

# The Bellbird Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	135132
<b>Local authority</b>	Cambridgeshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	381812
<b>Inspection dates</b>	1–2 March 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Marion Wallace

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	259
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Caroline Rapson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Linda Corral
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	30 April 2009
<b>School address</b>	Link Road Cambridge CB22 3GB
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<b>Fax number</b>	01223 839614
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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
<b>Inspection date(s)</b>	1–2 March 2012
<b>Inspection number</b>	381812



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## Introduction

Inspection team

Marion Wallace

Additional inspector

Sherry Gladwin

Additional inspector

Ron Elam

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed 10 teachers in 23 lessons and held meetings with parents and carers, groups of pupils, members of the governing body and staff. They took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at improvement plans for the school and for subjects, the governing body minutes, assessment information and curriculum planning. In addition, they carried out a scrutiny of pupils' work, listened to readers and analysed 125 questionnaires received from parents and carers.

## Information about the school

The Bellbird is an average-sized primary school. The percentage of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above average and a small minority are in the early stages of learning English. The percentage of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is average, but the percentage with a statement of special educational needs is below average, as is the proportion known to be eligible for free school meals. There is mixed-age teaching in four classes. The Early Years Foundation Stage provision is in a Reception class and a mixed Reception and Year 1 class. The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.

The breakfast and after-school club on the school site is managed by the school's governing body and was included in the inspection. The children's centre and pre-school provision are not managed by the governing body, and are inspected separately. The school was formed in 2007 after two local schools amalgamated. The school had been operating from two sites and for one term on three sites until the current school building was completed in April 2010.

**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

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>3</b>

## Key findings

- This is a satisfactory school. Parents and carers appreciate its very caring and inclusive ethos. It cannot be judged good because the use of assessment procedures, tracking and the setting of challenging targets to accelerate progress are not yet sharp enough to ensure that teaching is good and that pupils make good progress, especially in writing.
- Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Children make a good start to their education in the Early Years Foundation Stage, and older pupils make satisfactory progress in Key Stages 1 and 2. Their attainment is broadly average in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6, although they do better in reading and mathematics than in writing, especially at the higher levels.
- Teaching is satisfactory. There are some good or better examples, but sometimes teachers' expectations are too low and they occasionally miss opportunities to ensure pupils fully extend their work, especially the more-able pupils in writing tasks. The quality of marking and target setting does not always help pupils to improve their work.
- Behaviour around the school and in lessons is good. Pupils make good gains in their personal development and consequently feel very safe in school. The school works well with a wide range of external partners to support pupils with special educational needs and those whose circumstances may make them vulnerable, and consequently they gain confidence and are enthusiastic learners who have a mature attitude to their work.
- Leadership and management, including the leadership of teaching and management of performance, are satisfactory. Senior leaders have a clear vision for developing the school. Middle leaders are developing their role, but are not always monitoring teaching sufficiently to raise standards in all subjects, and especially English. The curriculum provides memorable experiences and pupils particularly enjoy mathematics and art.

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- Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

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

- Raise the quality of teaching so it is consistently good or better by ensuring that:
  - teachers use assessment rigorously to plan lesson activities that challenge all groups, but especially the most able pupils
  - marking is consistently good or better so that pupils are clear about how to improve their work.
- Help more pupils to reach the higher National Curriculum levels, especially in writing, by making sure that:
  - key skills are taught consistently well
  - targets are updated regularly
  - teachers plan writing tasks more rigorously and seize every opportunity to extend pupils' writing skills.
- Increase the impact of school monitoring and evaluation, particularly in English, by ensuring that middle leaders evaluate initiatives more rigorously and act swiftly to remedy weaknesses.

## Main report

### Achievement of pupils

Most children join the Reception class with skills and experiences below those expected for their age, a few speaking little or no English. Children make good or better progress in the Reception classes in all areas of learning. In their garage role-play area the youngest children made excellent progress in developing their early writing skills. They diagnosed that the damaged car needed new wheels and wipers, and identified the tools needed to complete the job, recording their observations confidently.

