

Bushmead Primary School

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

Inspection dates

21–23 September 2016

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Require improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Although improving, teaching and learning are not yet consistently good in key stages 1 and 2.
- Some teachers do not use information about pupils' learning well enough to plan work that meets the different needs and abilities of pupils. Work set for the most able pupils, including those who are also disadvantaged, is not sufficiently challenging.
- The progress of different groups of pupils is uneven across classes and year groups and in different subjects.
- Not enough pupils reach national expectations in reading, writing and mathematics by the time they transfer to secondary school at the end of Year 6.
- Few pupils exceed standards expected for their age nationally by the end of Year 2 or Year 6.
- Provision for disadvantaged pupils, including extra targeted support, has not been effective in raising their achievement.

The school has the following strengths

- The new headteacher provides strong, visionary leadership. The leadership team and governors are clearly focused on improving teaching to raise standards.
- Leaders and governors have successfully addressed most of the areas for improvement identified in the previous inspection, within 18 months. This demonstrates their proven capacity to make improvements.
- Staff and parents agree that the school is well led and that pupils are happy and safe.
- Pupils' good personal development, behaviour and welfare have been sustained since the previous inspection.
- Good teaching and learning in the early years enable the majority of children to make good progress from their starting points.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good in most subjects and year groups in key stages 1 and 2.
- Raise attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6, by ensuring that pupils make sufficient progress in every year across key stage 2.
- Ensure that learning for the most able pupils, including those who are also disadvantaged, is challenging enough to enable them to reach their full potential.
- Improve provision for disadvantaged pupils so that it diminishes any differences between their achievement and that of non-disadvantaged pupils nationally, by the end of each key stage.
- An external review of the school's use of pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Rigorous reviews of the school's work undertaken by senior leaders and governors have identified that not all pupils are doing equally well, especially disadvantaged pupils. Leaders and governors have made the right choices for priorities in the school's plans for improvement in response to the evidence that they have gathered about the school's work. The progress of disadvantaged pupils and the most able pupils feature as priorities in the current school improvement plan.
- Leaders and governors readily draw upon professional expertise from beyond the school, for example to improve outcomes in writing and the early years. The local authority has also checked the accuracy of assessment of pupils' attainment in the early years, Year 2 and Year 6, and judges it to be accurate.
- Not enough time has passed for all teachers to absorb and perfect some of the new recently introduced approaches in teaching and assessment. As a result, the progress that pupils make across subjects, year groups and classes is uneven – good in some but requiring improvement in others.
- Some of last year's additional provision for disadvantaged pupils has ceased because leaders and governors agreed that it did not achieve its intended impact in helping them to catch up. New approaches, such as the nomination of a teacher champion to keep a close eye on every disadvantaged pupil's progress, have been introduced this term. It is too soon for the school to be sure that this is making a difference.
- Sport premium funding is used effectively to increase pupils' participation in and enjoyment of a wider range of sports and clubs, such as multi-skills. The additional funding provides more opportunities for them to attend competitive inter-school sporting events. Specialist coaches provide suitable training and development for staff to develop their skills in teaching the physical education curriculum. This ensures that good-quality provision can be sustained.
- The headteacher, senior leaders and governors are ambitious for teaching and outcomes for pupils to be good or better. Expectations for teachers', support assistants' and pupils' performance have been raised. This has re-energised and motivated staff. They are all on board to embrace new ways of working and improve their skills so that pupils make better progress in most subjects.
- Staff hold very positive views about the school, as do parents. Results seen in the online questionnaires completed during the inspection show high levels of satisfaction and confidence in the school's leadership.
- Senior leaders are effective teachers who lead by example and are well equipped to coach, mentor and guide others. Sharing examples of outstanding teaching was an area for improvement in the previous inspection and this has been addressed successfully. This has been pivotal, for example, in contributing to the rise in the proportion of children in the early years reaching a good level of development. Outcomes for children in the early years have risen from below to above the national average over three years.
- The headteacher ensures that all staff receive good-quality training and that he appraises their performance against clear targets, linked to the school's priorities for improvement, formally and at regular intervals. He is particularly skilful in supporting

leaders in developing their leadership skills. This has built capacity across the leadership team to sustain improvement by spreading the workload. Teachers who are new to the school praise the helpful induction, training, support and guidance that they receive.

