

# Buckden CofE Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	110810
<b>Local Authority</b>	Cambridgeshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	325227
<b>Inspection dates</b>	1–2 July 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	John Francis

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>	Voluntary Controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	252
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Andrew Jarvis
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Andy Clarke
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	16–17 January 2006
<b>School address</b>	School Lane Buckden St Neots PE19 5TT
<b>Telephone number</b>	01480 810241
<b>Fax number</b>	01480 811937

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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
<b>Inspection date(s)</b>	1–2 July 2009
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

## Description of the school

This average-size school draws most pupils from Buckden village. About a third come from the village of Southoe and the surrounding rural area. There are fewer pupils on roll than at the time of the last inspection. Most pupils are White British. Socio-economic factors are very positive. There are 40 children in the Early Years Foundation Stage provided for in two Reception classes. The proportions of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities or who speak English as an additional language are below average. At the time of the inspection, most of the Year 4 pupils were on a residential visit, along with their teachers and teaching assistants.

The school has a number of awards including Activemark, a Healthy Schools Award, Generation Green School and for the quality of its financial management.

Buccaneers is an onsite childcare provision that is not managed by the governing body, and is inspected separately.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

**Grade: 2**

This is a good school, a view shared by most parents. In spite of many changes to the leadership over recent years, there has been good progress since its last inspection and the school shows a good capacity to continue this improvement. This progress is due to the good skills and abilities of those who lead and manage the school, from the headteacher and deputy headteacher, to the active and knowledgeable governing body. It is not just in the academic aspects of school life that pupils do well. Their excellent behaviour and enjoyment of learning provide a solid foundation for their good personal development and above average attendance. Pupils have a good understanding of issues around staying healthy and keeping safe. Their many awards, along with the choices pupils make at lunchtime from the wide range of healthy food on offer, clearly demonstrate their understanding of what they need to do to stay fit and healthy. With the many roles they take on, pupils make a good contribution to the school's supportive and calm atmosphere. One parent's comment sums this up well; '... there is an excellent ethos in that all of the children are part (of the school) and care for each other...'

The improvements to teaching, noted at the time of the last inspection, are now showing their impact in higher standards at the end of Year 6. Following a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage, good teaching ensures children continue to make good progress to attain above average standards in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6. Attainment in science, however, is closer to average and held back by the low percentage of pupils attaining the higher Level 5. This is also seen, albeit to a lesser degree, in mathematics. Although there are examples of good marking, this is not yet consistent and pupils are not all aware of the targets they are working towards.

The good curriculum provides a wide range of well-planned themes and activities for pupils and a good range of extra-curricular opportunities. Pupils' enjoyment of these shows in the high level of take up. Where pupils are less well informed is in their knowledge of the wide range of cultures and faiths found in contemporary society in Britain and overseas. This leads to pupils' cultural development and the school's promotion of the wider aspects of community cohesion being satisfactory. The school supports pupils well and pays good attention to their safety and well-being. All the necessary safeguards to protect children are in place and meet current government requirements.

## Effectiveness of the Early Year Foundation Stage

**Grade: 2**

When they start school, children's skills and knowledge are in line with those expected for this age. Consistently good teaching ensures they make good progress, not only in their numeracy and literacy skills but also in their personal and social development. Children enjoy learning because of the wide range of stimulating tasks, and their behaviour is excellent. Adults provide particularly exciting opportunities for boys to develop an interest in writing, for example, a 'pirate' came in to talk to the children, and many activities that followed were then based on this theme. Adults assess children's progress carefully, identifying the next steps in learning so that the tasks challenge all children. The environment is vibrant with many opportunities for

role-play and finding out about the world around them. They learn how to stay safe and healthy. Good use is made of the outdoor area, and visits and visitors provide children with rich experiences. Supervision is good and clear routines help them to become more independent. Children are well cared for and the encouragement they receive means they have high self-esteem, are motivated to persevere and solve problems and they achieve well. Leadership is good and the two class teachers work closely together so that children learn in groups matched to their abilities. There are strong partnerships with parents and with other agencies, which provide support for children who find learning more difficult. Good links with local nurseries ensure children make a smooth transition and settle easily into school routines.

