

# Bluebell Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	134942
<b>Local Authority</b>	Norfolk
<b>Inspection number</b>	328996
<b>Inspection dates</b>	14–15 October 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	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.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	186
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	52
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Ian Callaghan
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Trudi Sharred
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Lovelace Road Norwich Norfolk NR4 7DS
<b>Telephone number</b>	01603452196
<b>Fax number</b>	01603259895

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	14–15 October 2008
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Bluebell Primary School opened in September 2007 following the amalgamation of a first and middle school. It moved into spacious new accommodation in September 2008. All of the permanent teaching staff and most of the support staff transferred from the previous schools. The headteacher, deputy headteacher and special needs coordinator joined the school in September 2007.

A large majority of the pupils are White British with several from a wide range of other ethnic groups. The proportion speaking English as an additional language is above average and currently there are nine pupils at an early stage of learning English. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is high. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is very high. Many of these pupils have moderate learning or behavioural, emotional or social difficulties. The school has a learning support unit that serves pupils up to Year 2 from a wide area of the city and county. It currently has five pupils on roll.

The school has a Nursery and Reception unit for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). It also has a breakfast club and after school club on the site that is managed by the governing body. In addition, governors manage a lunchtime club for part-time Nursery and Reception children.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Bluebell Primary is a satisfactory school. It provides good care and support to its pupils which results in their good levels of enjoyment, positive attitudes and satisfactory behaviour. Overall, pupils' personal development and well-being are satisfactory. Pupils look after each other and, because all pupils respect other's individuality, those with additional learning needs or who are at an early stage of learning English are fully integrated in activities.

Pupils achieve satisfactorily. They start in the Nursery with skills that are low in comparison with those typically found, especially in their personal and language development. Progress is satisfactory overall in the EYFS and good in their personal, social and emotional development, although standards are well below expectations by the end of the Reception year. Progress is satisfactory overall throughout the rest of the school. Standards are below average by Year 2 and Year 6. In the unvalidated 2008 national test results, at the end of Year 6 not enough pupils reach the expected level in English and mathematics. In addition, too few pupils gained the higher level in English, mathematics and science. Senior leaders are keenly aware of the need to accelerate progress in all year groups and ensure that pupils achieve well, particularly those who find learning easy.

Good care, guidance and support are offered to pupils. Even though the school has only been in existence for a year, and in its current accommodation for just a few weeks, there is an inclusive and nurturing environment for all pupils. Parents are almost unanimous in their support of the school and many wrote positive comments. These are summed up by the parent who wrote: 'My son is always keen to go to school even when he feels unwell. There are excellent standards of pastoral care and it is a happy environment.'

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. In some classes, they are good because teachers have high expectations of what the pupils can achieve and the pace of learning is brisk. However, pupils do not make consistent progress from class to class. This is because activities are not sufficiently challenging and too much time is given for their completion. Tasks are not always matched to the learning needs of the pupils and work is often too easy for the more able pupils. The many pupils who have moderate learning, behavioural or emotional difficulties are supported well and their progress matches that of their classmates. The curriculum is satisfactory and has some good features, particularly in the wide range of additional activities that are offered. A reasonable start has been made to make sure that literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills are developed in topics being studied. However, this is at an early stage and hence, opportunities to practise these basic skills in other subjects are limited.

The headteacher is deeply committed to accelerating progress in order to raise standards. Working in effective partnership with the senior managers, she has welded a good staff team, despite having a number of them on long-term sick leave and the school moving premises twice in its year of existence. The headteacher has not been daunted by these challenges and there are signs that improvement projects, such as in literacy to strengthen sentence structure and punctuation, are having a positive impact on pupils' achievement. However, there are weaknesses in subject leadership because some important areas are not suitably covered and are simply being overseen by senior leaders. Hence, much of the process of checking the school's provision and standards have been carried out by senior staff with limited involvement of subject leaders.

Nonetheless, the improvements already made demonstrate a satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

## **Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 3**

Good pastoral care ensures that children's personal welfare is well promoted as soon as they enter the Nursery. Consequently, children settle in well and quickly become confident in the welcoming environment. Due to the staff's strong emphasis on the safety, care and well-being of children both in the Nursery and Reception, they achieve well in their personal and social skills. The children learn good manners and hygiene routines. The well-organised outdoor area is used well to support children's imaginative play in all areas of learning.

Although individual sessions of teaching are good in both Nursery and Reception and children make good progress in the development of their personal and social skills, overall learning and achievement is satisfactory. This is because teachers' plans are not always matched to children's individual needs. In addition, particularly in the Nursery, plans do not provide sufficient detail to show an appropriate balance between activities that are chosen by the children and those led by the staff. This is compounded because of the different way teachers' plans are prepared in the Nursery and Reception classes, although good assessments are made of children's achievements. Standards are well below the expected level by the end of the Reception year because only a minority attain the expected learning goals and none exceed them. The headteacher, who currently leads the EYFS, has quickly identified where improvements are needed in planning and the curriculum.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Raise standards at the end of Year 6 in English, mathematics and science and increase the proportion gaining the higher levels.
- Accelerate learning by raising teachers' expectations of pupils' achievement in every class and ensuring that work is well matched to their needs.
- Complete the process of embedding literacy, numeracy and ICT skills into teachers' plans for all curriculum subjects.
- Strengthen subject leadership by ensuring that there are named leaders for all areas and that they support the school's processes for checking the quality of its work.

A small proportion of 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**

Achievement throughout the school is satisfactory. Standards, at the end of Year 2 are below average, particularly in mathematics. The provisional results in the 2008 Year 2 national assessments show that more pupils attained the expected level in reading and writing than in the previous year. This marks good progress for these pupils. However, in mathematics far fewer reached the expected level and too few pupils attain the higher level in any subject.

