

# Bucklesham Primary School

## Inspection report

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Unique Reference Number	124572
Local Authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	328167
Inspection dates	23–24 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Helen Ranger

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 under pilot arrangements; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	104
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Simon Miles
Headteacher	Mr Neil Jackson
Date of previous school inspection	6–7 July 2006
School address	Main Road Bucklesham Ipswich Suffolk IP10 0AX
Telephone number	01473 659389
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## Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out by an additional inspector. The inspector visited six lessons or parts of lessons, covering all age groups, and held meetings with staff, pupils and governors. The inspector observed the school's work and looked at pupils' work, records of their progress, lesson planning, breaktime activities and the school's self-evaluation documents, including the main improvement plan. Inspection questionnaires were received from 52 parents.

The inspector reviewed many aspects of the school's work, looking in detail at the following:

- the pattern of achievement in key skills in Years 1 and 2, including the progress made by able pupils
- the features that make the curriculum outstanding
- how effectively the school's systems for self-evaluation and improvement promote better pupil outcomes
- the quality of provision and achievement in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

## Information about the school

The school is much smaller than the average primary school, with four mixed-age classes. It serves Bucklesham and the surrounding area, a mostly rural community. Pupils come from a very wide range of backgrounds. The number entitled to free schools meals is low. Most pupils are White British, with a small proportion from a range of minority ethnic heritages. It is rare for there to be pupils whose first language is not English. Children join the Early Years Foundation Stage (the Reception year) with a wide range of attainment. Generally this is, at best, in line with the levels expected nationally for four-year-olds. The overall proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties or disabilities is currently average, and higher than in recent years. Classes vary widely in the number of pupils who need extra adult help with learning.

## Inspection judgements

Grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness

2

Capacity for sustained improvement

2

## Main findings

This good school provides an extremely warm and welcoming environment for pupils and their families. Adults provide outstanding pastoral care and support for pupils. This promotes excellent behaviour, good attendance and very good attitudes to learning. From parents' first contacts before children start school, through to the transfer to secondary education, staff place a high priority on ensuring that pupils' overall personal development and well-being are assured. Parents who offered their views to the inspection were highly positive, especially about how much their children enjoy school and feel safe.

Achievement is good. Pupils' good progress in their work builds well on the excellent start they receive in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Effective teaching in all classes promotes good learning. The school provides an excellent range of activities which has continued to grow since the previous inspection. These engage and interest pupils. Highly effective partnerships with external providers and other schools give pupils access to opportunities that a small school could not otherwise provide. This provision promotes pupils' high levels of understanding of healthy lifestyles. Pupils take full advantage of many opportunities for physical activity and social interaction.

Teachers use the good assessment and tracking systems very well in planning lessons and determining where extra help is needed but miss some opportunities to involve pupils even more effectively in their own learning. The quality of teachers' oral feedback to pupils is good but written marking is too variable. Teachers are not consistent enough in communicating exactly what pupils have learned and what they should work on next. Pupils in their turn too rarely reflect on their own learning or actively respond to the comments their teachers write.

The school's track record in areas such as establishing excellent partnerships and ensuring good outcomes for pupils demonstrates its good capacity for the future. Leaders and managers, including the governors, are highly effective in engaging with families and providing an extremely safe and healthy environment. Teaching staff are involved well in checking the quality of provision and of pupils' achievement. Self-evaluation systems are mostly effective in ensuring the school continues to improve but the contribution that could be made by the governors is constrained. This is because they do not seek enough information for their monitoring in some important

areas, for example how pupils' performance compares with other schools. Nor are they aware enough of some national initiatives, such as those to promote community cohesion. The school has wide-ranging aspirations for the future. Many of these are summarised in the main written improvement plan. This shows that staff and governors regularly reflect on how the school can develop. The measures identified in the plan for judging success do not focus enough on how pupil outcomes are expected to improve as a result of any initiatives. As a result, the criteria used for monitoring are not fully effective in accelerating further school improvement.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of self-evaluation and monitoring by staff and governors by:
  - ensuring that the improvement and action plans include clear measures for identifying how initiatives will improve outcomes for pupils
  - ensuring governors are better informed about how the school's performance compares with other schools and about any relevant national initiatives that they need to consider.
  
