

# Bushmead Primary School

Bushmead Road, Eaton Socon, St Neots, PE19 8BT

**Inspection dates** 5–6 February 2015

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Early years provision		Requires improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Pupils' standards in writing are not high enough in Key Stage 1 or in Key Stage 2. Pupils have too few opportunities to write at length.
- Too few pupils in Key Stage 1 attain the higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The quality of teaching is not consistently good so the progress of pupils varies from class to class.
- Teachers do not always set work at the right level of difficulty for different groups of pupils, particularly the most able.
- Despite recent improvements to the teaching of phonics, younger pupils do not have enough opportunity to apply their knowledge of letters and sounds to improve the quality of their writing.
- The roles of subject leaders and key stage leaders are variable and not clearly defined. As a result, their impact on improving achievement is mixed and not as strong as it needs to be.

### The school has the following strengths

- Leaders and governors have recently brought about improvements in attendance and behaviour. Actions to improve teaching and pupils' achievement are showing success, including the good progress that pupils in Key Stage 2 are now making in mathematics and reading.
- The standards achieved by Year 6 pupils rose considerably in reading and mathematics last year.
- Pupils behave well, enjoy school and feel safe. Parents agree that their children are happy and safe in school.
- The school provides well for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The quality of the curriculum encourages particularly high standards in physical education and encourages the healthy lifestyles of pupils.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 18 lessons and attended an assembly. Five lesson observations were conducted jointly with the acting headteacher.
- Inspectors visited break times and lunch times.
- The inspectors spoke to pupils about their views of the school, listened to pupils read and looked at the work in pupils' books.
- A discussion was held with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of documentation including: the school's own evaluation of its performance and its improvement plan; information about pupils' progress and additional support given to disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and those who are disadvantaged; records of leaders' monitoring of teaching; and those relating to safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors examined the different range of extra small groups that support pupils' progress.
- The inspectors took account of the 23 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and other parental views. The 27 responses to the staff questionnaire were also considered.

## Inspection team

Duncan Ramsey, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Alan Prince

Additional Inspector

Jacqueline Pentlow

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is an average-sized primary school.
- The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and who speak English as an additional language is average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is about average. This is extra funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those in the care of the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is higher than average.
- Provision for the early years is provided through two full time reception classes.
- There have been substantial changes to the school's staffing since the last inspection. The acting headteacher has been in place for one term. Three new staff started in September, two of whom are in their first year of teaching.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is at least consistently good by:
  - providing greater challenge in the activities planned for children in the Reception class
  - ensuring that teachers set work at the right level for all groups of pupils, especially the most able
  - providing more detailed feedback to pupils, particularly the most able, and ensuring that they follow the advice so that they progress more quickly
  - sharing more widely the examples of outstanding teaching that exist in the school.
- Increase the progress that pupils make in reading and mathematics in Key Stage 1 and in writing across the school by:
  - improving younger pupils' understanding of letters and sounds, including in Reception, and helping them to apply this knowledge in their writing
  - providing more opportunities for pupils of all ages to write at greater length in literacy lessons
  - providing more able pupils, particularly in Years 1 and 2, with more challenging work so they can reach the higher levels.
- Strengthen the impact of leaders and managers on pupils' achievement by ensuring that:
  - responsibilities and accountability are clarified between key stage and subject leaders so that effective action can be taken to improve attainment in Key Stage 1 and pupils' progress in writing across the school
  - action plans are developed that set measurable targets for improvement in the early years and Key Stage 1
  - leaders ensure that these targets are met through rigorous monitoring against realistic timescales.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management requires improvement

