

Bawdeswell Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120785
Local Authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	319917
Inspection dates	30 April –1 May 2008
Reporting inspector	Tricia Pritchard HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	74
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr C Brown
Headteacher	Mrs M Vaissiere
Date of previous school inspection	6 July 2007
School address	Fakenham Road Bawdeswell Dereham NR20 4RR
Telephone number	01362 688282
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Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

Description of the school

Bawdeswell Primary School is a small village school with a falling roll. Pupil mobility is high. In September 2007, the number of classes reduced from four to three. There are two classes of Key Stage 2 pupils and one class of Foundation Stage/Key Stage 1 pupils. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below the national average. The proportion of pupils with additional learning needs and disabilities is above the national average. There are no pupils from minority ethnic groups or with English as an additional language. When the school was inspected in February 2007, it was judged to require special measures.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

During the last year, Bawdeswell Primary School has improved significantly as a result of the decisive leadership of the acting headteacher. In accordance with Section 13(4) of the Education Act 2004, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures. It offers a satisfactory standard of education and has good capacity to improve further.

The most recent national pupil performance data is almost a year old. It shows that achievement and standards in English, mathematics and science, especially in Key Stage 2, were below the national averages in 2007. Since then, robust systems for tracking pupils' progress and attainment have been introduced and teachers use the outcomes to set challenging targets for every pupil. Achievement and standards are now satisfactory although there is room for improvement in some areas. Pupils are making faster progress than previously in English where there has been a strong focus on improving the quality of pupils' writing. In mathematics, however, their progress is uneven. In all subjects, higher achieving pupils are not doing as well as they could because tasks are not always well matched to their abilities. Often, these pupils work independently without sufficient guidance. Lower attaining pupils receive effective support from learning support assistants and make satisfactory progress in relation to their starting points.

There is a happy atmosphere throughout the school. Pupils say they enjoy coming to school and parents confirm this. They are well cared for pastorally and consequently they feel safe and secure.

Teaching is satisfactory overall but there is some inconsistency between classes. A strong emphasis is placed on improving pupils' literacy and numeracy skills and this is having a positive impact. However, opportunities are lost to consolidate these skills in history and geography when pupils are given worksheets which lack challenge. Marking of pupils' work is an area for development.

The school has benefited from the stable leadership and clear direction provided by the acting headteacher since February 2007. Staff and governors have a secure understanding of the strengths and areas for development. There is a good team spirit and a determination to ensure that pupils fulfil their potential.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children joined the school this year below age-related expectations in all areas of learning. Since they started, they have made at least satisfactory progress, particularly in developing their communication, language and social skills. However, at the time of the inspection in the summer term, standards in all areas of learning were still below those expected of five year olds because they began from a low starting point. Pupils are taught in a mixed-age class with Year 1 and Year 2 pupils and benefit from a high level of adult support, especially during group work. The outdoor learning environment is well suited and equipped to meet children's needs and satisfactory opportunities are provided for learning outside the classroom. The curriculum is designed around learning through practical activities although, occasionally, children spend too long on the carpet during whole class sessions.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure greater consistency in the quality of teaching between classes.
- Ensure pupils make steady and consistent progress in mathematics throughout the school.
- Set more challenging work and provide better academic guidance for higher attaining pupils.
- Improve the quality of marking.

A small proportion of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged as 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

The number of pupils in each age group fluctuates from year to year and this factor needs to be taken into account when considering trends in performance over time. In 2007, there were six pupils in Year 2 and although they did less well in reading, writing and mathematics than pupils in the previous four years, they made satisfactory progress in relation to their starting points. However, no pupils achieved higher levels in any subject and so standards were below the national averages. Currently, the school's data indicates that most pupils in Key Stage 1 are making satisfactory progress. The exception is higher attaining pupils who do not do as well as they could.

In 2007, standards in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 6 were below the national averages and pupils' progress between Year 3 and Year 6 was unsatisfactory. Since then, pupils' progress has accelerated, particularly in writing where the gap between their reading and writing scores has narrowed. However, in mathematics, the school's data shows that their progress is erratic throughout Key Stage 2. Sometimes, they make good progress and at other times, they stand still. Higher attaining pupils do not do as well in mathematics as they do in English. Pupils with additional learning needs make satisfactory progress with some making good progress in reading.

