

Buckland Brewer Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	113141
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	378650
Inspection dates	8–9 February 2012
Lead inspector	Paul Sadler

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	36
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Philip Priest
Headteacher	Ruth Jones (Executive)
Date of previous school inspection	6 November 2008
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Introduction

Inspection team

Paul Sadler

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Over three hours was spent observing nine lessons taught by two teachers; meetings were held with staff, a group of pupils and the Chair of the Governing Body. The inspector took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at documentation including that relating to monitoring and evaluation, pupils' attainment and progress and to ensuring the safety of pupils. The responses to questionnaires completed by pupils, staff and by 27 parents and carers were analysed.

Information about the school

The school is of much smaller than average size and serves a village and surrounding rural area. There are two classes, in one of which children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught with pupils in Years 1 and 2. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is average, their needs relate mainly to moderate learning difficulties and to disorders on the autistic spectrum. All pupils are of White British ethnicity; the proportion known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. Government floor standards were met in 2011.

In January 2011, the school joined with another small local school to form the 'Flying Start Federation'. The federation operates under the leadership of a single governing body and an executive headteacher who leads both schools. Subject leaders operate across both schools also and opportunities for professional development are made available to all staff across the federation.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	1
Leadership and management	1

Key findings

- This is a good school. All pupils make good progress and their attainment by the end of Year 6 is above average in English and mathematics.
- Achievement in reading of pupils in Years 1 and 2 is good, but those who find greater difficulty in learning to read are not always provided with sufficiently challenging texts.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress in almost all aspects of their learning, but their small number limits their opportunities for social development.
- All teaching is at least good. In Years 3 to 6, it is often outstanding and is sometimes inspirational.
- The matching of tasks to the wide range of ages and abilities in each class is a notable strength.
- Marking and continual feedback are used very well to enable pupils to improve their work.
- Behaviour is outstanding. Pupils say that there has been no bullying in the recent past and their parents and carers agree.
- The climate of lessons is one of excitement, collaboration and hard work, with limited intervention needed by adults.
- Pupils feel very safe at school and have an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves safe. Arrangements to keep pupils safe are effective and meet all requirements.
- Leadership and management are outstanding; leaders and managers have brought about major improvements since the establishment of the federation. These improvements, especially to teaching and pupils' achievement, are now secure and demonstrate the school's strong capacity for improvement.
- The executive headteacher, governing body and staff share an ambitious, yet realistic vision for the future of the school and federation.
- Parents and carers are universal in their praise and support for the school and recommend it to others strongly.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Extend opportunities for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage to learn with a wider range of children of similar age, in order to promote their social development.
- Ensure that reading material offered to and chosen by those making slower progress in learning to read is always suitably challenging.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Evidence from observations in the classroom, scrutiny of pupils' work, and the school's records shows that pupils' attainment is now above average, having been below average in 2010, and that all are making good progress. Pupils have excellent independent-learning skills, which are reflected in their good overall achievement. They apply their growing skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) readily in a wide range of situations. For example, Pupils in Years 1 and 2 were describing toys which their parents and carers had owned as children. One pupil, knowing the parent's or carer's current age and the age they were when given the toy, mentally calculated the age of the toy quickly and accurately.

Children are excited by learning their letters and sounds. A group of children in Reception and Year 1 worked on the 'zz' sound and could spell and write their words, finishing the task by drawing their 'fuzzy, buzzy bees'. However, when the inspector heard the reading of pupils in Year 2 who were learning at a slower pace, the books chosen did not always challenge them to tackle more difficult words. Nevertheless, most pupils in Year 2 and all currently in Year 6 have already attained standards in reading that are at or above those expected nationally for their age. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress, especially with their communication, language and literacy and in their mathematical development, but the very small number of children limits opportunities to develop social skills by learning and playing with others of similar age. With these minor exceptions, all groups of pupils achieve equally well, partly because their progress is monitored carefully by senior leaders. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, including those with moderate learning difficulties and autistic spectrum disorders, flourish as a result of individual attention and do as well as their peers.

In Years 3 to 6, the teacher has created a climate for learning where pupils are treated as sensible young people, rather than as children. All pupils, some of whom are as young as seven, respond positively to this approach. As a result, pupils feel

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able to share personal thoughts and feelings, knowing they will not be criticised or made fun of. A good example was seen when a Year 6 pupil explained to the rest of the class how the work of the author Jacqueline Wilson had inspired her to become a reader and writer. Her classmates responded with enthusiasm, making perceptive comments and asking probing questions. Much of the work seen in this class was of high quality. For example, work around the theme of the Ancient Greeks included sensitive writing of prose and related to myths and legends and convincing Ancient Greek temples built as part of a design and technology project. Parents and carers believe correctly that their children are achieving well.

Quality of teaching

The teaching observed was never less than good and, in some cases, it was outstanding. The impact of teaching over time is shown in pupils' attainment, which has risen significantly in two years. Teachers know their pupils' strengths and weaknesses extremely well and use this knowledge to plan work that meets the pupils' needs. Marking is very effective and forms part of a continuous dialogue between teacher and pupil, including during classroom work. Expectations of behaviour are so high that behaviour management does not need to be a feature of lessons. Teachers have very good subject knowledge, not only in subjects such as English and mathematics, but also in others such as music, physical education, history and ICT, which enrich the curriculum. Activities take place at a good pace and teachers remind pupils frequently of how long they have left for the task. Strategies such as the use of 'mini-plenaries' refocus pupils and ensure they stick to the task in hand.

