

# Buckminster Primary School

## Inspection report

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Unique Reference Number	119910
Local Authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	339551
Inspection dates	23-24 September 2009
Reporting inspector	Doris Bell

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	84
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Trevor Hollingworth
Headteacher	Mrs Jacqui Fionda and Mrs Amanda McRobie
Date of previous school inspection	2 May 2007
School address	School Lane Buckminster Grantham Lincolnshire NG33 5RZ
Telephone number	01476 860315
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 14 lessons, and held meetings with the vice-chair of governors, staff and pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at a wide range of documentation including teachers' planning, pupils' books, the school improvement plan, monitoring and evaluation records, assessment records, individual educational plans, minutes of meetings and the termly reports of the school improvement partner. The responses from the pupil and staff questionnaires were analysed as were the responses from the 33 parents' questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. They looked in detail at the following:

- the Early Years Foundation Stage to see what improvements there had been since the previous inspection
- the progress of pupils currently in Years 1 to 6
- safeguarding, how well the school promotes community cohesion, and pupils' understanding of cultural diversity in Britain today
- leadership and management and how the school intends to check on the effectiveness of the new job share at headship level.

## Information about the school

This small school draws its pupils from a wide rural area where few children have formal pre-school experience. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average. All pupils are from White British backgrounds. From September 2009, two members of staff, one of whom is the previous full-time headteacher, share the headship of the school. Reception children are taught in single age classes, as are pupils in Years 1 and 2. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 are taught in two mixed age classes. The school has a Sports Mark, a Healthy Schools Award and Investors in People Award.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate  
Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

## Main findings

This is a good school. Effective leadership and management have successfully focused staff on meeting pupils' individual needs. Teaching is consistently good and sometimes outstanding. Since the previous inspection, improved assessment procedures and an initiative to improve writing have raised standards. These, and the now excellent provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, demonstrate the drive, ambition and passion of the joint headteachers to make the school outstanding. It also demonstrates the close teamwork among the staff, and their sharing of their vision. All of this gives the school good capacity for further improvement. It is too early to evaluate the impact of the new management set up but governors are strongly committed to checking its effectiveness as the year proceeds. Overall, governance is good and the school provides good value for money.

Caution is needed when comparing standards with national averages because of the small numbers and the varying proportions of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities in each year group. Because they make good progress, these pupils often reach the standards expected for their age. This is a mark of the effective support they receive. All pupils spoken to say they very much enjoy school. The skills with which they start school are broadly as expected for their age, although there are marked weaknesses in personal development, writing, and knowledge and understanding of the world. The proportion of children reaching average standards at the end of Reception is above that found in most schools, demonstrating the good and sometimes excellent progress they make. Overall, pupils achieve well and standards are also above average in Year 2 and Year 6.

Teachers assess and track pupils' learning well in English, mathematics and science, and they plan pupils' work accordingly. The curriculum is planned well, providing pupils with rich, varied and exciting experiences that successfully link different subjects together. However, the skills pupils are expected to acquire in each subject are not always defined clearly enough, and pupils' progress is not often measured in relation to these skills.

Staff care deeply for each pupil, and pupils care deeply for each other. The school is extremely vigilant about safeguarding pupils, and pupils feel safe and very well cared for. They have an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves fit and healthy and they contribute well to the school and local community. They are becoming increasingly aware of different communities across the world, but they do not have a

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secure enough understanding of the range and diversity of culture in the United Kingdom. The governors have a policy for promoting community cohesion but the action plan accompanying it has not yet been fully implemented.

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

- Identify the key skills pupils should acquire in every subject, and find manageable ways to measure their progress in them.
- Improve pupils' knowledge and understanding of cultural diversity in the United Kingdom.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils achieve well and standards are above average in Year 2 and Year 6. Except for 2008, the test results for pupils in Year 6 were significantly above average for several years, although not evenly so across English, mathematics and science.

Improvements in writing successfully raised standards in English in 2009. Pupils in Year 6 last year showed flair, imagination and a good sense of audience and purpose in their writing. Similar skills are emerging in the current year groups. Throughout the school, pupils present their work well, with good attention to grammar, spelling and punctuation.