Older pupils' satisfactory progress means that they reach broadly average standards by the end of Year 6, with higher attainment in mathematics than in English. Pupils have a good work ethic and they enjoy learning because teachers plan interesting tasks, but sometimes miss opportunities to fully extend groups, especially more-able pupils in writing. Appropriate focused support ensures that disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and those who join partway through their primary school education all make satisfactory progress, as do pupils who speak English as an additional language. The gap between the performance of pupils eligible for free

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school meals and others is closing.

Pupils' achievement in reading is satisfactory and attainment is average at the end of Year 2 and when pupils leave the school, although not enough more-able pupils reach the higher levels. Older more-able pupils talk positively about reading but most feel that there is a limited range of books available for them in school. The teaching of phonics (linking letters with the sounds they make) is good. Pupils enjoy reading and in Year 2 they know how to tackle difficult words. Pupils take a pride in their work, which is neatly presented, but handwriting skills and the quality of work seen are variable. Year 6 pupils used lively descriptions in their poems about the allotment. One wrote, 'The early morning mist hangs over the sky like a blanket. As the trees danced gracefully, the pumpkins gleamed with pride and the wind was left whispering its secrets.'

The school's tracking data and the inspection evidence indicate that all pupils are making satisfactory or better progress towards their targets for literacy and numeracy. Older pupils know them well but in some classes targets are not updated once they have been reached. Most parents and carers feel their children are making good progress. Inspectors agree that progress is improving, but has not yet been consistently good over time.

### **Quality of teaching**

The vast majority of parents and carers feel that teaching is good, and so do the pupils. There is an increasing amount of good teaching, particularly in reading and mathematics, but teachers' expectations are not consistently high enough to ensure good learning. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught well with plentiful opportunities provided for them to learn through activities led by adults and those they choose for themselves. In Key Stages 1 and 2, relationships are good, teachers explain tasks clearly and are well organised, but sometimes the pace of learning slips because expectations of the quality of work to be produced are not consistently maintained, especially in writing. In a Year 6 lesson pupils were challenged effectively to write about positive and negative points involved in the possible independence of the Scottish people and the government's treatment of them over time. More-able pupils showed good levels of maturity in their written responses. In some other classes, however, more-able pupils' work was constrained by having to respond to a single-page, undemanding worksheet.

Teachers use assessment information adequately to plan interesting curriculum work. They use questions effectively to check pupils' knowledge and understanding, but miss opportunities to vary questions for different ability groups. Some good examples of marking were seen that informed pupils how to improve their work, but this was not consistent in all classes. Pupils with additional needs are well supported by teaching assistants in class, as are those learning English as an additional language. The impact of teaching on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. As a result, they enjoy their learning and have very good attitudes to school.

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## **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Behaviour is good throughout the school, in lessons and at break times because relationships are good. Children in both Reception classes learn to behave well in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Pupils and staff show good levels of respect for each other and for visitors to the school. Pupils are polite, for example asking visitors if they would like a drink of water at lunch time. Almost all parents and carers who replied to the inspection questionnaire or who talked to inspectors felt that their children are safe in school and most that behaviour is good. Pupils also said that behaviour was good, and that they felt very safe in school. Pupils know the difference between falling out and bullying, and they have confidence in the adults that any issues will be dealt with. Older pupils were aware of different types of bullying and dangers of drugs and alcohol. They talked knowledgeably about safe use of the internet. Pupils say they can discuss any problems they have with adults. They take responsibility seriously and older pupils look after younger pupils in assembly and break times.

Evidence confirms that behaviour and awareness of safety have been consistently good over time, reflecting a positive school ethos and well-planned procedures. Good behaviour and attitudes have a positive impact on learning. Attendance is above average and most pupils are punctual for the vast majority of the time. The provision in the breakfast and after-school clubs is appreciated by parents, carers and pupils, and is well organised.

