outstanding because they are encouraged to be responsible, independent, self-confident and interact with each other. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Pupils develop a good insight into the world of work during 'Maths Week' when visitors, such as a chef and a structural engineer, explain how they use mathematics in their jobs. The school council is brilliant at organising charitable fund raising events. Pupils take on many responsibilities and make a good contribution to the smooth running of the school. They talk sensibly about their learning. They have an excellent understanding of how to lead healthy life styles. The daily 'Huff and Puff' session helps them to keep alert and fit. Pupils know how to stay safe and look after themselves. Parents work alongside their children in 'Learning Together' sessions as part of the school's excellent personal, social and health education programme. Pupils have a good understanding of environmental issues and wholeheartedly support the school's recycling initiatives. This underpins their moral development

and helps them to understand their responsibilities towards the wider community. Close links with the church complements pupils' spiritual development.

Excellent care, guidance and support helps pupils to understand what they should do if they are upset or worried about anything. They receive excellent guidance, particularly about how to become effective learners. They are set challenging targets in numeracy and literacy. They rise to the challenges and are highly successful at meeting their targets.

The dedication of the headteacher is the key factor in the school's success. She insists on high standards in all that the school does and will settle for nothing less. New teachers receive a constant stream of advice and support, and quickly appreciate that they too must set their sights high. Finances are used well and the school provides excellent value for money. Parents are delighted with the education provided for their children. They feel fortunate to be able to send their children to an excellent school where children 'blossom and flourish'. They appreciate all the hard work that the staff put in to create such an outstanding learning environment. Standards were high at the time of the last inspection but there has been further improvement since then. The leadership is always seeking to make further advances and welcomes fresh ideas to support learning. The school has excellent capacity to go from strength to strength.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Superb management of the Foundation Stage and high expectations of the youngest children's ability to do wonderful things are at the heart of the school's success. The teachers and the support staff share a total belief in children's ability to shine and this leads to exceptionally high achievement on all fronts. Children get an excellent start in the Nursery class where they learn new skills rapidly. The exciting curriculum helps them to develop in every way. A visiting hedgehog inspired them to create wonderful paintings and clay models. They are keen to write and quickly develop a good basis for learning reading and writing skills. They love interesting experiences in the well structured outside learning environment, such as splashing in rain puddles and planting and harvesting their own crops to make soup. Learning continues apace in the Reception class. The quality of children's written work is outstanding. They develop an excellent understanding of number, shapes and pattern through exciting activities, such as searching for ten hidden teddy bears in the garden and checking to see if they have all ten by putting them in order. They are taught how to learn, reason, think and use their initiative. They become articulate, self-assured little people who love exploring and finding out new things about their world.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make more links with schools in other countries in order to broaden pupils' understanding of the wider world.

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Annex A

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?	1
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?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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

5 October 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Bures C of E (VC) Primary School, Bures, Suffolk, CO8 5BX

What a great school! I thoroughly enjoyed my short time with you. Thank you for being so friendly and helpful. There are lots of good things that make your school so brilliant. Here are some of them.

- You told me that Mrs Furniss's leadership is the reason why the school is so fantastic and I agree.
- All the grown ups in the school work hard to make sure that you are happy and enjoy learning.
- From the Nursery onwards the grown ups believe that you can do wonderful things and reach high standards and they are experts at helping you get there.
- You are shown how to become 'powerful learners' so you are in control and know exactly what to do to produce high quality work.
- The youngest children quickly become keen readers and 'brave writers' and the teachers help you by building success upon success.
- You know how to stay safe and look after yourselves and you are very sensible.
- You paint beautiful pictures, use computers well, understand lots about numbers shapes and patterns, use what you know about grammar to help you write brilliantly and every day you learn so many new skills.
- You go on fascinating visits and have many expert visitors, like Mr Platt who showed you how to dance wonderfully well in the new hall.
- The grown ups are determined to make sure that each and every one of you does your very best and produces brilliant work.

I think that there are even more exciting times ahead and I know that Mrs Furniss wants to help you to make contact with other schools in different countries so that you widen your web of friendships across the world.

I wish you every success in the future and hope that you continue to enjoy your learning.

All best wishes

John Messer

Lead inspector