Girls reach higher standards than boys but both boys and girls make equally good progress. The good support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, most of whom are boys, helps a significant proportion of them to catch up with their peers. More able pupils often work alongside pupils from an older age group, extending their learning effectively. Pupils with behavioural difficulties are well supported, and behaviour is excellent throughout the school. Pupils know they work and play in a safe and secure learning environment. They have a strong moral conscience and excellent social skills, and they work together effectively in different groups. They feel well supported in every sense. They say school is 'fun and healthy' and talk knowledgeably about the benefits of making healthy eating choices and taking regular exercise. They also say that learning is made 'interesting' for everyone and that they have fun gardening and helping to look after the school chickens. Pupils trust the staff, stating confidently that any adult in the school would help them if they had any concerns. They understand what bullying is and are adamant that it would not be tolerated.

Pupils reflect thoughtfully on their own lives and on how they can help others, including, for example, through their work on Ethiopia. They contribute well to the school and local community, and governors describe the school as the 'core' of the local community. The missing link is the pupils' lack of understanding of the range and diversity of culture in the United Kingdom. Despite this, their good attendance, their well developed literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology skills, and their excellent social skills prepare them well for their future.

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*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

## How effective is the provision?

Teachers know their pupils well and plan carefully to meet their individual learning needs. They have a firm grasp of pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science. Exciting activities capture pupils' interest by linking subjects together, sometimes very effectively consolidating pupils' understanding in each. Objectives for each lesson are clearly stated in teachers' planning and they are shared with the pupils. Therefore, pupils are clear about what is expected of them. However, learning objectives are not always revisited, for example, at the end of lessons, to ensure that pupils are really clear about what they have actually learned.

Teachers mark pupils' extended writing well, consistently giving them points for improvement, and pupils understand the importance of heeding what their teachers say. They know their literacy and numeracy targets and what they need to do to move to from one level to the next. Marking also points out errors in mathematics and in written work in different subjects. However, teachers do not always assess pupils' progress in skills well enough in other subjects. The otherwise well planned curriculum does not provide them with a strong enough framework for this. Teaching assistants contribute well to pupils' learning and progress, working with different ability groups at different times. Excellent relationships throughout the school mean that staff and pupils share a mutual respect for each other that benefits pupils' learning and personal development.

The curriculum is enriched well by visits, visitors, opportunities for pupils to learn

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<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

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French, and to learn a musical instrument. However, it does not include enough opportunities for pupils to learn about life in a culturally diverse society. There are good arrangements for easing the transition from year group to year group and from primary to secondary school.

The outstanding care, guidance and support provided for the pupils is demonstrated clearly in the staff’s in-depth knowledge of each pupil and any factors affecting their learning or personal development. The school works closely with parents, carers, external agencies and other schools to ensure that pupils who are vulnerable, for whatever reason, receive the help and support they need. Parents are mostly very positive about the school and appreciate what it does for their children. The school is well ahead of minimum requirements for safeguarding. It has, for example, ensured that all adults who spend time in school, including governors and volunteers, have been rigorously vetted.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

### How effective are leadership and management?

The headteachers provide staff with clear direction and they are well supported by other senior managers, governors and staff, all of whom work together closely. The full time headteacher’s move to part-time working has occurred smoothly. The teacher now sharing the headship, though new to the role, has been a senior manager in the school and knows it well. She has also driven the improvement in assessment procedures. Governors are clearly committed to keeping a close check on all of this and on its impact on pupils’ learning and progress. They visit the school regularly, take their specific responsibilities seriously, setting challenging targets and checking how well the school meets them.

The school knows its strengths and what it needs to do to improve but its evaluations of some aspects of its work are over generous. The new development plan has a manageable number of well focused priorities that have the potential to help the school improve, as has the governors’ action plan for promoting community cohesion. Senior staff’s observations of teaching and learning are detailed and evaluative but they do not always contain clear enough points for improvement, or information about how well teachers use assessment in lessons, therefore missing opportunities to measure improvements in teaching and learning over time.