- Involve pupils more in their own learning by:
  - ensuring that marking gives clear information about progress and helps pupils identify the next small steps in learning
  - developing pupils' ability to reflect on their own achievements and what they need to focus on next.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2
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Pupils thoroughly enjoy school and this creates a harmonious background to learning. They settle to tasks well, work well both independently and in teams, and form very productive relationships with staff and other pupils. The lessons observed demonstrated their good learning and progress. In a striking example, Year 5 pupils showed great independence in group work carrying out fair tests on the distance travelled by the buggies they had made. In a Year 2 mathematics group, the teacher had very high expectations of what pupils could do; the challenging multiplication activities enabled pupils to practise and rapidly extend their numeracy skills.

Standards in key academic skills, as measured by the Year 6 tests, are above average and have been maintained since the last inspection. School records for current pupils show that pupils systematically build well on their achievements. In general pupils' reading ability is a little better than their writing. In Key Stage 1, the school has substantially improved mathematics standards to narrow the gap between literacy and numeracy skills. Tracking of recent years shows that pupils make good, progress compared with their attainment when they start Year 1. By very close attention to individual needs, staff ensure that learning is consistently good for all groups of pupils. For example, activities are tailored to the separate interests of boys and girls as appropriate. Pupils who find learning more difficult and those with very specific physical or emotional needs make good progress as a result of good quality

adult support.

Pupils' overall spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. School surveys of their views show they feel extremely safe in school. They express confidence in adults to handle upsets or very occasional minor bullying to their satisfaction. Pupils from minority ethnic groups integrate very well and recorded racist incidents are extremely rare. Pupils contribute well to their school and the local community. The school council, run by pupils themselves, is active in representing their views and contributing to changes in the school. Activities such as these, combined with above average academic standards, stand them in good stead for the next stage of their education. They are developing a good awareness for their age of global issues, such as sustainability and contrasting lifestyles in other countries. Their penpals in Mumbai and sponsorship of an African child are typical examples. They are very enthusiastic about all the chances they have to meet pupils from local schools. However, there are few opportunities for them to learn about or mix with children from contrasting parts of the United Kingdom, such as large cities or more multi-cultural areas.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and their progress	2
How well do pupils achieve and enjoy their learning?	2
To what extent do pupils feel safe?	1
How well do pupils behave?	1
To what extent do pupils adopt healthy lifestyles?	1
To what extent do pupils contribute to the school and wider community?	2
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
How well do pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	2
What is the extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development?	2

## How effective is the provision?

Teaching is good throughout the school and elements seen during the inspection were outstanding. The high quality of relationships pervades lessons so that they run smoothly. Tasks match pupils' varying abilities. Class teachers work closely with teaching assistants and the job-share teachers liaise effectively with each other. Teachers explain tasks clearly. While there is scope for improvement in marking and

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

in helping pupils to reflect on their progress, teachers conduct effective discussions to check and extend pupils' learning. Assessments are continually used to check progress and to identify any pupil at risk of underachievement. Teachers give additional support or challenge as appropriate.

The curriculum is outstanding for the size of the school. Some aspects of provision, such as those that cater for gifted or talented individuals, are relatively recent. They are yet to have a full impact on achievement but all age groups are served very well. The school exploits teachers' skills and passions, as in a lesson on the artist Marc Chagall, characterised by the teacher's tangible enthusiasm for the subject. The partnership and local federation arrangements are highly effective and contribute to providing memorable experiences through visits and joint ventures. A superb example is the current dance project in Years 5 and 6 that draws on outside specialist expertise and links with other schools. Pupils demonstrated a very high standard of performance during the inspection and benefit from such chances to meet and learn alongside those from other schools. There is high priority given to personal, social, health and citizenship education which promotes the high standards of personal development achieved by pupils.

The staff care for pupils exceptionally well and do all they can to involve parents in true partnership, including parents who are harder to reach. Excellent links are forged wherever possible between the special needs coordinator and external agencies to meet the needs of the school's most vulnerable pupils.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

The quality of teaching	2
The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

## How effective are leadership and management?

Staff and governors are highly effective in supporting pupils' pastoral development and forging links in the local community. In most respects the school has maintained its effectiveness since the last inspection, although more needs to be done to bring full rigour to evaluating the impact of its provision on pupils and, thereby, having the information to drive improvement more effectively. The headteacher has a positive and energetic approach and parents praise the continuing strong ethos that he, the staff and the governors have established. A key role in the smooth running of the school is played by office staff who efficiently turn their hands to a very wide range of duties, reaching far beyond routine administration.

