

Old Buckenham Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120839
Local Authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	327376
Inspection dates	11–12 September 2008
Reporting inspector	David Wynford-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	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	189
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 local authority
Headteacher	Mr John Kelly
Date of previous school inspection	10 November 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Abbey Road Old Buckenham Attleborough Norfolk NR17 1RH
Telephone number	01953860380

Age group	5–11
Inspection dates	11–12 September 2008
Inspection number	327376

Fax number

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is a similar size to most primary schools. Few pupils are entitled to free school meals. The vast majority of pupils are from British backgrounds, with none learning to speak English as an additional language. Attainment on entry is typical for children's age but it fluctuates significantly from year to year. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is increasing and currently is broadly similar to the national average. These pupils have a range of difficulties, mostly moderate learning difficulties. The school holds the Healthy School and the Eco School Awards.

The school shares the site with a private pre-school.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school that has sound capacity for further improvement. Strengths of the school include its inclusive approach and the provision it makes to promote pupils' personal skills. As a result, pupils' personal development and well-being are good.

Achievement is satisfactory. Children make satisfactory progress in the Reception class. In Years 1 to 6, pupils' progress is variable, but they make satisfactory progress overall. The variability in progress is partly because of inconsistencies in teaching quality. Whilst there is some good teaching, it is not sufficiently consistent to ensure that pupils make good progress. In too many lessons, lesson plans focus on what the pupils are going to do, rather than what they will learn. Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory.

Since the last inspection, standards in Key Stages 1 and 2 have ranged from average to above average and achievement has typically been satisfactory. Provisional figures for 2008 indicate that overall standards at the end of Year 6 were in line with national averages. Standards in mathematics were lower than in English, where progress was better in relation to pupils' prior attainment. In Year 2 standards were also broadly average in 2008, although writing standards were a little below average. Pupils in the current Year 6 are on track to attain above average standards in reading, writing and in mathematics. Pupils who have additional learning needs are fully integrated into the life of the school. Focussed ongoing support enables them to make satisfactory progress.

The relationships between teachers and pupils are good. As a result, pupils behave well, feel safe and know whom to ask for help if they are upset. Pupils' personal development is enhanced by the satisfactory curriculum and an appropriate range of extra-curricular activities and visits to places of interest. Health, safety and welfare procedures are satisfactory. Pupils say targets are set and that they are given guidance on how to reach them but inspectors found that this is inconsistent between classes.

Leadership and management at all levels are satisfactory. The school operates smoothly on a day-to-day basis. Senior managers' views of the school's performance are realistic. The school development plan identifies appropriate areas for development although the measures by which their success are to be evaluated are neither sufficiently precise nor linked closely enough with raising standards. There is not a robust whole school system for recording assessments and monitoring pupils' attainment and progress. This adversely affects leaders' ability to compare the school's performance with other schools. Action is now being taken to develop academic monitoring procedures and set a much clearer direction for school improvement. The recently appointed chair and vice chair of governors are rightly developing their roles without delay to help bring about the necessary changes to hold the school to account for its performance.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

From standards that are typical for their age when they begin, children make satisfactory progress in all areas of learning. The vast majority settle quickly, behave well and adopt a positive attitude to learning because staff build good relationships with them and induction procedures are good. As a result, children feel safe. They make sound progress because the curriculum is planned to include all areas of learning and staff work together well. There is a reasonable balance of activities led by staff and those chosen by children. Good use is made

of the parent volunteers who provide the children with individual support in developing their literacy and mathematical skills. However, the school does not have suitable outdoor provision as an extension for classroom activities. This is because the decision was taken to move the Reception class to its new class base at the start of this term before plans to develop the outdoor area were drawn up. The children's welfare is promoted satisfactorily. Day-to-day assessment procedures are thorough and used appropriately to identify children needing additional support and to plan future work. Links with the on-site pre-school are satisfactory but these are not sufficiently well developed to ensure good continuity of learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing in Key Stage 1 and in mathematics throughout the school.
- Improve the quality of teaching by ensuring lesson plans have a sharp focus on what the pupils will learn rather than on what they are going to do.
- Ensure leaders and managers at all levels are more rigorous in monitoring and evaluating the work of the school, particularly in the assessment of pupils' progress.
- Improve outdoor provision for the youngest children.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged 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

Provisional indications are that in 2008, standards in Year 6 were broadly in line with the national average in English, mathematics and science. Pupils performed better in English than in mathematics and science. In mathematics, the percentage of pupils attaining Level 4 and beyond was below the national average. The school is not able to account for this and is analysing the test papers.

