

Buckingham Park Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	134791
Local Authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	342342
Inspection dates	9–10 July 2009
Reporting inspector	Wendy Forbes

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	388
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 governing body
Chair	Keith Tulley
Headteacher	Louise Swann
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Buckingham Road Shoreham-on-sea BN43 5UD
Telephone number	01273 453515
Fax number	01273 441772

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This larger-than-average primary school is the result of the recent amalgamation of Kingston Buci First and Buckingham Middle Schools. It opened in September 2008. Early Years Foundation Stage provision is provided in two single-aged grouped Reception classes. The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above the national average and includes those with speech and language, emotional and social, and moderate learning difficulties. The school has received the Activemark and Eco Bronze awards.

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. It has some good aspects relating to Early Years Foundation Stage provision and its younger pupils, and how the school helps all pupils to stay healthy and safe. Pastoral care is good and pupils' welfare is given the highest priority by the school. The headteacher and governors have worked effectively in bringing together two schools with three separate phases and age ranges into a shared vision.

Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage and make good progress in most areas of learning. Their writing skills, while generally reaching average levels, lag slightly behind their extremely good personal, social and emotional development. Good teaching and a creative, well organised, fun curriculum ensures that pupils continue to make good progress in Years 1 and 2. They reach above average standards in Year 2 in reading and mathematics and average standards in writing. However, the rate of progress other pupils make varies and is slowest in Years 5 and 6. Based on pupils' current work in English, mathematics and science, progress is satisfactory. However, by the end of Year 6, standards are well below average, particularly in mathematics and writing. This is because teaching and the curriculum does not sufficiently interest or motivate pupils to do their best. The school's approaches to fostering good behaviour, while still having room for improvement, are changing for the better, according to pupils. Where teachers are good at promoting 'hands-on' activities, particularly in younger-aged classes, the quality of teaching is predominantly good. However, teaching in Years 3 to 6 is not of consistently high quality. Occasionally, expectations of pupils are not high enough, planned activities do not always motivate pupils, and the quality of marking is variable.

Many parents value the satisfactory levels of care and guidance given to their children. As one parent said, 'Staff care about our children ... real progress has been achieved in the first year of the new-style school and I am looking forward to future years...' The headteacher, deputy headteacher and governors have a clear picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses. However, the roles of other key staff, such as subject and learning leaders, to monitor standards and the quality of teaching are not fully developed. Where leadership and management has been most effective, improvements can be seen in the improving quality of teaching in some Years 3 and 4 classes. The changes accomplished so far reflect the school's satisfactory and developing capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Most children start in Reception classes with the skills and knowledge that are as expected for their age, except in speech and language, which is below national expectations. The priority given to children's safety and welfare, aided by good links with parents, means children settle quickly, enjoy learning and achieve well. Good teaching ensures children make strides in all areas of learning so that by the end of their first year at school, most have made good progress towards their early learning goals and achieve above average standards, except in writing, which is broadly average. Children relate well to each other both in working and playing. They enjoy planting, painting, mark-making and constructing their own pieces of equipment to solve a mathematics problem. The focus on developing children's speech and language helps to tackle their relative weaker understanding of letter sounds, although there is still more to do to promote children's writing. Good leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation

Stage ensure regular and accurate systems for checking children's progress. The introduction of 'learning journals' to identify how children learn through play ensures there is a good balance between activities led by adults and those chosen by children. The outdoor learning opportunities are developing well to complement the good range of indoor learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise achievement and standards in Years 3 to 6 so that pupils achieve their full potential.
- Establish consistently high quality teaching in Years 3 to 6 by setting high expectations and planning stimulating activities.
- Ensure that marking, feedback and the use of pupils' targets is consistent so that pupils know and understand what they need to do to improve.
- Develop the role of subject and learning leaders in order to improve the quality of provision.

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

Achievement is satisfactory, with variations in progress across the school. Children make a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Because of the good teaching and organisation by the end of their first year at school, children have made good progress so that most have achieved their Early Learning Goals making especially good progress in their personal and social development. Progress in Years 1 and 2 is good. By the end of Year 2, pupils achieve above average standards in reading and mathematics and average standards in writing. However, the pace of progress of older pupils varies, particularly in Years 5 and 6, because teaching and planning does not always promote basic skills in a creative or interesting way. Pupils' speaking, listening and report writing skills develop satisfactorily, but their creative writing and problem solving in mathematics and science activities are not sufficiently well developed. This means that by Year 6, standards are well below national expectations, but are higher in Years 3 and 4 than in the two final years. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress. This is because of the individual attention they receive which helps them overcome their learning difficulties.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

