

# Bushmead Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	132031
<b>Local Authority</b>	Cambridgeshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	328663
<b>Inspection dates</b>	20–21 May 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Ian Jones

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.

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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 on roll</b>	
School (total)	224
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
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Richard Labrum
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Linda Young
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	13 July 2009
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Bushmead Road Eaton Socon St Neots Cambridgeshire PE19 3BT
<b>Telephone number</b>	01480 375375
<b>Fax number</b>	01480 375001

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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	20–21 May 2009
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is an average sized primary school serving the village of Eaton Socon and the surrounding area. Almost all the pupils come from White British backgrounds and the proportion from minority ethnic groups is very small. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is above average, as is that of of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The Early Years Foundation Stage is provided by a Reception class whilst most other classes are mixed-age. Attainment on entry is typically below expectations, although standards of the current Reception class on entry is typical of those found nationally. The school has recently achieved the Activemark award for sport.

The Playzone Out of School Club operates from the site. This provision is not managed by the governing body and will be subject to a separate inspection.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

This school enjoys a good relationship with parents, a very large majority of whom are happy with the school. One parent, echoing the views of others, said: 'The school is very friendly, and all the teachers and staff are approachable. Any concerns are always dealt with promptly.'

Pupils usually enter the school with skills below those expected. They make satisfactory progress, leaving in Year 6 with standards that remain below average. Achievement is therefore satisfactory overall. Attainment fluctuates mainly because of changing rates of progress from year to year and between subjects. In recent years, standards in English and mathematics have not been high enough. The school has worked with some success to address weaknesses in these subjects, although there is further work to be done. Progress in science is not as good as it should be because of too little challenge and not enough opportunities for pupils to investigate and explore. A system to assess and monitor progress regularly in English and mathematics was introduced last year. The information it provides is helping leaders to measure how well the school is doing. However, information on pupils' progress in science is not collected and so the response to underachievement has been slow.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The recent drive to support provision in writing is beginning to deliver much needed improvement, although the school recognises that further work is needed. Lessons sometimes lack challenge for pupils at different levels of ability. Relationships between teachers and their pupils are often good and pupils behave appropriately.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are satisfactory. They feel safe at school and make a strong contribution to the school community through the range of responsibilities offered. There is a good focus on teaching pupils how to live healthily. The satisfactory curriculum provides pupils with sound skills for their future lives and has some good features, including personal, social and health education and music. However, the curriculum does not provide enough challenge and stimulation for pupils, and links between subjects are not clear. Good pastoral care is a strong feature of the school. Although academic guidance is satisfactory, marking and reference to pupils' individual targets are inconsistent in helping pupils understand what they need to do to improve.

The school makes a satisfactory contribution to community cohesion. There is good liaison with the church and the school regularly participates in village life. The curriculum celebrates a range of festivals from different faiths and cultures and pupils show appropriate attitudes to others. Although leadership and management are satisfactory overall, important systems to provide effective support are too new to have had a significant impact on standards. For example, a useful self-evaluation schedule was instigated this year, providing a systematic approach to planning for school improvement. This has enabled school leaders to gain a clearer vision for where they need to focus, but they have not had enough time to implement the improvements needed. The headteacher is appropriately supported by governors, who are beginning to hold her to account for her work. The school has a satisfactory capacity to improve.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Since the school has embraced the new early years curriculum, good teaching, detailed planning and clear expectations support learning well resulting in children making good progress. In previous years progress in Reception

had been satisfactory. There is a good balance between activities directed by adults and activities chosen by the children. There is an appropriately strong emphasis on teaching the relationship between letters and the sounds they make. This helps children get off to a flying start in reading and writing. In the exciting learning environment, both indoors and out, children often choose to use their writing skills in their play, for example producing delightful menus for the cafe and creative invitations for their party. Staff use good questioning strategies to encourage children to think hard about their learning. Children speak confidently and they are developing a wide vocabulary. Staff record progress carefully and use assessments well to plan the next steps in learning. Welfare is a top priority and staff respond sensitively to the needs of each child. Personal development is good. Children happily share equipment and are confident both in the way they approach adults and in the way they make decisions about their own learning. By the end of Reception, standards, although improved from children's starting points, are typically a little below expectations.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Provide a curriculum that develops basic skills well and challenges and motivates pupils to want to learn.
- Improve the quality of academic guidance so that pupils develop their understanding of what they need to do to improve their work.
- Raise standards in science by providing more opportunities for investigative work.

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**

Pupils make satisfactory progress from their low starting points, with standards below average at the end of both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. In 2008, standards at Key Stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics rose from the previous year's low levels, with the biggest improvement in writing. This improvement has been sustained, with the current Year 2 pupils expected to attain similar standards, with some improvement to the proportion of those reaching the higher levels. At Key Stage 2 in 2008, standards and progress dipped significantly from the previous two years, with not enough pupils making the expected progress. This was recognised by the school, who, with the support of the local authority, successfully took steps to implement improvements to the quality of teaching and learning in the core subjects of English and mathematics. As a result, current standards have risen and the rate of progress has returned to satisfactory levels. However, there have been some fluctuations in the rates of progress made. For example, too few pupils attain the expected levels in science because they are not consistently challenged in their learning, and the curriculum offers limited opportunities for practical investigations and activities. Pupils with moderate learning difficulties make satisfactory progress; they are supported by a team of competent and committed teaching assistants.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 3**