- Crucially, secure foundations on which to build improvement have been laid. These include a revised behaviour policy that staff implement consistently and most pupils adhere to, as well as increased vigilance over pupils' attendance. An agreed system for carefully checking pupils' progress has been introduced and implemented. All senior leaders and governors monitor the effectiveness of teaching and learning to identify strengths and weaknesses.
- Improvements in pupils' behaviour and attendance are markedly improved from a year ago. These areas have been prioritised, as the headteacher is acutely aware that pupils will not achieve well if they misbehave or miss school unnecessarily. The school is relentless in following up pupils' absence, and persistent absence is consequently diminishing.
- The new curriculum is implemented fully. It is broad, balanced and enriched with extra-curricular activities, special events, trips and visiting speakers. English and mathematics are, rightly, priorities on the timetable but not at the expense of other subjects. The curriculum promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well through the school's strong values that are woven through topics and subjects. Pupils themselves commented that they do lots of interesting topics and enjoy finding out things that they did not know about before.
- Subject leadership is improving because roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and leaders know what is expected of them. They have identified where new learning is required that was not previously included in the national curriculum. Where there are gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding additional teaching is arranged to fill them.
- The coordinator for special educational needs keeps a close eye on the provision made for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, and most make at least expected progress. She works closely with coordinators in the local secondary schools to ensure pupils' smooth transition on transfer at the end of Year 6.

Governance of the school

- Governance is effective.
- Governors know the school well and regularly visit to see the school's work at first hand. This means that they are able to form an independent view of what is working well and what needs to be improved further.
- All decisions taken about spending are firmly based on improving outcomes for pupils. Governors do not hesitate to reconsider funding for resources, including staff and pupil premium funding allocations, if there is no evidence that they provide value for money in raising pupils' achievement.
- Governors use the school's information about pupils' achievement successfully to gain an independent view of how well pupils are learning. However, they are not as familiar with interpreting the national data that is available to them.
- In minutes of meetings of the governing body it is clear that the headteacher is held to account, because governors question the information that they are given. Governors have become increasingly confident in challenging school leaders as well as supporting them.

- Governors ensure that their statutory duties are fulfilled and that the headteacher's performance is appraised annually.

Safeguarding

- The school's arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The headteacher and governors ensure that safeguarding is a priority and that everyone plays their part in keeping children safe. Guidance for staff written in the school's policies for behaviour, e-safety and safeguarding is explicit and useful in ensuring consistency in approaches. Staff are confident in raising any concerns with the designated lead for safeguarding and effective systems are in place for recording and noting them carefully. Teaching and non-teaching staff are trained regularly in safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty. This equips them with the up-to-date knowledge they need to detect pupils who are potentially vulnerable so that action to intervene can be taken quickly. Most parents view staff, and especially the headteacher, as very approachable and accessible. This gives parents the confidence to share information with the school or to raise concerns. Leaders ensure that action is taken swiftly to address any issues that arise and seek early help to support vulnerable families. Documentation is detailed and well organised, enabling referrals to external agencies to be made quickly and confidently. Statutory checks made on all staff, governors, regular volunteers and contractors are thorough to ensure their suitability to work with children. Safeguarding in the early years is effective.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching varies in quality across the school in different age groups, classes and subjects. There is no clear-cut pattern but overall it is not consistently good. Work seen in pupils' English, mathematics and topic books, the school's information about pupils' progress and attainment and the school's records of teaching and learning confirmed this.
- Staff use the school's chosen approach to assessment confidently to establish what pupils understand, know and can do. However, the way that this information is used to plan future learning on a daily basis is more variable.
- The level of challenge for the most able pupils is often underestimated. For example, mathematics work undertaken by pupils new to Year 1 is at the right level of difficulty for most pupils but is not stretching able pupils who reached a good level of development by the end of Reception. Similarly, the books chosen for pupils to read in Years 5 and 6 are too easy to enable them to meet the higher expectations for reading in the new national curriculum.
- In the previous inspection, the teaching of phonics required improvement. It is now taught well and pupils use their knowledge proficiently to break words down into shorter sounds to read them and to blend sounds together to help them with spelling. As a result, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard for phonics in Year 1 in 2016 was above the national average for the first time in three years.
- Some effective teaching in Year 1 ensures that transition from the early years curriculum to the national curriculum is smooth. The key stage 1 leader ensures that pupils learn by accessing similar activities that they were familiar with in Reception, while sensibly introducing more formal approaches throughout the day.

