

Bishop Lonsdale CofE VC Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124296
Local Authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	359628
Inspection dates	19–20 October 2010
Reporting inspector	Melvyn Blackband

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	210
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Angela Webb
Headteacher	Christopher Middleton
Date of previous school inspection	20 February 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Inspectors observed 14 lessons and 8 teachers. Meetings were held with groups of parents and carers, pupils, staff and governors. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documents relating to the school's performance data, teaching standards, and leadership and management. Inspectors also took account of 70 parents' questionnaires, 11 staff questionnaires and 113 pupils' questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

How high is current attainment in English and mathematics and how well are pupils achieving in these subjects?

- How well does the teaching take account of the needs of different groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and pupils learning English as an additional language?
- How effective is the curriculum in motivating pupils and to what extent are activities adapted to suit the abilities and interests of different groups of learners?
- How effectively do leaders at all levels monitor and evaluate the school's work and contribute to improvement?

Information about the school

This is an average sized school. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage, but there is a very small number of pupils who are learning English as an additional language. The proportions of pupils who are entitled to free school meals and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities are much lower than average. The school operates on a split site where the buildings are separated by a public road. The school roll has fallen in recent years and is now one-form entry. A new headteacher has been in post since September 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

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

In this satisfactory school, pupils are happy, confident and have positive attitudes towards their learning and each other. Most parents and carers are supportive of the school, and even those who have some criticisms recognise that their children love coming to school. Pupils join the school with skills and abilities that are slightly above average for their age. They make good progress through the Early Years Foundation Stage. Progress in the main school is satisfactory, although inconsistent. At the end of Year 6, attainment is broadly average. Results in national tests are getting better year on year in science but have remained static in English and mathematics since the previous inspection. Achievement is satisfactory because there is not enough good teaching to ensure that pupils make good progress. The assessment of the pupils' work, although good in some classes, is inconsistent, and teachers do not always match activities closely to the capabilities of different pupils. There are limited opportunities for pupils to work collaboratively. Teachers' planning for lessons does not always make clear exactly what pupils are expected to learn. Sometimes the time at the end of lessons is not used to check how well pupils have done.

The curriculum is satisfactory. There is a suitable emphasis on basic skills, and there are many opportunities for pupils to enhance their learning through trips and visits, including residential experiences. Links between subjects have yet to be fully exploited to provide more opportunities for pupils to practise their literacy skills, in particular, those of research and enquiry. Pupils have insufficient opportunities to make regular use of information and communication technology, due in part to lack of suitable equipment.

Pupils' personal skills are good, as is their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They have a high regard for their classmates and for the adults who work with them. Staff have created a school in which all pupils get on well together. Pupils' behaviour is good and is promoted by a shared set of values based on care and consideration throughout the school. Pupils' enjoyment of school is obvious and is reflected in their above average attendance. Sensitive and vigilant pastoral care ensures that, by the time pupils leave Year 6, they are confident, well-rounded young people, ready to play their full part in the world beyond school.

The new headteacher has had an immediate positive impact on the school. Morale is good and parents and carers are pleased with the school's efforts to establish good communications with them, for example, in the recent well-attended open morning. The headteacher has created an effective interim improvement plan and is leading the senior team well in starting to tackle the school's weaknesses. Subject leaders and governors are working hard to establish more robust monitoring and self-evaluation strategies and there are signs that these are starting to improve the quality of teaching. Subject leaders, however, currently have limited experience in monitoring standards in their subjects. The

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governing body provides good support but has yet to evaluate the work of the school fully and systematically and to play an active part in setting school priorities. Recent initiatives which are beginning to have an impact, such as the focus on raising the quality of teaching and learning and on more effectively tracking the pupils' progress, demonstrate that the school has a satisfactory capacity to improve.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement by increasing the proportion of good and outstanding lessons through:
 - improving the quality of assessment and target-setting
 - checking pupils' progress regularly
 - increasing the opportunities for pupils to take part in collaborative work
- Strengthen the quality of leadership and management at all levels by:
 - developing the effectiveness of the governing body in holding the school to account for the achievement of all pupils
 - equipping subject leaders with the skills to drive up improvement in their subject areas.
- About 40 of the schools, whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory, may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