The pupils make satisfactory progress in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Relationships between adults and pupils are good. They show mutual respect for one another and pupils enjoy talking to visitors. Pupils are good at taking turns and consider the feeling of

others during lesson time. Behaviour is satisfactory. Some children exhibit challenging behaviour in and around the school. These pupils are well managed although much teaching assistant time is devoted to this small group. Pupils have a good awareness of the benefits of adopting a healthy lifestyle and taking exercise. They show a good understanding of how to keep safe. Many enjoy eating fruit at break and a significant number either cycle or walk to school every day. They like taking responsibility. The older pupils happily accept various responsibilities, for example supporting younger ones during lunch times and running the healthy tuck shop and the 'equipment hut' during playtimes. The school council members take their roles seriously and represent the views of their peers. They have been successful in enhancing the outdoor play areas. Basic key skills in language, literacy and numeracy show that they are satisfactorily prepared for the world of work. The school uses a number of strategies to improve attendance in liaison with the Education Welfare Service. However, there are still a few children who have persistently poor attendance.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teaching promotes positive relationships and pupils behave appropriately in classrooms. Pupils say they enjoy learning 'when it is fun and interesting' and they generally work hard. In some lessons, interesting and challenging activities engage pupils and encourage them to develop problem-solving skills and learn for themselves. When this happens, learning is focused, resulting in good progress. However, the rate of progress is inconsistent, and varies between classes and subjects. In some lessons, planning does not result in activities matched to the pupils' differing abilities, and learning is restricted when work is not sufficiently challenging. In some cases, expectations of what pupils can achieve are not high enough. Opportunities to promote independent learning and for pupils to practise what they have learned are not always taken. Marking varies in quality. At times, it provides useful guidance on the next steps pupils should take in their learning, notably in writing. It is less developed in other subjects, where advice often focuses on presentation or effort, rather than giving pointers as to how to improve.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum promotes personal, social and health education effectively and, as a result, pupils often collaborate on learning tasks and get on well with each other. Provision for literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology is satisfactory but the curriculum is not always adapted effectively to suit the different needs and abilities of all pupils. The music curriculum is well-developed, and pupils enjoy a range of interesting activities during and after school. The school intends to redesign the curriculum through a thematic approach with links across subjects within an overarching topic. At Key Stage 1, the school has begun to increase the number of opportunities for pupils to write, especially in other subjects. This has had a beneficial impact on standards, although the school recognises that further work is required, especially for older pupils. The science curriculum does not provide enough opportunity for investigative work, and so pupils do not develop good understanding or enjoy scientific enquiry as much as they could. There is a good range of after school clubs, visitors and visits that help to promote pupils' personal development and effectively contributes to their healthy lifestyles.

## Care, guidance and support

### Grade: 3

Care, safety and pupils' well-being are top priorities. Child protection procedures are robust and staff receive regular training. Health and safety matters are addressed efficiently. The school ensures that all pupils are included and can play their full part in school life. Pupils are supported well in developing social skills and self-confidence. However, academic guidance is less well embedded and pupils do not receive clear direction to improve their own performance. All pupils are set literacy and numeracy targets but these have had little impact on improving standards because they are not referred to often enough. A new system for tracking pupils' progress has begun but as yet assessment data about the stages pupils have reached in their learning is not being used effectively enough to clarify the next steps in learning and make sure that all pupils are progressing as well as they should.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

The headteacher enjoys the confidence of colleagues and the trust of parents, who welcome her commitment and drive to furthering school improvement. The newly appointed leadership team is providing the school with a clearer direction and a more streamlined process for evaluating the school's success. They ensure that this is an inclusive school with a welcoming and friendly community. The school has a growing understanding of its strengths and where action is required. Thanks to the determination of the headteacher, there have been recent improvements to standards. Increased use of the data available from the school's tracking system, such as the termly progress interviews between teachers and headteacher, is increasing accountability for teaching, although this system is relatively new and not embedded. Governance is satisfactory, and governors are keen to enhance their role as 'critical friends' and develop the school's effectiveness. Community cohesion is satisfactory, and the school is developing a more structured approach to this aspect of its work.

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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	Yes
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 <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
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

<sup>1</sup>Grade 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

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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**

22 May 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Bushmead Primary School, St Neots, PE19 3BT

Thank you for making Mrs Wesley and myself so welcome when we visited your school recently. We certainly enjoyed talking with you. We think yours is a satisfactory school and we know that you and many of your parents and carers think so too. We were impressed by your politeness and the way you get on with your teachers and each other.

Mrs Young and the staff make sure that you get along with each other around school and you make satisfactory progress. They are ensuring that those of you who sometimes find learning difficult receive the help you need. We were pleased to see how well you take pride in your school and look after it. We were also pleased to see how you take responsibility and are willing to do jobs and help around the school.

We have asked Mrs Young, the staff and governors to try to make your school even better by doing the following things:

- Make sure that lessons are planned to be interesting and challenge you to make quicker progress.
- Make sure that marking and personal targets clearly help you to improve.
- Raise standards in science by giving you more practical lessons and investigations to do.

You can help by working hard, getting to school on time and doing your very best and enjoying your time at school.

Yours faithfully

Ian Jones

Lead inspector