- Teaching in the early years is consistently good. Adults interact well with the children to move their learning forward. They know when to intervene and show children how to do new things and when to step back and let them find things out for themselves. Their use of questioning is particularly skilful in encouraging children to think more deeply while they play.
- Support staff are rapidly developing their skills and competency in teaching small groups and individual pupils. This is because they have received good-quality training and guidance from leaders, including the coordinator for special educational needs. Their individual strengths and skills are matched closely to pupils' needs. This is speeding up the progress that pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are making.
- All classrooms are well-organised, inviting places for learning. Good-quality resources are readily available for pupils to use. Information and prompts are on display for pupils to refer to, and pupils use them readily to support their learning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils enjoy school and show that they are eager to learn by arriving punctually each morning. They know what they need to do to learn well. Their attitudes to learning are positive, except when the teaching does not meet their needs well enough to sustain their interest and enthusiasm.
- Pupils use equipment safely in class and when they are outside playing at breaktimes.
- Pupils confirmed that they feel safe, bullying is rare and they know who to turn to in school if they feel worried about something. Minor falling out among friends is quickly resolved.
- Pupils have good knowledge and understanding of e-safety. They know 'never to give personal information to anyone on the internet', and that 'people on the internet can be anyone and sometimes they pretend to be children when they are not'.
- Older pupils are trained as peer mentors to help and support the younger pupils when they move into Year 3 from key stage 1. This helps younger pupils to feel safe and comfortable in the bigger playground, for example.
- Pupils new to the school are welcomed by existing pupils so they make new friends quickly.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well through teaching and the broad, balanced and enriched curriculum. Pupils learn to 'treat others as you would like to be treated'. They are given time for reflection and prayer during the day and are mindful of those less fortunate than themselves. They fund-raise for charities such as cancer research.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Attendance is improving strongly. Previously below the national average, it has improved steadily and thus far in the new term it is above average. Persistent absence is diminishing steadily with support from the family worker.

- Children in Reception quickly learn the school's strong values that promote their good behaviour. The planned activities in Reception both indoors and outside enable children to work both together and individually.
- Pupils know the rules and usually stick to them. The school rarely uses fixed-term exclusions because pupils know that good behaviour will be acknowledged and that sanctions follow for poor behaviour.
- Behaviour out in the playgrounds is harmonious. Pupils mix well and enjoy playing together. The school's good provision for outdoor play promotes pupils' good behaviour at breaktimes. Pupils enjoy a wide range of activities that are well matched to their ages in the key stage 1 and key stage 2 playgrounds.
- The majority of pupils' responses to the pupil questionnaire are positive about behaviour. Parents also registered no concerns about pupils' behaviour in Parent View.
- Pupils move around the building sensibly and suitably during the school day. They have good manners and are respectful towards adults.
- Pupils listen well and usually respond to adults' instructions without hesitation.

Outcomes for pupils

Require improvement

- The attainment of pupils in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6 has not been good enough to prepare them well for their transfer to secondary school. This is because, historically, pupils have not made enough progress from their starting points in Year 3. The school's most recent information about pupils' learning shows that most, but not all, groups of pupils in key stage 2 are now making expected progress. Pupils in the current Year 6 class are better placed to reach national expectations for reading, writing and mathematics by the end of this year.
- The attainment of disadvantaged pupils is not rising quickly enough in all year groups. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make at least expected progress through extra teaching from specialist teachers and higher expectations for progress set in their individual targets. Many parents gave praise to the school in Parent View for the good progress that their children are making in a range of subjects.
- The school was unable to provide assessment information about the achievement of the most able pupils and those who are most able and also disadvantaged. This group has not, until this school year, been a high enough priority in the school's plans for improvement. Very few of the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, have exceeded national expectations in the past. The work set for them has not been sufficiently demanding to enable them to reach their potential.
- Attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is rising rapidly in key stage 1 for most groups of pupils because they are making at least expected progress from their starting points on entry to Year 1. In particular, pupils are learning to read fluently at an early age because phonics is taught systematically and proficiently from Reception onwards. In key stage 2 pupils' fluency and comprehension in reading are improving rapidly through focused daily teaching of reading, writing and spelling skills. Pupils are enjoying reading because they have access to a wide range of literature and non-fiction in the new library, which is an attractive place for choosing, browsing and reading books.

