

Buxton Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120794
Local Authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	332306
Inspection dates	9–10 February 2009
Reporting inspector	Tricia Pritchard HMI

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

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	92
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	Interim executive
Chair	Mr M Jackson board
Headteacher	Mrs M Vaissiere
Date of previous school inspection	28 June 2007
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Aylsham Road Buxton Norfolk NR10 5EZ
Telephone number	01603 279357

Age group	4–11
Inspection dates	9–10 February 2009
Inspection number	332306

Fax number

01603 279296

Age group	4-11
Inspection dates	9-10 February 2009
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Introduction

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

Description of the school

Buxton Primary School serves a rural area to the north of Norwich. The number on roll has fallen significantly during the last five years with the closure of the airbase at Coltishall. There are very few pupils from minority ethnic communities and no pupils with English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with additional learning needs and/or disabilities is above the national average. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Buxton Primary School provides a satisfactory education and is an improving school. In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

Overall, achievement in English, mathematics and science is satisfactory. Following a period of declining standards and inadequate progress, most pupils are now making at least satisfactory progress and standards, although still below the national average, are rising slowly. It will take time for pupils to catch up fully and for these improvements to be reflected in the national pupil performance data. However, it is evident, from lesson observations and through scrutinising pupils' work, that pupils are making faster progress this year than previously. Contributory factors are improvements in the quality of teaching which is now satisfactory as a result of a well-targeted professional development programme, and the rigorous monitoring of pupils' progress and standards to identify where strengths and weaknesses lie.

There are now clear signs of improvement in pupils' writing, which are due largely to planning more opportunities for pupils to practise their writing skills in subjects other than literacy, and to teaching pupils how to structure their writing and make it interesting. However, the marking of writing and the assessment of writing tasks are areas for development. Too often, spelling and grammatical errors go uncorrected in Key Stage 2 and, sometimes, the assessment of writing is overgenerous. The presentation of pupils' work is also not commented on enough. Consequently, some pupils' work is not as neat as it should be.

Pupils are happy and enjoy school. They are well cared for pastorally. Their behaviour is good and they learn in a calm and well ordered environment. Classroom displays celebrate pupils' achievements and pupils are proud to see their good work recognised. Lower attaining pupils are especially well supported and, therefore, they consistently do well. Higher attaining pupils, however, could do better, especially in mathematics, where sometimes the work is not challenging enough.

There is a good team ethos throughout the school. Relationships are good. Under the strong leadership of the acting headteacher and the interim executive board, the school has made good progress in tackling the issues raised during the last inspection. Strategic planning is a strength. Plans for the future leadership are both well conceived and well advanced. The school has a track record of improved provision and good leadership, which is reflected in pupils now making faster progress. The challenge lies in maintaining this momentum. At present, the school provides satisfactory value for money and demonstrates that it has good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Attainment on entry is usually in line or above age-related expectations in most areas of learning. By the end of the Foundation Stage, the vast majority of children are working well within the early learning goals. This year, the children's attitudes to learning and their oral communication skills are particularly good. Their writing skills were less well developed at the beginning of the year than their reading skills but since September, they have made good progress in writing in relation to their starting points. Their social skills have also developed well.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory with good elements. The best teaching occurs when the teacher is teaching the whole class. Relationships are good and the children are very keen to learn. The curriculum provides a sound balance between child-initiated activities and adult-led learning. It is well resourced. Children have plenty of opportunities to engage in play-related activities. However, when they move into groups or pairs, opportunities are sometimes lost to structure their play in order to maximise learning, and to make full use of other adults in the classroom to guide an individual child's learning. Leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are satisfactory and developing well. Careful records are maintained of children's progress and the information is used increasingly to inform planning. Class numbers are small and the adult/child ratio is very good. The welfare requirements are met in full. Children are well cared for and supported. Parents are actively encouraged to be involved in their children's learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide greater challenge for higher attaining pupils, especially in mathematics, in order to accelerate their progress.
- Gain greater consistency in the marking of writing in Key Stage 2 and particularly in correcting spelling and punctuation.
- Ensure that the assessment of writing is accurate and not overgenerous.
- Encourage all pupils to present their work well.
- Ensure that play activities for reception class pupils are always planned and structured to provide good learning opportunities.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged to be 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

Standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 declined steadily between 2005 and 2008 from considerably above the national average to below. Year 2 pupils' reading scores were particularly low in 2008. Pupils did better in mathematics than in English.

Although the decline in standards has not been as marked in Year 6 as it has been in Year 2, the past two years have seen Year 6 pupils attaining scores for English, mathematics and science, which are below the national average. In 2008, too few pupils attained higher levels in English because their performance in writing was exceptionally low; they did better in mathematics. In science, there was a distinct improvement in comparison with the previous year's results even though scores were below the national average. A key factor, which makes it difficult to make direct comparisons from year to year, however, is the vastly fluctuating numbers in each year group as a result of the closure of the airbase.