'Over the year, there has been much improvement in behaviour and attitudes' is a typical comment made by a parent. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. They know the difference between right and wrong and are very clear that bullying and name-calling are unacceptable. Pupils have a good understanding of the importance of keeping safe, fit and healthy. Most pupils attend school regularly. The positive attitudes and generally good behaviour of younger pupils is reflected in their good personal development and achievement. However, some older pupils find it more difficult to settle down in class. Pupils say that behaviour has generally improved and is now satisfactory. However, some minor behaviour incidents during lessons interrupt and slow pupils' learning. As a result, some older pupils do not enjoy school activities and achieve as much as they could. Pupils say that bullying is a rare occurrence and staff quickly intervene to help stop any that occurs. Most pupils say they are happy at school and this is reflected in their satisfactory attendance. Pupils have

learned well how to be safe and have a strong awareness of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle, appreciating the need for regular exercise, and eating a healthy diet. They learn about other cultures through the curriculum but their involvement in the wider community is not fully developed. Pupils are supportive of the way the school is evolving and play an active role in improving the school community, as school councillors, monitors, sports captains, members of the Eco-council and playground buddies, so that it can become a happy place for everyone. Based on their satisfactory achievement and improving social skills, pupils are soundly prepared for the next stage of their lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching, while typically satisfactory, is generally stronger in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2, where staff skilfully teach well planned lessons in fun and engaging ways. Teachers develop positive relationships with pupils and generally plan work which takes account of pupils' needs and interests. In the older age groups, activities are often planned with insufficient creativity or innovation to capture pupils' natural enthusiasms. Some activities are too predictable or fail to stretch pupils' skills, particularly in mathematics or in creative writing. This causes some to occasionally 'switch off' and become restless. Teaching assistants support pupils well, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Teachers' marking varies too much in quality between year groups. Where it is most successful, it provides good action points to show pupils how to improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school is developing its creative curriculum appropriately to provide effective links between different subjects. The focus on developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills through topics is beginning to have an impact, particularly in Years 1 and 2, where pupils make good progress in English and mathematics. The purchase of a new mathematics scheme has done much to structure what is taught throughout the school. Nonetheless, there is still too little, particularly in Years 3 to 6, that is consistently creative or engaging for pupils. Daily plans are tailored well for the diverse needs of pupils but in practice many older pupils say they find the curriculum uninteresting and that it does little to motivate, interest or help to improve their basic skills. Information and communication technology and interactive whiteboards are used well in some activities. The curriculum is enhanced effectively by good facilities and a wide range of extra-curricular activities. Pupils talk enthusiastically about opportunities to learn French, feed the school's chickens, or use the school's pond and wildlife area. The contribution made by visitors, visits and school events all help to broaden pupils' horizons. The promotion of personal, social and health education is satisfactory and the support for pupils with learning difficulties and those with a statement of special educational needs is good and helps pupils make satisfactory progress.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

There are robust systems in place to ensure that pupils are effectively safeguarded. Teaching and support staff all provide good pastoral care and support to pupils. Effective links have been

established with outside agencies to support vulnerable pupils. There is a good range of systems in place to ensure that pupils know where they can find adults who will sit and listen to their problems or will help them manage their behaviour. However, academic guidance is not as well developed and is satisfactory. Marking and feedback is inconsistent and does not always give sufficient information to the pupils, particularly older ones, about the next steps to improve their work. Although curriculum targets are used well by teachers to help plan strategies to improve pupils' attainment, they are not always effectively shared with the pupils. Consequently, pupils are not always clear about how to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Clear and decisive leadership from the headteacher, well supported by the deputy headteacher and governors, is the driving force behind this new and improving school. The amalgamation has been tackled with determination and the school's accurate self-evaluation identifies what still needs to be done. The governing body is developing well and is playing an increasingly strategic role in the development of the school. In a relatively short space of time, senior staff have developed a clear vision for the school, which is focused on high expectations and raising standards. The school has made good use of pupils' assessment information to set appropriately challenging whole-school targets. However, this has not improved the quality or consistency of good teaching, marking and feedback to ensure the highest levels of challenge, particularly for older pupils, so that standards in Year 6 improve. The role of subject and learning leaders as well as other middle managers is developing and, although it is having some impact on improving provision for younger pupils, it is not fully effective throughout the whole school. The school has developed satisfactory provision within its community cohesion policy. However, the school acknowledges the need to provide further opportunities for pupils to develop a wider understanding of the world.

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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?	3
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?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
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?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
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?	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	3
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

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?	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

13 July 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Buckingham Park School, Shoreham-on-Sea BN43 5UD

- Thank you very much for making us feel welcome when we visited your school recently. It was good to see you hard at work and to talk to you. Your school is providing you with a satisfactory education. That means that everything is in place but there are some things it needs to do to help you learn better. Your teachers and the people in charge help you to make satisfactory progress. This is what you told us and what we thought about your school.
- You say your teachers look after you well and you feel safe. We found that this is right.
- You say that you enjoy using computers, feeding the school chickens, gardening, swimming, clubs and school trips.
- Your behaviour is improving and is now satisfactory.
- You have a good headteacher who has made many important improvements to help make the school better.
- This is what we have asked your school to do to make it even better.
- Help older pupils to improve their work and raise standards so that they all do as well as they can.
- Ensure that those who teach older pupils help them to enjoy their learning.
- Help pupils to understand what they need to do to improve their work.
- Make sure all teachers who are in charge of different subjects and year groups can lead and manage them well.

You can help by working hard and always trying your best.

Best wishes for the future

Yours faithfully

Wendy Forbes

Lead inspector