- The acting headteacher has introduced a range of initiatives that have improved attendance, behaviour and performance management systems, but over time, leaders have not ensured that the progress of pupils is good enough in writing across the whole school and in all subjects at Key Stage 1.
- The quality of subject and key stage leadership is mixed and requires improvement. The work of the leader of Key Stage 2, and of subject leaders for English and mathematics, has had a positive impact on pupils' achievement in reading and mathematics in Key Stage 2, so that pupils' now make good progress in these subjects in Years 3 to 6. Results in the 2014 National Curriculum tests for Year 6 rose markedly from significantly below average to broadly average.
- The leader for English is also the leader of Key Stage 1. Roles and responsibilities in this key stage have not been sufficiently clarified, with the result that action plans for raising pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics have not been required previously in these areas. This has slowed the improvement of pupils' achievement in Years 1 and 2, so that progress is no better than that expected. Pupils' writing across the school has been slow to improve because of the focus on other areas. The school is aware of this and steps are being taken to improve accountability, including the rigour with which leaders monitor the success of their actions.
- The leadership of the early years requires improvement. In common with Key Stage 1, this phase lacks rigorous planning for improvement. As a result, children's learning is not as effective as it could be because teachers have not been set sufficiently high expectations of what can be achieved.
- The new system of lesson observations introduced recently has allowed the acting headteacher to have a good understanding of the strengths and areas for development in teaching. He provides accurate and challenging feedback to staff and has linked the quality of teaching effectively to performance management so that the pay of staff is closely connected to the progress pupils make in class.
- The special educational needs coordinator provides a positive role model for teachers in supporting the progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. Guidance to teachers is good and liaison with outside agencies is effective in providing a wide range of specialist provision.
- Additional funding is used effectively to provide disadvantaged pupils with extra support for their learning so that they reach standards that are higher than the national average in reading and mathematics. There is no discrimination in school and leaders are working hard to ensure that opportunities are provided for all pupils equally.
- Leadership has had a significant impact on the standard of behaviour. A wide range of initiatives were introduced in September and this has resulted in much improved attendance and a significant reduction in exclusions. Parents, pupils, staff and governors all commented on the change in the school atmosphere. The school's 'family ethos' was praised.
- The primary school sports funding has been used effectively so that physical education is a strength of the school and the promotion of healthy lifestyles is excellent. Funding has been used to increase participation levels, introduce high quality coaching at lunchtime and expand the competitive sport programme. Winning the east of England small schools football championship and the success of the girls' cricket team are two examples of the high quality practice that exists.
- The curriculum is planned well around a 'topic' theme. This, combined with the wide range of extra-curricular activities and the excellent assembly programme, means that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is provided for effectively. Their understanding of life in modern Britain is promoted throughout the school. Pupils understand the role of democracy well and have developed a healthy respect for the law through effective teaching and a close relationship with the community police officer,

who visits regularly.

- The local authority has an accurate overview of the school's performance and has systems in place to provide additional support for improving standards in writing.

#### ■ The governance of the school:

- Governors are supportive and have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, including teaching. They hold the headteacher to account and have high expectations for how they want the school to improve. Governance is effective.
- There is considerable expertise on the governing body with a wide range of skills relevant to running a school. Governors have an understanding of how to use data to compare the school's performance with that of others. The governors carry out a self-evaluation audit each year which they use to help improve their performance.
- Governors visit school regularly to work with the headteacher and meet with parents and pupils. They make a lot of effort to be available to parents through attendance at parents' evenings and coffee mornings.
- Governors understand how the pupil premium funding is spent and monitor its impact effectively. The school's budget is managed well.
- Governors understand the importance of linking staff pay to the progress of pupils and, in partnership with the headteacher, have made significant improvements in this area since September. They ensure safeguarding meets statutory requirements.

### The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

#### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They enjoy school and take a keen interest in learning. They behave well in a wide range of learning situations such as when working independently, in small groups or listening to the teacher.
- The school has implemented several new initiatives to encourage better punctuality and attendance and these have been successful. Attendance has improved significantly so that it is now better than average. The number of pupils who are persistently absent has been reduced by a highly-effective family-support worker.
- Relationships in school are excellent. The school has a family feel. One parent commented on how well her child had settled into school because of the caring teachers and friendly pupils. Around school, pupils are calm. The small number of pupils who have challenging behaviour are well managed and dealt with consistently.
- Pupils' behaviour at lunchtime is good on the playground and in the dining hall. Older pupils show considerable enthusiasm for looking after the younger ones, for example, when helping the Reception children at lunchtime or in assembly time.

#### Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe in school, at home and in the community. Within school, they show consideration for each other and try hard to solve any arguments quickly and fairly.
- Pupils say that there is little or no bullying and that teachers deal with any concerns quickly. Investigation of the school's records for bullying show that the number of incidents of concern have been significantly reduced.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe when using the internet and mobile phones. They are taught in lessons and during assembly time and there are regular reminders around school in the form of displays.