The work seen by inspectors in lessons confirms the overall picture of satisfactory progress and achievement. The rate of progress improves for pupils in Years 5 and 6. Pupils enjoy their lessons because teachers are enthusiastic and teach at a lively pace. The pupils develop positive attitudes to learning. There is some inconsistency in the development of pupils' skills in English, largely due to the weaknesses in assessment and the setting of clear targets. Where teaching is good, the pupils make rapid progress. This was observed in a lesson for pupils in Years 5 and 6, where pupils confidently gave their considered opinions on characters from a Shakespeare play and then wrote down their descriptions. The teacher has maintained very clear assessment records and, as a result, was able to set the pupils tasks which accurately matched their abilities and stretched all of them in writing accurately and concisely about their chosen character. Pupils' progress in mathematics is satisfactory but sometimes affected by imprecise assessment and by working on activities which are not clearly focused on what each pupil knows and can do. For example, groups of pupils are regularly asked to complete commercial worksheets, which are not clearly linked to their learning targets and which they sometimes find too easy or too difficult. Pupils with learning and/or behavioural difficulties and those learning English as an additional language receive support which enables them to make satisfactory progress. Pupils have targets in English and mathematics but they are often uncertain as to what they are, or how to reach them.

Pupils have a well-developed understanding of right and wrong promoted by the strong Christian ethos of the school and an appreciation of their own culture, thanks to the well-

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chosen visits to theatres and museums. They say they feel safe at school and confident in trusted adults. The pupils develop a good understanding of eating healthily. They take advantage of the many opportunities to take part in physical activity such as in the full programme of after-school clubs and sporting fixtures. Their social development is good. There is a flourishing school council, which many pupils aspire to join. They contribute enthusiastically to the life of the village through the links with the local church, and their behaviour is well regarded by the local community. The pupils are friendly and confident. They were keen to show inspectors their work and to engage in conversation about the school. Their good interpersonal skills and their satisfactory progress in basic skills means they are satisfactorily prepared for the next stage in their lives.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

Teaching was satisfactory in most of the lessons observed during the inspection. There are good relationships between pupils and adults. Lessons are generally interesting and lively, and pupils respond with enjoyment and good attitudes towards their learning. In the most effective lessons, teachers have high expectations of pupils' progress. This is indicated through their clear planning, supported by precise marking and assessment which ensures that activities are geared specifically to the needs and abilities of each pupil. In these classes, teachers have a good understanding of each pupil's progress and set clear challenging targets which they review consistently. However, weaknesses in teaching in

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other classes are preventing the pupils' progress from being good. Assessment information is not used effectively enough, which results in pupils sometimes being given work which is too hard or easy. There is inconsistency in the regularity with which teachers use the end of lessons to check pupils understanding and identify steps needed to improve further. Similarly, pupils are not yet sufficiently involved in evaluating their own progress.

The curriculum supports the pupils' personal skills and well-being effectively through good provision for personal, social and health education and through the opportunities for residential and educational visits. There are limited opportunities, however, for the pupils to make links between subjects and thus to extend their confidence in independent learning and in their literacy and communication skills. Although pupils have timetabled information and communication technology lessons, they do not have sufficient opportunities to apply their skills to consolidate their learning in the classroom. Most pupils find lessons interesting but the weakness in assessment in some lessons means that activities are not always matched closely enough to the abilities of each pupil.

The school's strong emphasis on promoting the pupils' well-being results in them feeling secure and happy at school. Parents and carers overwhelmingly agree that their children are safe. There are secure arrangements to enable pupils to transfer between classes and when they leave the school for secondary education. Vulnerable pupils with additional needs receive good support. For instance, the confident, sensitive care, supported by clear protocols, which was given to an injured pupil during the inspection, was of a high standard.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The new headteacher's thoughtful, enthusiastic and determined leadership has given the school a clear direction, and subject leaders, although relatively new in post, are eager to take responsibility for their respective areas. The headteacher has begun to establish rigorous and accurate self-evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses and there is a rapidly growing understanding by staff that there needs to be consistently better teaching to ensure that all pupils make better than satisfactory progress. Several teachers, parents, carers and staff used the phrase, 'the green shoots of progress' to describe the determination of all concerned to improve the school's performance. Through this unified approach, the school is more effectively promoting the equal opportunities of all pupils. This is illustrated by the school's new procedures to track the performance of pupils and to detect and plan intervention should any underachievement occur. There are also recent

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and rigorous procedures to monitor teaching and to link the school's improvement planning securely to the performance of teachers.

