

Bunwell Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120790
Local Authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	327364
Inspection dates	23–24 September 2008
Reporting inspector	John Mitcheson HMI

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	76
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	Mr James Braithwaite
Headteacher	Ms Michaela Rolph
Date of previous school inspection	26 September 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	The Turnpike Bunwell Norwich Norfolk NR16 1SN
Telephone number	01953 789318
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

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

Description of the school

Bunwell Primary school is a smaller than average school serving Bunwell and other surrounding villages in rural Norfolk, where there is less socio-economic disadvantage than found nationally. Most of its pupils join the Early Years and Foundation Stage (EYFS) having attended a privately run playgroup within the village that makes use of the school buildings one afternoon each week. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals and the number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds are below national averages. A lower than average percentage of pupils need additional help with their learning and one pupil has a statement of special educational need. Attainment on entry is average. The school holds the Activemark award and is working towards achieving Healthy Schools status.

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. One of its key strengths is its small size; pupils value this and say that, 'we know everyone and it's like we're one big family,' and that 'teachers know you well and make you feel special'. The outstanding care, guidance and support for pupils help them to settle quickly into school and enjoy a wide range of learning, after-school clubs and educational visits that fill a busy school year. Pupils achieve well and thoroughly enjoy school. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive, viewing it as, 'a lovely school, small and very caring.' One parent summed up the positive contribution made to their children's lives by saying that, 'my only wish would be that every child in the country had the opportunity to go to a school like Bunwell Primary.'

The school's success is due to the excellent qualities in the leadership of the headteacher who has instilled in her staff a common vision and commitment to improve the quality of education provided. They have ensured that the school has improved significantly since the last inspection. Regular guided reading lessons and practical activities in science have had a significant impact on overall standards. Results in Key Stages 1 and 2 improved in 2008 and the school met or exceeded most of the challenging targets that it set for itself. Progress is good overall but uneven as pupils move through the school. Pupils build upon the satisfactory progress they make in Key Stage 1 and flourish in Key Stage 2, where they attain above average standards by the end of Year 6.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. They feel safe and grow up healthily. They talk enthusiastically about the additional activities and special events like 'play in a day'. They readily adopt responsibilities as lunchtime helpers, buddies and school councillors. Pupils' excellent behaviour and cooperation were evident at playtimes as they lined up to receive play equipment distributed by older pupils, and children of all ages played together on the playground in a safe manner. The school council contributes well to improving school life and in raising money for charitable events. Pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural education is outstanding. Assemblies include opportunities to consider the lives of others and reflect upon how they can help those less fortunate than themselves in the community and the wider world. The quality of singing is first-class.

Observations of lessons by inspectors confirmed the school's own view that the quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers build up a thorough understanding of individual pupils and personalise their learning according to pupils' abilities and interests. Staff work as a team to plan activities and are particularly adept at evaluating what works well and what needs changing to ensure that pupils achieve what they are capable of. At times, the pace of learning dips, particularly when teachers do not set clear timescales for the completion of tasks. Teaching assistants are deployed effectively and pupils value the support provided when they 'get stuck'. Pupils enjoy using information and communication technology (ICT) to help them learn but say that they would like to use computers and the new whiteboards more often in lessons.

Maximum use is made of the limited space available to deliver a broad curriculum that meets all statutory requirements. Two hours of physical education (PE) each week for all pupils is complimented by an outstanding range of after-school sports clubs, activities, and educational visits, which add significantly to pupils' health and well-being. Enterprise days and a weekly school bank run by pupils give them a better understanding of commerce and contributes well to their future economic well-being. Child protection procedures are robust and all statutory

safeguarding arrangements are in place. Established monitoring procedures help teachers to track the progress of all individual pupils and identify, and respond to those at risk of under-achieving. They are particularly effective in spotting those at risk of under-achieving. Teachers regularly update their plans to ensure that the needs of pupils that find learning difficult are fully met in lessons.

Teachers take responsibility for managing a number of subjects. They observe colleagues teaching and analyse performance data to inform future development plans and priorities for raising achievement. An effective governing body knows its school well and asks challenging questions to ensure that targets are set and achieved. Finances are well managed and the school provides good value for money. Capacity to make further improvements is good.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children enjoy playing and learning together in this safe, friendly and caring environment. They develop excellent relationships with staff who observe their health and safety at all times. Children are taught how to look after each other and behave well, which promote their personal development and well-being. Parents are supportive and are encouraged to get involved in their children's learning. Satisfactory teaching in a well-resourced classroom ensures that children make the progress expected of them in all six areas of learning and attain the standards expected by the end of this stage. Staff focus on developing children's personal and social skills and in helping them develop a good understanding of their feelings. A popular phonics scheme is used daily for practice in letter formation and sounds, which the children enjoy. They have access to a stimulating outside area but the lack of an all-weather cover restricts opportunities to promote their physical development through outdoor play.