- Almost all parents agree that their children are happy at school, feel safe and are well looked after. These positive views reflect the findings of the inspection. Staff too feel that behaviour is good.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Teaching is not consistently good over time. In the Reception class, children are not always given sufficiently challenging activities. Pupils' progress in writing throughout the school is not as fast as it could be. Expectations of what younger pupils can achieve are not always high enough in this subject. Older pupils have too few opportunities to write at length in other subjects.
- Aspects of the teaching of phonics require improvement. Recent training has had some favourable impact, but teachers do not always provide younger pupils with enough practice at saying the sounds or proceed at a fast enough pace. Teachers do not always take the opportunities available for pupils to use the phonics skills learnt in class to ensure high quality writing.
- The tasks set for the most able pupils, particularly in Years 1 and 2, do not always ensure that pupils have to think hard and work to the best of their abilities. On occasions, the most able pupils are expected to do work that is too easy. These pupils are very keen to work but when they finish tasks, they are expected to sit and read rather than being given more stretching work. In Key Stage 1, this applies to reading, writing and mathematics and means that not enough pupils reach the higher levels that can be achieved at this age.
- Discussions with several groups of pupils and individuals in class show that they do not always know what their long term targets for improvement are. A new system for marking has been introduced which has improved the quality of feedback but not all teachers are ensuring that pupils read what is written by the teacher and respond accordingly.
- Disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and disadvantaged pupils have better support from teachers and teaching assistants. Teaching assistants are given good guidance on how to help these pupils make progress in all activities, and the wide range of support programmes for academic and social development have a significant impact.
- The teaching of mathematics is good in Key Stage 2 and there are examples of high quality learning. For example, in one effective lesson, older pupils were working on placing fractions on a number line from smallest to largest. The teacher planned the lesson so that all pupils were challenged at the right level and made rapid progress. The good input from the teaching assistant supported the progress of less able pupils well and when the more able completed their task the teacher quickly stepped in with a more challenging activity. The school does not sufficiently share its examples of best practice.
- Reading is taught well in Key Stage 2 and pupils make better progress in this subject than in any other. Pupils enjoy reading and talk confidently about their books. There are excellent links with parents through the home/school communication booklet. The school has invested in a wide range of new books and interviews with pupils showed that they like to pick challenging books. Teachers promote reading well and provide a wide range of opportunities for individual, group and class reading during the school week.

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because the progress pupils make is variable. Pupils achieve better in reading and mathematics in Key Stage 2 than in Key Stage 1 but their progress in writing is slow throughout the school and has been for several years. In Key Stage 1, pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is consistently below the national average because not enough pupils reach the higher levels.
- In 2014, there was a marked improvement in the attainment of pupils in Year 6 so that standards rose from being below average overall in 2013 to broadly average overall in 2014. Standards were lower in writing than in reading and mathematics.

- While a high proportion of pupils reach the expected level in Year 2, the most able do not always have work to challenge them sufficiently in order to move them on quickly. This is true for reading, writing and mathematics. In Key Stage 2 the more able pupils make progress that is expected for reading and mathematics, but they make slower progress in writing.
- The progress of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and of those who speak English as an additional language is similar to that of other groups of pupils in school.
- The number of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is large. By the end of Year 6, they have made expected and sometimes better than expected progress given their different starting points.
- The relatively high number of disadvantaged pupils attain well in reading and mathematics so that by the end of Year 6 in 2014, they were over a term ahead of the national average for other pupils and roughly a term ahead of their classmates. In writing, they performed less well. In 2014, they were two and a half terms behind the national average for other pupils and just over a term behind their classmates.
- In the past, the proportion of Year 1 pupils achieving the expected standard in the national phonics check has been considerably below average. Standards are on track to be higher in this year's phonics check because of improved teaching. However, pupils do not have enough opportunities to practise their skills and this slows pupils' progress in reading, particularly that of the most able.

### The early years provision

### requires improvement

- Children start in the early years with levels of knowledge, understanding and skills that are broadly typical for their age. This has risen since the last inspection. This year, they were stronger in mathematics and writing but weaker in speaking and listening. By the end of the Reception Year, attainment is similar to the national picture. Children are suitably prepared for their start in Year 1.
- Children's achievement requires improvement because teachers do not always make sure that the learning activities are sufficiently challenging so that all pupils make good progress, particularly the most able.
- The teaching of early literacy skills and, in particular phonics, is improving, but on occasion the teaching lacks pace in this area and not enough is expected of what all children can achieve.
- There are positive relationships in the Reception class. Teachers and other adults demonstrate their care and concern for children and create a loving environment. Children enjoy their work and are keen and enthusiastic to do well.
- Behaviour is good. Children listen attentively to the teacher when she is talking, take turns using equipment and play carefully on the outdoor equipment. As a result, they feel safe in school.
- Leadership and management require improvement. Leaders have not set high enough expectations of what can be achieved and there are no written action plans for how standards will be raised. Learning journals do not contain evidence to support the assessments that have been made.

## What inspection judgements mean

School	Grade	Judgement	Description
	Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
	Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	132031
<b>Local authority</b>	Cambridgeshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	456058

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

<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>	257
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Maureen Plowman
<b>Acting Headteacher</b>	Mark Leonard
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	3 July 2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	01480 375375
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