Pupils' progress and attainment is tracked rigorously and teachers' assessments are accurate.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils enjoy coming to school and behaviour is mostly good. Attendance is slightly below the national average. Pupils' social, moral and spiritual development is satisfactory and their cultural and multicultural understanding is good. It is developed well through opportunities to participate in musical and artistic activities and to learn about other cultures. Pupils work collaboratively in lessons although sometimes noise levels rise too much and this hampers their concentration. They say that they feel safe in school and there is no bullying. They have a good understanding of how to live a healthy lifestyle and are proud that the school has achieved Healthy Schools status. Pupils are keen to take part in physical exercise and sports clubs are always full. Many walk or bicycle to school. They make a positive contribution to the community through their regular fundraising activities. Pupils are adequately equipped for their future economic well-being because they make satisfactory progress in basic skills.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Overall, teaching is satisfactory with good elements. It is best in Year 3 and Year 4 where teachers are confident planning a series of lessons to ensure that pupils make steady progress. During the inspection, mathematics and English lessons were observed. The best lessons were characterised by clear learning objectives and carefully targeted questioning to ascertain whether pupils understood. However, although teachers are more aware than previously of the need to match work to meet the pupils' individual needs, this remains an area for development. Work set for higher attaining pupils sometimes lacks challenge. For example, in mathematics, they are often required to answer too many questions correctly instead of moving on to the next stage. Teachers are adept at using the interactive whiteboards to support teaching. The presentation of pupils' work has improved since the last inspection.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Although a considerable amount of time is devoted to teaching English and mathematics, the time allocated to teaching the rest of the curriculum is satisfactory. Reading has a high profile and consequently, most pupils enjoy reading. In English, pupils have plenty of opportunities to write for different purposes and audiences. In mathematics and science, there is an increasing focus on problem solving to develop pupils' thinking skills. However, in history and geography, there is insufficient challenge, especially when pupils are asked to complete worksheets which are too easy. Intervention groups for pupils at risk of underachieving work well and pupils benefit from the extra support. There is a satisfactory range of enrichment activities including sports and science clubs.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Staff provide effective pastoral support during lessons and around the school. Parents say that rare incidents of bullying are dealt with quickly. The school has robust systems to ensure the safety of pupils.

Academic guidance is not so consistent. In lessons, well-briefed teaching assistants give good support and most pupils know their learning targets. However, the marking in pupils' books does not give pupils sufficient guidance on how to improve. Teaching assistants are well deployed to support the needs of lower attaining pupils. Higher attaining pupils do not receive the same level of guidance. Links with outside agencies are good to support pupils with additional learning difficulties.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The acting headteacher provides strong leadership and has been the driving force in turning the school round. The challenge now lies in sustaining this improvement. A positive development is the active role played by subject leaders in monitoring standards, teaching and learning. They

have a good understanding of strengths and areas for development within their subjects across the school.

Self-evaluation is developing well and is informed by the robust analysis of pupils' progress and standards. The provision for pupils with additional learning needs is managed effectively. Links with neighbouring schools are good. For example, teachers from the local high school teach science in Years 5 and 6.

The school has received well-targeted help from the local authority through a difficult period. Governance has improved significantly. The leadership team recognises that there is room for improvement in gaining consistency in the quality of teaching and learning in all classes. Performance management for staff is in place but there is scope for leaders to give more focused individual feedback to all staff, using clear criteria for their judgements. Staff are determined to see the school thrive. Negotiations to secure the permanent leadership of the school are well advanced and carefully thought through. The school demonstrates good capacity to improve.

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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?	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?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
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?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
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	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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

2 May 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Bawdeswell Primary School, Dereham, Norfolk, NR20 4RR

Thank you very much for welcoming Mrs Winyard and myself when we visited recently. We enjoyed talking to you and looking at your work.

We were pleased to see that your work is improving, especially your writing, and that your books are much neater. I have now suggested to your teachers that they ensure that you make faster progress in mathematics. You are taking pride in your work and that is good. All the adults in the school take care of you and you care for each other. Those of you who find learning in some subjects difficult get good support from teaching assistants. You told us that you enjoy coming to school and seeing your friends. Your behaviour is mostly good but in some lessons, there is rather a lot of noise and this stops you from getting on with your work.

Teachers mark your work and you receive encouraging comments. However, it would help you make even better progress if you were given more advice on how to improve the quality of your work and your teachers agree.

Mrs Vaissiere has worked particularly hard to lead your school. She has introduced a very good system for tracking how well you are doing and makes sure that you are set targets to help you improve your work. Mrs Winyard and I were impressed with how well you knew your targets.

There is a good team spirit in the school. I have enjoyed my visits over the last year because I have seen how much your school has improved.

Good luck for the future.

With best wishes

Tricia Pritchard HMI