## **Leadership and management**

Many parents and carers commented on the strength of the headteacher and senior leaders, who have a clear vision for the school that is rightly focused on improving achievement for all pupils. They are supported by all staff, who work effectively together. Their very good role modelling is a key reason why pupils' behaviour and personal development have been good or better over time. All senior leaders communicate drive and ambition. Equality of opportunity is pursued resolutely. In practice, most groups of pupils achieve at a similar level despite the occasional lack of challenge for more-able pupils. Discrimination in any form is not tolerated, and this contributes significantly to the harmonious community.

The school has satisfactory capacity for further improvement. The determination to improve is underpinned by effective systems for evaluating strengths and further areas for development. Since the last inspection the school has made good progress in ensuring that the governing body and key staff are involved in checking how well pupils are achieving, although the achievement of more-able pupils is still not good. Subject leaders have clear roles but their impact in improving the quality of provision has not yet led to consistently good achievement. Monitoring and evaluation of teaching, supported by professional development, have ensured that the majority of teaching is at least satisfactory but inconsistencies remain. There is a strong desire to overcome any difficulties and to provide extra support and intervention for pupils and families who may face significant difficulties and barriers to learning.

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Strong links with parents and carers ensure that they engage well with the school. This was evident in an assembly attended by over 50 parents, carers and grandparents. The governing body monitors and evaluates the work of the school effectively and is well organised. It knows the school well and holds it to account appropriately. Its members monitor the site and procedures rigorously. Child protection, risk assessment and safeguarding procedures meet current statutory requirements.

The curriculum is broad and balanced, meets the needs and aspirations of pupils appropriately despite the occasional lack of challenge for some groups, and provides them with enjoyable and memorable experiences. Parents, carers and pupils appreciate the good extra-curricular activities, the enrichment activities and the good opportunities for pupils to use most of their key skills across different subject areas such as history, art, literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology. Opportunities for pupils to sharpen their writing skills are limited.

The school promotes pupils' social, moral and spiritual development well. Pupils learn to respect other religions, and the whole school enjoyed singing a Muslim song from Pakistan about the creation of the world. Pupils talk respectfully about communities different from their own through curriculum links with India and Pakistan. Older pupils fulfil their responsibilities as monitors and buddies for the younger children very well. Pupils appreciate artists from countries such as Ethiopia and use the art work to inspire their own pictures of the Queen of Sheba.

## 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](http://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.**

5 March 2012

Dear Pupils



### **Inspection of The Bellbird Primary School, Cambridge CB22 3GB**

Thank you all very much for welcoming us to your school. We thoroughly enjoyed talking with you and your teachers, and reading the views of those who returned questionnaires. We will remember your polite, considerate and good behaviour. You and your parents and carers told us that most of you learn a lot at Bellbird Primary School. We agree that the school has many strengths, but it is satisfactory overall because teaching and your progress over time are satisfactory. These are the things we liked best.

- You get off to a good start in the Reception classes.
- You all enjoy learning and teachers give you interesting things to do, including out-of-school activities, trips, visitors and visits, that make learning fun.
- Your attendance is above average.
- Your behaviour is good, and you are sensible and know how to keep safe.
- Your school cares for you and your families very well, and teaches you a lot about how to care for others.
- There are good opportunities for you to take on responsibilities as monitors and buddies, help others and contribute to helping your school improve even more.
- Those of you who join the school late, or who speak very little or no English, settle in well and make the same progress as your peers.

The headteacher and all the staff know what needs improving and have started to make changes. We have identified three things that will help them.

- Ensure that teachers use assessment information to plan work that is closely matched to your ability, so that you are all appropriately challenged, especially those who find the work easy.
- Improve standards in writing throughout the school and give you more opportunities to write and enjoy your writing.
- Ensure that your leaders, particularly those with responsibility for subjects, check regularly how well you are doing.

Best wishes for the future. You can all help by continuing to work really hard.

Yours sincerely

Marion Wallace  
Lead inspector

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