When considering current pupils' progress in relation to their starting points, the picture is improving. Most pupils throughout the school are now making at least satisfactory progress and often good progress. They are well placed to meet their personal targets by the end of the year. This was evident in the lessons observed and in the scrutiny of their work. Pupils with additional learning needs, particularly in Key Stage 2, make good progress and attain levels in all subjects, which are well above the national average for this group of pupils. In contrast, higher attaining pupils do not always do as well as they could.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy coming to school and attendance is in line with the national average. Behaviour is good in lessons and in the playground. Pupils are motivated to learn and are keen to talk about their lessons. Their spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory, and their moral and social development is good. They possess a good awareness of the advantages of eating healthily and enjoy participating in physical exercise. Those on the school council take their responsibilities seriously and all pupils are keen to make a contribution to the life of the school community. In the locality and beyond, they participate readily in a range of activities to promote community cohesion and to broaden their knowledge and understanding of what life is like in different cultures and religious communities both at home and abroad. As yet, standards in literacy and numeracy are not as high as they could be and so most pupils are not so well prepared for their future economic well-being. The exception is in Year 6 where the business enterprise initiative has raised pupils' awareness of the financial skills needed to be successful in a business environment.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Since September, changes in staffing and in class organisation have led to improvements in the quality of teaching and learning, and to a more common approach to planning and delivering lessons. Teachers' expectations are clearer and there is a shared understanding of what constitutes good teaching and learning. There is clear evidence, in pupils' books, to show that progression in learning has improved and is now satisfactory.

All lessons observed during the inspection were at least satisfactory with good elements. Lessons proceed at a brisk pace and teachers are confident in using interactive whiteboards to support their teaching. They assess pupils' progress regularly and are getting better at assessing accurately although there is still scope for greater accuracy in assessing the quality of pupils' writing. Sometimes assessments are slightly over generous. Teachers are using the outcomes of assessment wisely to identify pupils at risk of underachieving and to target extra support for these pupils. They are planning different tasks for pupils of different abilities, particularly in mathematics. However, higher attaining pupils are often required to get too many numerical sums right before moving onto the next stage. Pupils' presentation of their work is improving but it is not yet consistently good enough.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

An appropriate and strong emphasis is placed on timetabling literacy and numeracy everyday. In response to the issues surrounding low reading scores in Key Stage 1, pupils have daily phonics lessons. These are having a beneficial effect on improving their reading and writing skills. A satisfactory start has also been made in reinforcing literacy and numeracy skills when teaching other curriculum subjects. For example, in topic work and science, pupils are now required to write independently and at length rather than complete worksheets, which require one-word answers.

The curriculum is enriched significantly by outside visits and visiting speakers. There are some extra-curricular clubs but not a wide range. Pupils say they would like more. Personal, social and health education is integrated well.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Pupils are well cared for pastorally. They say that they feel safe and secure at school. There are good procedures for following up non-attendance. Safeguarding procedures are in place and implemented. The school works well in partnership with neighbouring schools, particularly with the local secondary school, so that pupils experience a smooth transition from one school to the next.

Pupils' academic needs are met well through careful recording of pupils' progress. Those with additional learning needs are particularly well supported in small group work by skilled teaching assistants. In whole class teaching sessions, however, teaching assistants are not always so well deployed to support learning.

The marking of pupils' work is an area for further development. Although it has improved, it is not consistently good in all classes. In particular, too little attention is paid to correcting spelling and punctuation in Key Stage 2. A good start has been made, however, on encouraging pupils to self assess their learning. Good practice was seen in Key Stage 2 when pupils were checking their work against their personal targets and against the learning objectives of the lesson.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

When the school went into special measures, the local authority stepped in to provide strong leadership and management in order to turn the school round. Currently, the school is well led and managed by an acting headteacher with the able support of an interim executive board, which has replaced temporarily the governing body. The school has resolved the issue of weak teaching through a well-targeted professional development programme for all staff and the additional support of a county school improvement teacher to model good practice. Staff have shown a united determination to get to grips with analysing pupils' performance and to using the information to inform their planning, to accelerate pupils' progress and to raise standards.

The headteacher's monitoring of standards and of teaching and learning is robust. Subject leaders are also taking an active part in monitoring standards through analysing data and moderating pupils' work. Their role in monitoring teaching in the classroom is not so well developed but this was a deliberate decision. The school has rightly focused upon improving the quality of teaching and learning first under the clear direction of the headteacher and with the help of local authority advisers and consultants. Plans are now in place to enable subject leaders to play a bigger part in monitoring lessons.

The interim executive board has been successful in setting the strategic direction for the school and plans for the future leadership and governance of the school are well advanced. Self-evaluation is accurate with staff contributing to the evidence base. Improvement planning is focused firmly upon raising standards and improving the quality of provision. Challenging

targets have been set and progress towards meeting these targets is monitored regularly and rigorously.

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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	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?	2
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	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?	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	3
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	3
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?	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	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**

11th February 2009

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Buxton Primary School

Thank you very much for making me so welcome when I have visited your school. Altogether, I have been four times to see you and your teachers. The purpose of my visits has been to see how the school is getting on and particularly to judge how well you are making progress. The visit that I have just made will be my last visit because the school has now improved well and so has your learning.

I was really pleased to see that you are making faster progress in all subjects than you did previously. In particular, it was good to see you enjoying writing and using interesting words. I looked at your work and saw that you do lots of writing not only in literacy lessons but in other lessons too. Your teachers mark your work and give you encouraging comments. However, I have suggested that they correct words that you have mis-spelt more often and that they ensure that you punctuate your work well. Sometimes, it is difficult to read your writing properly when, for example, you write a lot but with no full stops. I have noticed that you are presenting your work better but some of you could present it even better still.

You enjoy lessons and find them interesting and because your behaviour is good, you learn more. I did discuss with your teachers, however, the possibility of setting more difficult work for those of you who find mathematics easier than others. I also discussed how the play activities for children in the reception class could be structured to provide good learning opportunities.

Mrs Vaissiere, your headteacher, knows each one of you very well and she has introduced a good system for checking that you are all making progress. Your school is well led and managed.

You all get on with one another and it is good to see you caring for each other. I enjoyed meeting the school council. Your school is a welcoming school.

Good luck for the future.

Best wishes

Tricia Pritchard

Her Majesty's Inspector