The governors have great potential but this is not exploited enough to enable them to act as true 'critical friends' to the school. They are extremely supportive and committed, offering a wide range of expertise and local knowledge that can benefit the school. They ensure statutory requirements are met, including their procedures

to safeguard pupils. However, they do not have all the information they need for an accurate picture and full understanding of the school’s strengths and weaknesses. It is therefore difficult for them to be as effective as they could be in shaping the future direction of the school and in checking current provision and standards.

Although the school has not fully evaluated its practice in detail, it makes a positive contribution to community cohesion based on a clear understanding by staff and governors of the community it serves. It engages consistently with a wide range of community groups, tackles any likely discrimination and promotes equality of opportunity well.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

The effectiveness of leadership and management in communicating ambition and driving improvement	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school’s engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage receive an excellent start to their education, eased by effective induction arrangements and close links with parents. The Class 1 teacher’s leadership is excellent in ensuring a consistently high quality of provision. By the end of the Reception year, children reach standards considerably higher than those expected nationally in all areas of learning. Children settle into school very quickly and become interested, confident learners who get on well together and develop independence in learning. The staff work closely together to provide an excellent range of activities both indoors and out. Parent volunteers have contributed very well to the further development of the outdoor area to provide a safe and stimulating environment. During the inspection this space included art and role play areas for an Outer Space topic, leading to high levels of engagement and excitement. Highly detailed assessments of progress are used to ensure children do consistently well and are used very effectively to inform children’s seamless transfer to Year 1.

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation	1



Stage	
Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

## Views of parents and carers

Half of parents and carers returned inspection questionnaires. The results were overwhelmingly positive in all aspects and match the school's own surveys. Parents commented on effective teaching, the approachability of the headteacher and his staff, and the safe, family atmosphere of the school. They praised the range of activities available to children. A few would like more information about their child's progress and more opportunities to meet teachers to discuss this. The inspector's view is that the number of events such as parents' evenings is similar to most primary schools, but the comments of these parents were shared in general terms with the headteacher.

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Bucklesham Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. If a parent has more than one child at the school, we ask them to record an answer against all the questions, for each of their children.

The inspector received 52 completed questionnaires. In total, there are 104 parents and carers registered at the school.

	Always	Most of the time	Occasionally	Never
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	48	3	1	0

## What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. In 2007-8, 15% of schools were judged to be outstanding.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well. In 2007-8, 49% of schools were judged good.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils. In 2007-8, 32% of schools were judged satisfactory.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves. In 2007-8, 5% of schools were judged inadequate.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

- Attainment:** the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
- Progress:** the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
- Achievement:** the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, training or development. This may refer to the acquisition of skills, knowledge, understanding or desired attributes. Attributes include qualities or personal competencies which are important to the development of the pupil; for example personal, social, cultural, emotional or health.
- Capacity to improve:** the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
- Leadership and management:** the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.



25 June 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Bucklesham Primary School, Bucklesham, Ipswich IP10 0AX

Thank you for your welcome and help when I visited your school recently. I really enjoyed meeting you and speaking to so many of you. Special thanks to Class 4 for inviting me to your wonderful dance rehearsal. I hope the actual performance goes equally well.

These are some of the best things I found out about your school.

- Children in the Reception age group get an excellent start to school.
- You enjoy coming to school a great deal, behave extremely well and make good progress in your work.
- You especially like all the clubs, visits and special events that the staff provide.
- You are cared for extremely well and taught well.
- You have an excellent understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle by eating sensibly, having fun together and taking so many opportunities for sport and exercise.
- The teachers have set up good systems for checking that you all achieve well, have some extra adult help or are set challenges if that is what you need.
- The staff and governors work very closely with your parents.

Yours is a good school. These are a few ways I have asked the adults to improve it further.

- Making sure that when adults mark your books, their comments encourage you to think about what you have done well and what you should focus on next. (You can help with this one by paying close attention to what they write, acting on their comments and maybe setting yourselves some small targets too.)
- Giving governors more of the information they need to help your school get better.
- Asking the staff and governors to find more ways to check that any changes they make to your school really help you with your learning.

I hope you carry on enjoying all that your school offers you.

Best wishes

Helen Ranger  
Lead inspector

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