- Children make good progress in the Reception classes. From starting points that are at, and in some areas above, those usually expected for four-year-olds, the majority reach a good level of development by the end of the year in readiness for their transition into Year 1.
- The whole-school focus on writing has had a positive impact. Pupils have regular opportunities to write at length across a range of subjects. As a consequence, most pupils are working at the expected standard for their age and some are beginning to work at greater depth within the expected standard.

Early years provision

Good

- Effective leadership in the early years has been pivotal in making improvements in provision since the previous inspection, when it was then judged to require improvement. Routines are established quickly right from the start, enabling children to settle into school easily. The ethos is warm and caring, and supports learning and children's well-being effectively.
- At this early stage of their first term, children were thoroughly engaged in a very wide range of well-chosen, exciting activities to support and develop all areas of learning both inside and outdoors. A buzz of busy learning was evident in the classrooms and outdoor spaces. Adults listen to children and respond to their questions and requests quickly.
- Staff work well as a coordinated team. They access good-quality training which is focused on helping children to learn and make good progress through purposeful, well-planned play. Children are prepared well for learning in Year 1.
- Good practice in assessing children's understanding enables the team to accurately establish children's starting points on entry, and from this baseline they continue to check that children are making enough progress towards the early learning goals. The leader has identified that disadvantaged children and boys are the groups that have previously not achieved as well as others, and this is taken into account in curriculum plans.
- Developing children's creativity is a strength in the early years. This is because they are taught important skills, such as how to use scissors for cutting, and then they are given opportunities to practise those skills on their own. Children make choices and decisions about what they want to explore or try, and the options are extensive.
- Responses in Parent View from those with children in Reception were extremely complimentary about the good start their children have had this term. This comment captures those received from many other parents: 'The Reception team have been outstanding in providing a well-structured transition programme for children starting school. Positivity and enthusiasm is amazing which has helped my child settle in from day one. The school is inviting and friendly. The headteacher is enthusiastic and driven to ensure that the school is successful and a fantastic learning environment for the children.'

School details

Unique reference number	132031
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	10022920

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	277
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Maureen Plowman
Headteacher	Steve Down
Telephone number	01480 375 375
Website	www.bushmead.cambs.sch.uk/
Email address	head@bushmead.cambs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	5–6 February 2015

Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication on its website of information about the phonics scheme used in key stage 1 and details about pupil premium funding for this school year and how it will be spent.
- Since the previous inspection, the governing body has appointed a new, permanent headteacher who took over a year ago.
- The school meets the government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment by the end of Year 6.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities who require support, have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is above average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors looked at examples of pupils' work from all classes and year groups.
- They saw teaching and learning in all classes at least once, usually with the headteacher or a senior leader.
- Inspectors made shorter visits to some classes to look at the teaching of reading, and they heard pupils read in Year 2 and Year 6. They spoke to pupils of all ages informally during the school day and a meeting was held with 12 pupils from Year 2 to Year 6 to seek their views.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, all other senior leaders, some subject leaders and the coordinator for special educational needs. The lead inspector met with six governors and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documents including information about pupils' attendance, the school's self-evaluation and plans for future improvement, reports from professionals external to the school, and minutes of meetings held by the governing body.
- Policies and procedures for the safeguarding of pupils were examined, including the single central register (an electronic spreadsheet showing all of the safeguarding checks made on staff prior to appointment).
- The views of 81 parents who responded to the questionnaire were taken into account, along with 18 responses to a staff questionnaire and 18 from pupils. Inspectors also spoke to parents informally in the playground.

Inspection team

Linda Killman, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Robert Greatrex	Ofsted Inspector
Jane Dooley	Ofsted Inspector

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