

Buckton Vale Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106191
Local Authority	Tameside
Inspection number	324346
Inspection date	9 February 2009
Reporting inspector	Peter Jones

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	261
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs S Goddard
Headteacher	Mrs Chris May
Date of previous school inspection	16 May 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Swallow Lane Carrbrook Stalybridge Cheshire SK15 3NU
Telephone number	01457 833102
Fax number	01457 833102

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: achievement and standards, leadership and management, care guidance and support, and some aspects of personal development and well-being. Evidence was gathered from lesson observations, parents' questionnaires, the scrutiny of pupils' work and of assessment data and other documents. In addition, discussions were held with pupils, governors and key staff. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This average-sized primary school in a residential area takes in pupils from a wide range of social and economic backgrounds. The school has experienced a number of staff changes since the previous inspection. A new headteacher was appointed in April 2008 and a new deputy headteacher was appointed in January 2009. The school's Early Years Foundation Stage provision comprises a Reception class. Many pupils are taught in mixed-age classes. Almost all of the school's pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is lower than in most schools. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average. The school holds the Investors in People award.

There is a Day Nursery on site which is run by a private provider and did not form part of this inspection.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school. Despite difficulties experienced with some staff changes, the school has made good improvement since its previous inspection, and provides good value for money. Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage, which continues in Key Stages 1 and 2. Standards are broadly in line with national averages by the end of Year 6. Given pupils' low starting points this represents good achievement. In mathematics they are currently above average as a result of improvements in the teaching and learning of this area. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities also make good progress because the school promotes equality and diversity well.

The headteacher has led a review of the school's effectiveness since her appointment, and was supported in this by the very recently reorganised leadership team and an experienced governing body. However, these new arrangements to check the effectiveness of the school's work are not yet rigorous enough to provide a complete picture of its performance. This has consequences for the quality of the school's self-evaluation, which is not yet as detailed or unified as it should be. The school has identified improvements to be made in standards, achievement and pupils' personal development, and is working on these areas. However, until arrangements for review and development are fully and effectively in place, the school's capacity for future improvement and its overall leadership and management are only satisfactory.

Pupils are polite and welcoming to visitors and their behaviour is excellent at all times. They are proud of their school and are keen to talk about the improvements they have helped to make to the site and resources. Pupils enjoy their lessons and speak highly of the many opportunities they have to take part in sport, music and other activities, often with pupils from other schools. Attendance is consistently above average. Pupils say they feel safe and that bullying is rare and dealt with very swiftly and effectively. Parents and carers are extremely supportive of the school's work. Pupils have good awareness of the need to stay healthy and take exercise and enjoy the excellent meals the school kitchens provide. They are encouraged to take responsibility and older children serve as junior play leaders and work and play with the youngest children at lunchtimes. Members of the elected eco-committee have a high profile in the school and actively lead ongoing recycling and energy saving projects that involve all pupils.

The school has a close relationship with many of the local community's older citizens and pupils are involved in fundraising for school and a range of charities. Pupils gain a good knowledge of other religions and cultures in lessons and assemblies and through the strong links with the local church. They have opportunities to run the school tuck shop and organise fairs and charity events. This further enhances the successful way in which the school helps them develop the skills and abilities they will need for success in their later lives. Furthermore, the school's good contribution to community cohesion has been improved by its growing links with primary schools in other local authorities.

Good teaching has brought about a rise in mathematics standards, and the school has been particularly successful in improving the achievement of its less able pupils and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Effective use is made of computers and electronic whiteboards to motivate pupils and give lessons variety. Pupils respond well to the high expectations of work and behaviour. They have good opportunities for discussion and to offer opinions. These factors combine to make learning effective for most pupils. Work set within

the mixed-age classes is generally appropriate to the age and ability of the pupils. This is not always the case for the school's most able pupils. In many lessons, they spend too much time involved in whole class teaching rather than working together or individually on tasks that challenge and extend their skills. As a result, they do not make the best possible progress.

The pastoral care the school provides for its pupils is good. Parents say, 'Children are confident and feel safe and secure at school'. Good use is made of the expertise available from outside agencies to provide pupils with the specialised help and support they require. Arrangements to safeguard pupils and ensure their safety are in place and meet current requirements. Recently introduced assessment arrangements have yet to provide a detailed picture of the progress individual pupils make. Consequently, their learning targets are not always reviewed and adjusted with sufficient precision. Pupils' work is generally marked well, although there is some inconsistency across classes when providing pupils with the advice they need to improve their work

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children have a good start to their learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They enter Reception with skills and abilities that are below those expected for their age. Good links have been established with parents and carers and with local nursery providers. As a result, children settle quickly and make good progress to reach standards just below national expectations for their age at the end of Reception. Some Reception aged children share a class with Year 1 pupils. They all gain from the shared learning and social opportunities they experience. At the same time, staff ensure that individuals receive the teaching and learning experiences that are appropriate to their age and ability. Children's overall personal development is good. This is the result of the effective use made of the well-resourced and organised indoor learning areas. The limited outdoor learning facilities are used well, with staff and parents currently consulting over ways to improve this area. Children are able to choose their activities but an appropriate balance with adult led activities ensures good learning and development. Children's welfare is effectively promoted. They behave well and develop good relationships with adults and each other. They feel safe, and as their confidence quickly grows, they become enthusiastic learners. Leadership and management are good. Staff work as a team and carefully assess and record children's progress.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that the most able pupils are given more tasks that provide appropriate challenge and opportunities to develop new skills.
- Increase the effectiveness of leadership and management in the monitoring and self-evaluation of the work of the school.
- Refine assessment systems to provide the information the school needs to ensure every pupil is making the best possible progress towards their learning targets.

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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?	2
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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
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	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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Inspection of Buckton Vale Primary School, Stalybridge, SK15 3NU

I am writing to thank you for being friendly and helpful when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed our visit very much. I would like to share with you what we found out.

You go to a good school. You work hard and make good progress and reach standards that are similar to those reached by other children. You told me that you feel safe, and are enjoying school. Many of you take part in the clubs and activities your school provides, especially in sport and music. I was pleased with your behaviour and the way you get on with each other and your teachers. Your eco-committee has helped your school use less energy and water and to recycle much of its waste materials. Some of you work at lunchtime as junior play leaders with the younger children. I was impressed with your fundraising for school and charities, and the ways you try to help older people in your community.

I would like you to do even better with your work and so I have suggested three things that will help. I would like your teachers to make sure that those of you working at the highest levels have more opportunities to work together and by yourselves. This will give you more challenges and the chance to learn new skills and make even more progress. Also, I have asked your school to become better at finding out how well the school is working so it can change things if necessary. Finally, I also feel that the ways in which your school checks your progress towards your learning targets could be improved.

You can help by always trying your best and thinking about how you can improve even more. Everyone at Buckton Vale wants the best for you and for you to do as well as you can.