

Babraham CofE (VC) Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110780
Local Authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	325217
Inspection date	26 January 2009
Reporting inspector	Keith Sadler

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	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	78
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	Dr John Archer
Headteacher	Mrs Suzanne Berry
Date of previous school inspection	22 March 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	High Street Babraham Cambridge Cambridgeshire CB22 3AG

Age group	4–11
Inspection date	26 January 2009
Inspection number	325217

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Age group 4-11

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). In addition, the following issues were investigated:

- why standards in science are not as high as those in English and mathematics
- how good the curriculum is
- how effective are the systems for the care, guidance and support of pupils.

Evidence was gathered from the school's analysis of pupils' progress, a scrutiny of samples of their work and observations of pupils in lessons. Discussions were held with staff, governors and pupils. In addition, the responses of 41 parents' questionnaires were analysed and their comments taken into account. 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

Babraham is much smaller than most primary schools though it is growing in size and is oversubscribed. A majority of pupils come from the surrounding area including Sawston and Haverhill and Cambridge. The children in the EYFS share a class with Year 1 pupils. There is an after-school club that is not managed by the governors.

A majority of pupils are of White British heritage. There are a few pupils from a number of different backgrounds, mainly European. Pupils occasionally start or leave the school mid year when parents have temporary secondments to nearby research institutes. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average. Most of these have either moderate or specific learning difficulties. The school has gained a number of awards, most notably Healthy Schools and the International School status.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

'My children have absolutely thrived at Babraham. It is a pleasure to see them gladly skip into school. The school has gently encouraged them to work hard and enjoy learning'. This comment sums up the views of many parents who are unanimous in their support. Pupils do well in this good school because it is well led and managed, and has some outstanding features. It has improved well since the previous inspection and has a good capacity to improve further.

A key feature of the school is its excellent promotion of pupils' personal development because the quality of care, guidance and support provided is outstanding. In consequence, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are outstanding. Behaviour is excellent and this makes a positive contribution to learning. Pupils' evident enjoyment of school and good learning are reflected in their positive attitudes and good attendance. Pupils say that they feel safe, which reflects the high priority staff place on protecting and safeguarding the pupils' well-being. Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle, and they are proud of gaining the Healthy School award. They grasp with relish the many opportunities for assuming responsibility, such as by helping younger pupils, being members of the influential school council, or by being trained young leaders who enjoy providing playground games for other pupils.

Wherever possible teaching staff involve pupils fully as partners in learning and this too, has a positive impact on their achievements. For example, the school's accurate checking of provision and pupils' progress revealed that pupils did not have a sufficiently clear view about their progress or what they needed to do to improve. In consequence, changes were made that have successfully boosted learning. Teachers now ensure that pupils are clear about not only what is being learned, but also what was expected of them to meet lesson and unit objectives. There are excellent and rigorous procedures to tracking pupils' progress and the revised systems that have been introduced are both thorough and comprehensive. These are being used well both to help teachers develop an accurate picture of pupils' progress and also to quickly identify any pupils that are in danger of slipping behind.

Learning is promoted effectively by good quality teaching that builds well on pupils' knowledge and understanding. Lessons are planned well to make sure that all pupils are catered for with work that matches their needs. The most able pupils are challenged consistently to aspire to high standards and there is some dedicated provision for them. Teaching is consistently of good quality and some lessons are outstanding. Support staff make a very positive contribution to learning, particularly when working with small groups or individual vulnerable pupils.

Pupils receive a well-rounded education. The school's carefully planned curriculum focuses effectively on developing literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills. The improved provision for science, particularly for investigative skills still needs to be bedded down. There are some particular strengths in the curriculum. Teachers are adept at linking subjects together which helps to make learning more meaningful and interesting. In addition, a good emphasis is placed on broadening pupils' understanding of other cultures and the importance of community cohesion by the promotion of global education. This is organised effectively through focused weeks such as the international week held in the summer when pupils were able to study drama, dance, music, geography and literacy.