Standards at the end of Year 6 are below average in English, mathematics and science. In Years 3 to 6, the legacy of underachievement in mathematics is being tackled and the school is making sure that information from tracking pupils' progress is used effectively to set clear targets. As

a result, progress is accelerating as shown in the work in pupils' books. However, the current pupils in Year 6 are not on track to attain the national expectation in mathematics. In English, previous under-achievement is being overcome more quickly, particularly in reading; progress is speeding up and pupils are on course to attain standards that broadly match the national expectations. However, too few of the current Year 6 pupils are on course to attain the higher levels in English, mathematics and science. The school is successful in ensuring that pupils who find learning hard or who are at an early stage of learning English make progress that matches that of their classmates.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 3**

Pupils are generally friendly, polite and considerate. Behaviour is satisfactory. Pupils respond positively to the firm, encouraging and supportive approach consistently used by staff. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils say they feel safe and they know there is always someone they can turn to for advice or if they are worried. Older pupils look out for those who are lonely on the 'buddy bench'.

Pupils enjoy school and most attend regularly. The school does much to promote good attendance although the poor attendance of a few means rates of attendance are below average overall. Pupils willingly take on responsibilities as school councillors. They express their views confidently and feel the school takes their suggestions seriously. Pupils play a full and active part in the school community by organising fund-raising for charities and offering their ideas for improvement, such as when designing plans for the courtyard. Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay healthy, including the need for rest and relaxation. Their attitudes to learning are positive, and they are adequately prepared for their move to secondary education.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Pupils enjoy lessons and they make satisfactory progress. In all classes, pupils are managed well and relationships are positive and supportive. In addition, teachers clearly set out what is to be learned in lessons. However, there are variations in the quality of teaching and learning. In the best lessons, teachers' planning ensures that a good range of activities is provided to meet the varying learning needs of pupils in their classes. In these lessons, teachers' expectations of what the pupils can achieve are high and they provide good challenge which the pupils say that they enjoy. However, this is not always the case and learning is slowed overall because teachers' expectations are not high enough and they set work that is too easy, particularly for the more able pupils. Planning does not focus sufficiently on developing pupils' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills across subjects. Teaching assistants fulfil their role well and make an effective contribution to pupils' learning.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

The satisfactory curriculum is being broadened and more closely tailored to pupils' needs. This is leading to increased cross-curricular work where new learning in one subject reinforces what has already been learnt in another. The growing effectiveness of the use of these links is beneficial to pupils' academic development, particularly when basic skills in literacy, numeracy

and ICT are practised and improved in other subjects. Provision for pupils with additional learning needs is effective. Those who speak English as an additional language also have the support to enable them to achieve. The curriculum is enriched by a good variety of activities and a good range of visitors and visits extend and enliven it.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Rigorous safeguarding procedures ensure the safety, security and health of the pupils. Skilled teaching assistants closely support those who find learning difficult. There are good processes to guide pupils with behavioural needs, through the effective use of a learning mentor and by being part of the specialist learning support unit. Thorough tracking of each pupil's progress, particularly in English and mathematics, is now taking place and means that those who are doing less well than expected are identified and given extra help. Teachers set individual targets which pupils find helpful because they tell them what they have done well and how to improve. These new systems are being implemented throughout the school but have not been in place long enough to have had an impact on standards.

There is a good quality breakfast club and after-school provision. Staff encourage pupils well and provide a good range of activities, and pupils say that they thoroughly enjoy the sessions. The high level of care and support at the club enables pupils to thrive in the well-organised and spacious accommodation.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The headteacher has played a pivotal role in lifting the school's effectiveness to its current satisfactory level. She has led the school well through very challenging changes in premises and staffing and ensured that pupils' learning has remained central to its work. Because she has appointed effective senior managers to support her, consistent policies for teaching and learning and for meeting regulatory requirements have been developed, as well as a good improvement plan, with the support of the local authority. However, much of the checking of provision is carried out by senior managers because there are important areas in the school which are not covered by subject leaders. This includes the EYFS, English and science. Although senior staff ensure satisfactory oversight of these areas, improvement is slowed due to the lack of named coordinators. Governance is satisfactory. Governors are committed to the future of the school but they do not have a systematic programme of visits for them to find out about the school for themselves. The school promotes community cohesion satisfactorily.

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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	NA
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?	3
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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

<sup>1</sup>Grade 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

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	3
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	3
The behaviour of learners	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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?	2

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	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**

16 October 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Bluebell Primary School, Norwich, NR4 7DS

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school. We were impressed with your good manners and also by your enjoyment of school. We thought your singing in assembly was brilliant. We can also understand why you were so keen to show us everything about your new buildings. We think you are very lucky to have such spacious buildings. We enjoyed listening to what you had to say about the official opening, and we wished that we could have been there too!

Yours is a satisfactory school. There are some things that are good, including the way that the adults care for you and support you. We know that you enjoy school and you know about staying healthy and safe. We agree with you and your parents that your headteacher is doing a brilliant job to make sure that you all learn more quickly and well.

There are some things that can be done to make your school better. We have asked your governors and teachers to do four things. Firstly, to make sure that standards are raised at the end of Year 6 in English and mathematics and make sure that more of you reach Level 5 in English, mathematics and science. Secondly, to make sure that your learning is equally good in all classes by making sure you are always given work that challenges you and is not too easy. Thirdly for your teachers to give you some literacy, numeracy and ICT work as part of other subjects that you study. Finally we have asked that your teachers take some responsibility from your headteacher and deputy head by having a teacher in charge of each of the areas in which you learn.

You can help by working hard to meet your targets.

Thank you again for helping to make our time with you enjoyable and we hope that you will always be happy at school.

Yours sincerely,

Keith Sadler

Lead inspector