Standards in Key Stage 1 are typically above average in reading, but in writing and in mathematics, they are more variable. In 2008, standards were above average in reading, average in mathematics and a little below average in writing. Pupils made too little progress in writing from the end of the Reception class because teachers did not focus sufficiently on teaching basic writing skills. The recently introduced class-based assessment sheet is enabling teachers to identify pupils not making the expected rate of progress and to better target their support.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils have a good understanding of healthy living and staying safe. They behave well in classes and around the school. They are keen to take part in after school sports clubs and they know the importance of taking part in physical activities, drinking water and eating healthily. They want to take responsibility and participate in the school community through initiatives such as the school council and supporting pupils with disabilities. They contribute to the local community and raise funds for national and international charities. The great majority enjoy school and attendance is above average. Pupils' cultural development is promoted satisfactorily through their work in art and music. They are gaining a reasonable understanding of other ways of life and cultures but this aspect is not as strong as other elements of their spiritual, moral, social

and cultural development. Pupils' basic skills and ability to work with others are developing satisfactorily. As a result, they are adequately prepared for the next stage in their lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Most teachers use questions effectively to develop learning and sustain interest but some teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are not sufficiently high. They do not always encourage pupils to question, explore and take the initiative for their own learning. Lesson planning is detailed but the focus is too often on planning activities for pupils with too little focus on what pupils of different abilities will learn. As a result, pupils are sometimes not clear about the purpose of the activity. However, teachers are increasingly encouraging pupils to evaluate their own learning. Behaviour is good so classrooms are quiet, calm and industrious; this contributes to pupils' enjoyment of learning. The use of electronic whiteboards is beginning to have a positive impact on the quality of lessons. Enthusiastic teachers and teaching assistants work well together, particularly in support of pupils who find learning difficult.

Teachers set pupils targets to help them improve their work in English and mathematics. There are some procedures in place to monitor pupils' progress but the data is not used rigorously enough to check that pupils are on track to meet their targets.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The recently revised national frameworks for literacy and numeracy are being implemented satisfactorily. Links between subjects are being developed appropriately to provide more creative and practical opportunities for pupils to see the relevance of the lesson and to enjoy their learning. For example, pupils appreciated the recent book week and art week and said, 'They were fun'. Visitors, visiting places of interest and a reasonable range of after school activities enrich pupils' learning. Residential trips for older pupils extend personal experiences and contribute effectively to pupils' personal development. The recently introduced project focusing on the social and emotional aspects of pupils' learning is beginning to have a good impact on their personal development and on their understanding of safe and healthy living. Pupils benefit from learning in a spacious, well-equipped environment with good facilities outdoors for pupils to participate in physical activities

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Pupils feel well cared for and know who to ask for help. They are confident and happy because relationships are good. Satisfactory risk assessments and equipment checks are carried out regularly. Arrangements for child protection and for safeguarding pupils meet the current statutory requirements.

Links with outside agencies to provide additional support are good. As a result, pupils with learning difficulties receive the help that they need to enable them to make at least satisfactory progress. However, the school does not have an established systematic assessment system. As a result, leaders are not able to readily compare the performance of different year groups to identify ongoing strengths and areas for development. All pupils are set targets to help them

improve their work in English and mathematics but they do not always know precisely what they need to do to reach the next stages in their learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leaders and managers effectively promote the pupils' personal development. All learners, including pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, are welcomed into the school and the environment for learning is positive and encouraging. Relationships with pupils and with their parents are good. The vast majority of parents speak highly of the school. One wrote, 'All the children are happy and everyone knows everyone else. It's more like a community.'

The school has sound links with the local neighbourhood and it satisfactorily fosters pupils' understanding of other ways of life. Academic targets are realistic and adequately challenging but some aspects of school systems for improving its performance are not robust enough. Leaders and managers at all levels do not provide sufficiently clear direction to raise standards. There is no whole school system for recording and analysing standards and pupils' progress, and the school development plan and governors' meetings do not focus sufficiently on raising standards. The school acknowledges these shortcomings and has already started to take action to bring about improvements.

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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 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?	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?	3
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

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/or disabilities make progress	3

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	3
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	2
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	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of 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

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	4
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	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
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**

15 September 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Old Buckenham Community Primary School, Old Buckenham, NR17 1RH.

Thank you very much for making us so welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed our visit and talking to you. You were very friendly and polite. Your behaviour in class and in the playground was good. We were very pleased to hear that you like coming to school and to see that your attendance is good. You know a lot about being safe and healthy living. You told us about the things you should eat and about having lots of exercise. Overall, we thought that your personal development is good.

The school provides you with a satisfactory education. The standards you reach vary from year to year. These could be higher, especially in writing by the end of Year 2 and in mathematics throughout the school. To help you reach those higher standards we have asked your teachers, when they plan your work, to think more carefully about what you are going learn. We have also asked the governors and the senior members of staff to check more carefully the progress you are making.

We know that the Reception class has only just moved into its new classroom and things are in the process of being sorted out. We were very sorry to hear that some of the resources and displays were ruined by the flood last weekend. The staff have worked hard to get the classroom set up so that it can be used. Once this has been completed, the next big task is to get the outdoor area developed so that it can also be used for learning. We have asked that this be done as soon as possible so that the children in the Reception class can experience the full curriculum.

Once again, thank you for making our visit so enjoyable.

With best wishes for the future.

David Wynford Jones

Lead inspector