Pupils achieve well and they are prepared well for their move to secondary education. From above average starting points, they make good progress and attain the challenging targets

that the school sets for them. By the end of Year 6, they reach standards that are well above average in English and mathematics. The headteacher commenced a review of teaching and learning in science and this revealed that too little emphasis was being placed on pupils' practical and investigative skills. This led to a revamping of the curriculum and there are now clear indications that the gap between science and other subjects is closing. However, a legacy of some underachievement means that even though the current Year 6 pupils are on course to attain high standards, results in science were slightly below English and mathematics in 2007. Vulnerable pupils who find learning difficult and need additional help make good progress because their needs are identified early and they are given good support. In addition, the pupils that are learning to speak English as an additional language are also supported well, both by a specialist teacher and by school staff. They quickly learn basic English and because there is such a positive ethos for learning, they too thrive at the school.

The headteacher has done a first rate job in building upon the many strengths found at the time of the previous inspection. She provides excellent direction for the school and has steered the school well through many changes in staffing since her arrival. Because she has been careful to consult with parents, governors, staff and pupils, the school continues to foster a strong sense of common purpose. Teamwork is strong and staff morale high. Teachers with responsibilities, most of whom are either new to the school or to the areas they lead, are keen to ensure that they make a good contribution to the school's accurate and rigorous monitoring and evaluation processes. They are beginning to have a positive impact on the school's improved curriculum and pupils' progress.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children get a good start to their education in the Reception class. Good provision, care and leadership ensure that children settle quickly and become familiar with school routines. There is close liaison between school staff and parents, who share information and build good partnerships. Parents are very positive about the start their children are given and make comments such as, 'We were very impressed by the way the school encourages older pupils to help the new Reception children integrate into school life and we feel this helped our child especially during those first few exciting weeks at school.' Teaching and learning are good overall. Particular emphasis is given to developing routines and personal and social skills, such as working with others. As a result, children make swift progress in this aspect of learning. Their personal development is good and their attitudes to school and towards their learning are excellent. Children work and play confidently and happily, cooperating well with adults and with each other.

Staff ensure that there are interesting opportunities to promote learning. They plan suitable activities to meet the learning needs of pupils from all groups and evaluate each child's progress efficiently. However, on occasion, children are sometimes kept sitting for too long; for example, when lessons in literacy and numeracy entail teaching Year 1 and Reception together. This limits the practical activities necessary to develop confidence in early calculation as well as the opportunities for children to take responsibility for choosing their activities.

The outdoor area is bright and attractive and children use it daily. However, there is a lack of climbing and adventurous equipment to develop physical skills. In addition, although there are plans in place to provide a covered area, which will provide shelter during inclement or hot weather, as yet, these have not been enacted. Good arrangements exist to ensure the safety of children and healthy lifestyles are promoted well. Children make overall good progress in

the Foundation Stage. From their starting points, children reach standards above those expected by the time that they move to Year 1.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise attainment in science in order to ensure that standards match those in English and mathematics.
- Strengthen outdoor provision in the EYFS by providing cover outside the classroom as well as apparatus for climbing and adventurous play to develop children's physical skills.

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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	2

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	2
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?	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	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	1
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?	1

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 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	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

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

27 January 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Babraham Primary School, near Cambridge CB22 3AG

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited you recently. You were all extremely polite and keen to talk to us about your work and your school. There are many good things about your school. These are some of them.

- You reach above average standards and make good progress in your learning.
- You behave exceptionally well and work hard to help others. You enjoy school and the good range of things for you to do. We particularly enjoyed seeing the many displays of your work.
- All the adults make sure that you are well looked after and cared for exceptionally well.
- Your headteacher, and all the other people who help run your school, are very good at making sure that you receive a good education.
- Your teachers provide you with interesting and challenging activities and they teach you well.

We agree with your parents that you go to a good school. However, all the adults want it to be even better. We have therefore asked the staff and governors to do the following things.

- Make sure that you learn as well in science as you do in English and mathematics.
- Provide cover outside Class 1 so that the children can go outside whatever the weather, and also to provide climbing apparatus to enable the youngest children to develop even better physical skills.

You can help by continuing to work hard to meet your targets, particularly in science.

With best wishes

Yours faithfully

Keith Sadler

Lead inspector