The school promotes equality of opportunity well and there have been no reported

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incidents of racial harassment or discrimination. The school involves parents and carers well in their children’s learning through newsletters, curriculum information and formal and informal contact about their children’s progress. The majority of parents praise it for this.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school’s engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	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

The curriculum for this age group is exceptionally well planned. It contributes very effectively to the children’s consistently good progress in all areas of learning. The sheer richness and variety of activities, indoors and out, keep children busy, well focused and eager to learn. An outstanding feature is the way all activities extend the work the children do in whole class sessions, yet at the same time cover all areas of learning extremely well. Children are keen to show how well they can write letters and numbers, count, and use shapes to make repeated patterns, for example, on paper or in the sand.

Staff are very rigorous about recording children’s progress and building on what they have learned in lessons and over time. Children’s learning and development are very successfully assured in the excellent balance between adult directed activities and those that children select for themselves. Staff intervene extremely effectively in both, challenging children’s thinking and extending their learning, as well as encouraging them to work with and alongside each other.

The Reception class is a very happy place where children settle really well, quickly gain confidence in themselves and form excellent relationships with adults and with other children. Behaviour is excellent as is the staff’s relationship with parents and carers, which begins with the effective induction procedures that introduce them and

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their children to school. Children are well prepared for their work in Year 1.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

## Views of parents and carers

Most parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaires were very positive about the school's work and the efforts of the staff. Comments such as 'my child is extremely happy at the school' and 'the school is very supportive' typify the responses on the questionnaire. A few responses indicated that parents felt they were not well enough informed about what their children were learning or how well. Inspectors found little to support this view, given that there is much informal contact with parents about this, and parents' evenings and annual reports follow the same pattern as most schools. Additionally, parents receive regular newsletters and an outline curriculum plan which shows the topics to be studied each term.



## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Buckminster Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with statements about the school.

The inspection team received 33 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 84 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	22	67%	11	33%	0	0%	0	0%
The school keeps my child safe	22	67%	11	33%	0	0%	0	0%
The school informs me about my child's progress	13	39%	17	52%	3	9%	0	0%
My child is making enough progress at this school	15	45%	14	42%	2	6%	0	0%
The teaching is good at this school	20	61%	12	36%	1	3%	0	0%
The school helps me to support my child's learning	14	42%	13	39%	4	12%	1	3%
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	16	48%	16	48%	1	3%	0	0%
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	16	48%	14	42%	1	3%	0	0%
The school meets my child's particular needs	18	55%	12	36%	3	9%	0	0%
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	17	52%	11	33%	3	9%	0	0%
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	13	39%	16	48%	1	3%	2	6%
The school is led and managed effectively	22	67%	9	27%	2	6%	0	0%
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	22	67%	10	30%	1	3%	0	0%

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### 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.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
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.

### Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
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.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.



25 September 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Buckminster Primary School, Buckminster NG33 5RZ

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school. It was a delight to talk to you, to hear how much you all enjoy school, and to see how hard you work. You and your parents are right in thinking you go to a good school. The outstanding work done in Reception ensures that you get off to an excellent start when you join Year 1. Your good progress starts there and continues throughout the school, enabling you to reach above average standards by the time you leave. We were very impressed by your excellent behaviour.

The staff care deeply for each one of you and it was good to see how well you follow their example by working together and caring deeply for each other. The school is vigilant about ensuring you are safe and well cared for, and you have an excellent understanding of how to keep yourself safe, fit and healthy. You are clearly very much involved in the school, particularly through the Focus Group, and in the local community, and you are learning about different communities in different parts of the world. However, we found you do not have a very good understanding of the many different cultures in this country. We have asked the school leaders and managers to help you develop this understanding because it is important to do so as you grow up.

You told us about the targets you have for literacy and numeracy, and what you need to do to reach them. Your teachers mark your writing well, correcting your mistakes and reminding you what you need to do to improve. We could see how much better you are getting at doing longer pieces of writing as a result of this. We found that marking in other subjects is not as helpful in showing you how well you are doing, what skills you are getting better at, or what you need to do to improve them. We have therefore asked the school to look at ways to do this so you can be clear about what and how well you are learning in every subject.

Thank you for being so helpful. We hope that you will continue to work hard and that you will enjoy learning for the rest of your lives, as much as you do now.

Yours faithfully

Doris Bell  
Lead Inspector

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