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

- Ensure planning for the more able pupils clearly focuses on meeting their specific needs and raising their attainment, particularly in science.
- Widen the range of opportunities to raise pupils' awareness and understanding of the different cultures and faiths found in modern Britain and the wider international community.
- Improve the consistency of marking and target setting so that all pupils understand what they have achieved and what they need to do to make further progress.

### **Achievement and standards**

**Grade: 2**

The recent focus on writing has led to big improvements, particularly for the boys. However, at the end of Year 6, standards in science lag behind those of English and mathematics and while there is a move towards a more practical and investigative approach to scientific learning, not enough of the pupils reach the higher levels. With changes to the class organisation at the start of the academic year, progress by the end of Year 2 has speeded up. The heavy gender imbalance (70% boys) necessitated a rethink of class structures in Key Stage 1. This, along with curriculum changes, has led to better achievement in reading, writing and mathematics. As a result, boys' attainment at the end of Year 2 is now higher than the national average. In Key Stage 2, the changes of the last year have resulted in better than average progress, although the progress in Year 3 lags a little behind that of other year groups.

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

**Grade: 2**

Pupils' excellent attitudes to school and their exemplary behaviour reflect their good spiritual, moral and social development and create the very positive ethos seen throughout the school. Cultural development is not as embedded and while pupils have a good appreciation of aspects such as music and literature, their knowledge and experience of different cultures and faiths found in today's Britain and in the wider world is more limited. The impact of the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) programme pervades all that goes on in school. Pupils feel safe and secure; they say bullying is not an issue and that there is always someone to talk with if they have any concerns. All these factors create an environment where pupils flourish as individuals. The interaction between the older pupils, acting as lunchtime

monitors, and the younger children exemplifies this perfectly. They engaged the younger children in conversation and were genuinely interested in asking them about their awards in the morning assembly. In other areas, pupils have good knowledge and understanding of how to stay safe and healthy, including when using the internet. There are many opportunities for them to take part in vigorous physical exercise at break time and through sports coaching, as well as experiencing the discipline of their yoga classes. Pupils make a good contribution to the smooth running of the school through many responsibilities such as lunchtime monitors, play leaders, school councillors and house captains. Excellent social skills along with their good literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology (ICT) skills, prepare pupils well for the future.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

**Grade: 2**

Good teaching motivates and engages the pupils. Teachers questioning is open and probing and often requires pupils to justify their opinions. Teachers' use of on-going assessment is good and helpfully focuses their planning, and they generally set suitably high expectations. In all classes, marking is supportive but not always developmental. While there are some excellent examples, the revised marking policy is not yet consistently applied. Throughout the school, teachers and support staff create a calm but focused approach. Relationships and good class management are strong features. Effective use of interactive whiteboards and a developing thematic approach help to bring learning to life for pupils.

### Curriculum and other activities

**Grade: 2**

The school provides a rich and varied curriculum. Careful planning means that the thematic approach the school has developed ensures progression in the key skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT. The approach really engages pupils' interest and provides a wide base from which to explore a range of projects. In addition, it is utilizing pupils' good social skills through developing their decision-making and problem solving. This links well to initiatives such as the school's 'enterprise week'. A wide range of extra-curricular activities enhance the curriculum, and bringing in outside expertise in subjects such as physical education and yoga adds to pupils' enjoyment as well as furthering their skills. The excellent musical provision enables all pupils from Year 2 onwards to have the opportunity to learn to play a wide range of musical instruments. Good personal development comes through the SEAL programme, building confidence and understanding of emotional and social issues.

### Care, guidance and support

**Grade: 2**

Pastoral care is good. The adults in school know the children well and are committed to them, something that the pupils value and appreciate. The care shown has a positive impact on pupils' personal development, successfully fostering a caring and supportive atmosphere across the school. This is also reflected in the attention given to those pupils who have additional learning needs. Detailed individual education plans have precise targets and good support enables these pupils to make good

progress. The work of the parent inclusion worker compliments that of the special educational needs coordinator. Detailed tracking systems and careful analysis enable the leadership to identify pockets of underachievement. Through this, the school is very aware of the need to challenge the higher attaining pupils more effectively. While pupils in Year 6 are clear about their individual targets, other pupils are less so and the expected learning outcomes for lessons sometimes reflect this. Where they are not particularly sharp, it makes it more difficult for teachers and pupils to be certain about what they have achieved.