Teachers encourage pupils to work at higher levels than those they are currently attaining. In the Years 3 to 6 class, a pupil was excited to be a 'visitor' to a different group and saw the challenge of the work he would need to tackle if he was to become a more permanent member of that group. Teaching assistants give good support to disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs and to children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, but, on occasion, they intervene too readily, which reduces the opportunities for pupils to work independently and find their own success. Senior leaders are aware of this and are working to change previous less-effective practice. Teaching encourages pupils to discuss and develop their own opinions, which contributes well to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

The quality of the teaching can be summarised by this comment by a Year 5 pupil new to the school: 'In my last school I was taught in Welsh. I was worried about having to learn in English but teachers here helped me so quickly I had no need to be worried.' Parents, carers and the pupils themselves, correctly, believe the teaching to be good.

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Behaviour and safety of pupils

The inspector spent two very cold days in the school and the only occasion observed of an adult actively managing pupils' behaviour was when a playground supervisor asked a group of pupils not to play with some ice. They were asked if they understood the dangers of playing with ice; they responded politely and correctly, apologised and moved away from the area without fuss. This incident sums up the outstanding behaviour seen at all times, both in and out of the classroom. In lessons, the question of inappropriate or challenging behaviour simply does not arise as pupils are too motivated by the work. However, they are not passive learners; at appropriate times, classrooms are alive with animated conversation and discussion of the work. Pupils say that, although some bullying occurred in the past, there is currently none. Their parents and carers agree. In fact, some did not reply to the question about how the school responds to bullying, commenting that they had no experience on which to base an answer.

Nevertheless, pupils show an excellent understanding of different types of bullying and its dangers. They are clearly aware of issues concerning safe use of the internet and are keen to take up the opportunities the school offers for them to learn about personal safety, for example when cycling, doing watersports, or when using or living around farm equipment. Pupils feel extremely safe and make an exceptional contribution to a safe, positive learning environment.

In response to the inspector's questionnaire, all pupils said they were happy to come to school all or most of the time. This is reflected in their above-average attendance and lack of unauthorised absence. Pupils are also very punctual, both when arriving at school and when returning to lessons at the end of a break.

Leadership and management

Following a decline in the school's performance in 2010, the federation was established. Following the appointment of the executive headteacher, there was an uncompromising and highly successful drive to improve achievement, most importantly through significant improvements in teaching. Regular monitoring by senior leaders and local authority staff ensured the achievement of all pupils, including of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, improved markedly. The enhanced pool of expertise available within the federation and the local authority has been used very effectively by senior leaders to extend and refresh the skills of staff through professional development and support. The able governing body provides strong challenge and effective support for the improvement process, which is seen as having benefited both schools and as bringing the two village communities together.

Federation has also enabled the school to offer a good and rapidly improving curriculum, with a wide range of additional activities, including sport and residential experience, which also promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural

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development well. Senior leaders, rightly, plan to extend these opportunities further, for example through joint work in creative subjects and by increasing opportunities for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage to learn with a wider group of their peers. Leaders and managers show a high level of effectiveness in promoting equality and tackling discrimination, as shown by the similarly good progress of all pupils and the lack of bullying and poor behaviour. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils are secure and meet all requirements, for example, all staff have received recent training in procedures for child protection.

The inspector's questionnaire was returned by three-quarters of parents and carers, a high rate of response. Parents and carers were unanimous in their support for the changes made by current leaders and managers and expressed a very high level of confidence in the school's work, which inspection findings support. These factors, together with the positive impact of the improvements made on pupils' achievement, demonstrate the school's capacity for improvement.

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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



10 February 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Buckland Brewer Community Primary School, Bideford EX39 5LX

Thank you for making me so welcome when I visited your school recently. I enjoyed talking with you especially, seeing your work and hearing your views.

Yours is a good school. The most important things about it are:

- You make good progress and, when you leave at the end of Year 6, your attainment in English and mathematics is above average.
- Teaching is good because teachers give you work that is right for your age. The way your work is marked helps you to improve it.
- Your behaviour is outstanding and you and your parents and carers told me there was no bullying. The school makes sure that you are safe also.
- You are given interesting work. I was especially impressed with Class 1's work on their parents' and carers' toys and with Class 2's work on Ancient Greece.
- The headteacher and the governing body know the school's strengths and weaknesses and have improved many things about the school. You are all now making better progress than before and are using your skills well to learn even more.

To make sure the school gets even better, I have asked the staff to:

- give the Reception-Year children more opportunities to learn with children of their own age, perhaps at your partner school in the Flying Start Federation
- make sure that those of you who find learning to read a bit difficult are given books that help you to learn new words.

You can help by choosing more challenging books, or telling your teacher if the book is too easy.

Yours sincerely

Paul Sadler
Lead inspector

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