A varied curriculum meets the needs and interests of children. Time is allocated to teach discrete literacy and numeracy activities with the very youngest children and their progress is rigorously assessed and recorded daily. However, due to the nature of the mixed-age class, Foundation Stage provision is often closely linked to the work of older children in Years 1 and 2, so children's interest and attention often wanes if they have to sit and listen for too long. At times, too much emphasis on structured learning and adult-led activity limits opportunities for discovery and child-initiated play. Considerable improvements have been made since the last inspection and the Foundation Stage now has its own classrooms and outdoor play area. Long-term staffing issues have limited its full development but a newly appointed teacher is beginning to establish herself with the help of a dedicated and effective teaching assistant and other teachers.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the EYFS by increasing the quantity of indoor and outdoor play provision and by providing more opportunities for the very youngest pupils to play and work together.
- Continue to improve the quality of teaching and learning so that pupils achieve well throughout all key stages.
- Increase the use of ICT in lessons by teachers and pupils.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards in Key Stage 1 have fluctuated in recent years, but results in national tests at the end of Year 2 this year have improved and most pupils met the targets set for them. Standards

in Key Stage 2 have been above the national average for the past five years. This year's unvalidated test results show that almost all Year 6 pupils attained the expected level in English, mathematics and science and more than half of them attained the higher Level 5 in English and science. Standards in ICT are average. Progress is good but uneven across the school. It is satisfactory in Key Stage 1 and good in Key Stage 2. In Years 3 and 4, close monitoring of individual pupils allows support to be targeted towards those pupils who need it most to help them to catch-up in their reading and mathematics. This, along with expert teaching in Years 5 and 6, help to accelerate progress and ensure that all pupils, including those who find learning difficult, achieve their full potential by the end of this key stage.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' enjoyment of school is reflected in their regular attendance, which is above the national average. Behaviour is exemplary in lessons and around the school. They lead active lifestyles and eat healthily at lunchtimes but the contents of some packed lunches compromise the school's efforts to educate pupils about healthy eating. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 enjoy free fruit every day. Pupils told inspectors that they feel that can approach a buddy or any member of staff if they have concerns and when low-level bullying does occur staff deal with it promptly.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are generally satisfactory in Key Stage 1 and good in Key Stage 2. In Years 1 and 2 lesson planning identifies what pupils of different ages and abilities are expected to learn. They are encouraged to think for themselves, share their ideas and work together in small groups. The best teaching was observed in Years 5 and 6 where a combination of good pace, teacher's high expectations and regular use of praise helped to stimulate pupils' learning and ensured rapid progress.

Effective demonstrations, coupled with clear explanations, aid pupils' learning in PE lessons. Pupils understand the targets set to help them improve their work and personal reading targets in Years 5 and 6 allow pupils to check their own progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum meets all statutory requirements and is enhanced by an excellent enrichment programme. Despite limited space for physical activity on the school site, after-school sport ranges from multi-skills activities for the very youngest pupils to rugby and netball clubs for those in Years 5 and 6. Regular PE lessons take place in the village hall and pupils in Key Stage 2 learn Spanish and French. Pupils perform in an annual theatre production and the school has introduced drama into the curriculum this year. The school allocates sufficient resources so that every pupil receives regular tuition to learn to play the recorder.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school prides itself in providing outstanding care, guidance and support for its pupils. All adults in the school are totally committed to ensuring that pupils receive the very best the school can provide, and achieve well. Staff meet regularly to discuss the progress of individual pupils and identify what is working well for them and what could be done to help them further. The headteacher actively seeks the views of parents and encourages them to engage with and contribute to the life of the school. Teachers' marking informs parents of the quality of their child's work done in independent study, group work and with the teacher, so they can gauge how well their child is progressing. The school has recently established a family learning group to provide parents with a better understanding of what and how their children learn.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher is particularly effective in balancing three days of teaching each week with her management responsibilities. Significant improvements have been made since the last inspection, but staff are not complacent and strive for further improvements. The headteacher recognises that more time is needed to strengthen the day-to-day management of the lower school. School self-evaluation is largely accurate although some judgements are too modest and some performance data requires updating. Teachers work well with other local schools and have forged partnerships with local support services and the local authority. Governors' strategic development of the school has included the building of a new reception area and plans for improved toilet facilities. They make frequent visits to look at pupils' work and evaluate how well they are doing.

The school makes a good contribution to community cohesion. Pupils engage with a number of community activities including church services, fund-raising activities for local and national charities and hosting the village fete. Local residents comment favourably on the school, its children and teachers.

Visitors from different denominations, cultures and countries are welcomed into school to talk with pupils and increase their knowledge and understanding of different cultures compared with their own.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
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?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

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	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
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	1

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**

25 September 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Bunwell Primary School, The Turnpike, Norfolk NR16 1SN

Earlier this week I visited your school and found it to be good. You are looked after very well and given lots of interesting things to do. Pupils told me you love being in a small school where everyone knows each other and people are really friendly. They also said that teachers know you all well and make you feel really special. During my short visit, I found this to be true. You are very lucky to attend such a lovely school. Thank you for allowing me to join you in lessons, talk with you and look at some of your work. I also met your teachers, a school governor and read letters from your parents. My meeting with the school council was an absolute pleasure, they represented your school very well indeed.

The care and support you are given from when you start school all the way through to the end of Year 6 is fantastic. There is always someone to talk to if you have concerns. You know that your teachers and assistants will help you and they really don't mind if you get things wrong. I was particularly impressed with the way older pupils care for the younger ones, and also your excellent behaviour in lessons and in the playground. It was great to see how well you were doing in guided reading. Well done and keep it up.

You particularly like the sports activities at lunchtimes and after-school. There is not much that you would change, but you would like to use computers more often in lessons. Your parents also told us that you enjoy school and that most of you make the progress they expect of you. Overall you achieve well and reach above-average standards by the end of Year 6. To help the school become even better than it is I have asked Ms Rolph to make the following improvements.

- Let the very youngest pupils go outside to play and work together more often.
- Improve the way teachers teach and you learn, so that you make good progress throughout your time at school.
- Let you use computers and interactive whiteboards more often.

Ms Rolph leads and manages your school very well. You can help her by using the suggestion box in your class to let your school council know your views on further improvements and ask them to share your suggestions with teachers.

Once again, thank you for your kind welcome. I wish you all well for the future.

John Mitcheson

Her Majesty's Inspector