The effectiveness of the governing body is satisfactory. It fulfils all legal requirements and safeguarding arrangements were found to be satisfactory at the time of the inspection. The governing body is very supportive of the school but is insufficiently involved in prioritising improvements. Its present contribution to the school's improvement plan is superficial and its approach to evaluating the success of some policies and procedures is not yet rigorous enough. For instance, the school's promotion of community cohesion remains satisfactory, because, while governors and the school's leaders ensure pupils have a good knowledge of their school and local cultures and of the cultures and religions of other countries, they have not yet created realistic plans to provide pupils with a good understanding of the diversity of cultures in Britain today. Relations with parents and carers are satisfactory. Through the questionnaires which they returned, a small minority of parents and carers expressed dissatisfaction with the school's provision. Meetings with groups of parents and carers revealed, however, that most are optimistic about the school's future under the new leadership. The school has satisfactory partnerships with other schools and sports clubs to enhance the pupils' learning. Given the outcomes for pupils, the school provides satisfactory value for money.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

There is a warm, welcoming, colourful and well-resourced environment for the children and they are obviously happy to be at school. Teaching is good and this results in good behaviour. Pupils are interested in their activities and they stay engaged for long periods. Occasionally, however the 'free' activities lack some challenge and a small number of pupils can lose concentration and wander from one activity to another. The outdoor area

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is used routinely to enhance learning. The pupils make good progress through the Early Years Foundation Stage and reach above average standards by the end of their Reception Year. Relationships with parents and carers are good and help to support the children's learning. The leadership and management of the provision are good. Pupils are well provided for, their needs are met skilfully by teachers and they make good progress.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers overwhelmingly agree that their children enjoy school and that they are safe. They also agree that they grow in understanding of healthy lifestyles and that they are well prepared for changing schools. Overall, most are happy with the education their children receive. A small minority of parents and carers are concerned about behaviour, but this concern was not borne out by the inspection findings. A small minority believe that their children are not making enough progress. The inspection confirmed that, while pupils are making satisfactory progress, this could be improved. A few parents and carers have concerns about the inclusion of pupils with special educational needs. This aspect was a focus of the inspection and findings confirmed that provision for these pupils is satisfactory and that they receive a good level of support. There are on-going concerns that the pupils sometimes have to cross a fairly busy road to get to the other building, but parents and carers are confident in the school's procedures to ensure the pupils' safety. Just under a quarter of parents and carers made no comment about the quality of the school's leadership. Discussions with groups of parents and carers revealed that perceptions of the new headteacher and senior team are favourable but that it is too soon to make a firm judgement on the impact of their work. One parent, however, spoke for many in stating, 'Already, positive changes are beginning to happen.'

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Bishop Lonsdale CoFE VC Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 70 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 210 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	31	44	32	46	5	7	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	35	50	32	46	1	1	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	26	37	37	53	4	6	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	19	27	38	54	10	14	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	13	19	45	64	6	9	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	21	30	34	49	10	14	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	28	40	39	56	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	27	39	36	51	3	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	17	24	39	56	10	14	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	13	19	35	50	14	20	3	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	16	23	40	57	7	10	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	12	17	39	56	2	3	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	20	29	40	57	7	10	1	1

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on 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 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:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.

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.



21 October 2010

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Bishop Lonsdale CofE VC Primary School, Stafford, ST21 6AU

On behalf of the inspection team I would like to thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school to see how well you are learning. We enjoyed talking to you in your classrooms and in a meeting. We could see that you all enjoy school. We judge your school to be satisfactory.

Here is a list of some of the things we particularly liked about your school.

You work hard and you make satisfactory progress in your learning. By the time you leave, you are working at the levels expected for children of your age.

You make good progress in your personal development, especially in learning how to keep safe, in appreciating the value of a healthy lifestyle and in your contribution to the school and local community.

The many different people at the school look after you well.

You do many interesting activities including those which take you out into the community so that you learn new things in all sorts of situations.

Your new headteacher and the staff are working hard to make things even better for you. To help them do this and to improve the progress you are making, we have asked your school to do the following:

- improve the quality of the teaching, the way your work is assessed and the opportunities for you to work collaboratively
- check really carefully how well you are doing in your work and make sure that everything you do is your best work.

You can help too by continuing to work hard and by supporting each other.

Please thank your parents and carers for the helpful comments they made on the questionnaires.

Yours sincerely

Melvyn Blackband

Lead inspector

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