## **Leadership and management**

**Grade: 2**

Under the new headteacher's leadership, the school has a strong focus on driving improvement. Staff morale is high and the headteacher and all the staff are clear about their common vision of helping the school to reach new heights. Subject leaders are keen to extend their roles further by playing a more influential role in the monitoring of teaching and sharpening their data analysis skills. The governing body, led by a knowledgeable chair of governors, is supportive and challenging in equal measure. The school is a very cohesive community with pupils playing a full part in helping to maintain this. The leadership recognises the need for the school to extend its promotion of community cohesion and links with other agencies more widely. The school has been effective in ensuring good promotion of equality of opportunity. This is clearly demonstrated by the way in which it has addressed the issue of raising boys' standards, particularly in writing. The school works hard to ensure that the views of pupils and parents are taken on board. A small number of parents expressed concerns about the level of communication but these were significantly outweighed by the number who felt very well informed and involved. The school has a real buzz of energy and a commitment to improvement. Inspection evidence suggests that the drive for further success has a secure basis in current practice.

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**Annex A**

## Inspection judgements

<b>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate.</b>	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	<b>2</b>
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	<b>Yes</b>
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	<b>2</b>
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	<b>2</b>

### Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

<b>How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?</b>	<b>2</b>
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	<b>2</b>
How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	<b>2</b>
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	<b>2</b>
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	<b>2</b>
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	<b>2</b>

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	<b>2</b>
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	<b>2</b>
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	<b>2</b>
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	<b>2</b>

<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>	<b>2</b>
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	<b>2</b>
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	<b>2</b>
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	<b>2</b>
How well learners enjoy their education	<b>1</b>
The attendance of learners	<b>2</b>
The behaviour of learners	<b>1</b>
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	<b>2</b>
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	<b>2</b>

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	<b>2</b>

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	<b>2</b>
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	<b>2</b>
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	<b>2</b>
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	<b>2</b>
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	<b>2</b>
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	<b>3</b>
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	<b>2</b>
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	<b>2</b>
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	<b>Yes</b>
Does this school require special measures?	<b>No</b>
Does this school require a notice to improve?	<b>No</b>

## Annex B



3 July 2009

Dear Pupils

### **Inspection of Buckden CofE Primary School, Buckden, PE19 5TT**

You may remember that we came to visit your school a little while ago and I am now writing to let you know what we found out. However, before I do, I would just like to say a big thank you to you all for helping to make our visit such an enjoyable experience. It was good to hear how much you enjoy school, how safe and secure you feel and how all the staff are always there for you if you have any concerns whatsoever. I was impressed by the way that many of you help in school and beyond through the school council, the play leaders and lunchtime helpers.

Having looked at all the different features of your school, our conclusion is that you go to a good school. The good teaching and wide range of interesting learning activities, both during and after the school day, all help you to make good progress and achieve well. The school cares for you well and gives you many opportunities to have your say in how to make the school even better. We can see that the school is helping you to follow a healthy lifestyle and your lunches are great. All the staff and governors make sure that the school runs well and is an exciting place to learn. Mr Clarke has many good ideas to help Buckden become even better. However, this could not happen without you. Your behaviour is excellent and your enthusiasm and positive attitudes make everybody feel included and part of the school's family. Well done!

Even good schools can improve. We have asked Mr Clarke, the staff and governors to provide activities that are more challenging for those of you who are more able, especially in science. We have also asked them to make sure that you know exactly what you need to do to make your work better. In addition, we have asked that teachers plan more activities looking at other cultures and religions and how they influence our lives in Britain. I know that you will want to play your part by continuing to work and behave as well as you do now. It was a real pleasure to meet you all and we wish you every success in the future.

Yours faithfully

John Francis  
Lead inspector