

Bidston Village CofE (Controlled) Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131281
Local Authority	Wirral
Inspection number	360247
Inspection dates	13–14 December 2010
Reporting inspector	Brian Dower

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	276
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ronald Iveson
Headteacher	Mrs Lynne Hazeldine
Date of previous school inspection	28 February 2008
School address	Ballantyne Drive Bidston, Wirral Merseyside CH43 7XG
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They visited 13 lessons and observed the work of 12 teachers. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, two members of the governing body and with staff. There was a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation, including monitoring and assessment records, pupils' books and files, minutes of the governing body's meetings, school improvement planning, and curriculum and lesson plans. Forty questionnaire returns from parents and carers were analysed, together with a sample from pupils and staff.

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

- The progress made by potentially vulnerable pupils, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are particularly able.
- The use of accurate assessments to set suitably challenging and enjoyable learning activities and to inform pupils on how to improve.
- The effectiveness of the measures taken to improve attendance rates.
- The extent to which the school successfully harnesses the support of parents and carers, other institutions and agencies to support it in its work.

Information about the school

The school is slightly larger than the average primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is high. The proportion with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well above average. Pupils are predominantly White British, with very few from a minority ethnic background. A small minority of pupils join the school late or leave early. There is a before and after school club run by the governing body. There are two education inclusion units catering for pupils with moderate learning difficulties and a range of other special educational needs. The school has many awards, including Healthy Schools status and the Activemark.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school. Significant strengths include its work in the effectiveness of the education inclusion bases, the opportunities afforded to every boy and girl to enjoy school and succeed at their work, the close links with parents and carers and the partnership arrangements to support pupils' learning and well-being.

Pupils' achievement is good. Good teaching and learning help pupils to make at least good progress in relation to their low starting points when they joined the school. Those pupils whose circumstances make them more vulnerable, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities across the school and in the education inclusion bases, make outstanding progress. This is because highly favourable staffing ratios and specialist teaching results in every pupil receiving individual support closely tailored to meet their very different needs. Attainment, although low in recent years, is rising securely and there is a strong upward trend, particularly in writing and pupils' basic number work. Good practice was seen in helping pupils to assess their own work but it is not being adopted consistently across subjects. An appropriate plan has been agreed for the improvement of pupils' problem-solving skills but it is not yet established as a routine approach to raising standards in mathematics. Opportunities are sometimes missed to develop pupils' discussion skills.

Pupils say they feel safe and secure in school. Their smiles and eager chatter about work and after-school activities show that they are. Attendance rates have been below average but they have risen this year and are now close to average. Behaviour is good and pupils relate well to each other and adults. They have a good understanding of how to stay fit and well by eating healthy lunches and taking plenty of exercise. Older pupils take on a range of responsibilities, including helping with playtime games and lunch-time activities for the younger ones. Pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is good, with their social awareness being the strongest element. They understand the cultural diversity of society.

The school is a stimulating place for pupils and staff to work in. A trip by Year 4 to the Tate gallery resulted in pupils creating an impressive art gallery in school of their own work, with critiques in place for each piece displayed. The encouraging and supportive approach by adults to pupils' needs has boosted their confidence and self-esteem. There are excellent transition arrangements between the different phases of pupils' primary education and on to the secondary schools. These arrangements complement the high-quality care and support given to every pupil. The impact of such provision is evident in one parent's comment, 'that her son gets upset on Saturday mornings because there is no school'.

The effective leadership of the headteacher, good quality of improvement planning underpinned by rigorous monitoring and accurate self-evaluation, securely improving

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progress and attainment, and better attendance testify to the school's good capacity for further improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' mathematical ability by implementing consistently and rigorously the agreed action plan for the teaching of problem solving skills.
- Improve pupils' ability to understand for themselves how well they are doing and how to improve by disseminating across all subjects the good self-assessment practice which already exists.
- Improve pupils' speaking skills by extending opportunities in lessons for pupils to reflect on and discuss their learning at length with the class as a whole.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils are enjoying their work and in all the lessons seen they were attentive and hard working. Their achievement in relation to their low starting points is good. All groups of pupils make at least good progress; and for those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities it is outstanding. There has been a marked improvement in the attainment and progress of the more-able pupils. Potentially vulnerable pupils are making excellent progress in their personal and academic development, with many exceeding the performance targets set for them. All groups show securely sustained improvement in attainment.

Pupils have satisfactory speaking and listening skills but many lack confidence in whole-class discussion work. Their securely improving literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills are applied satisfactorily in different contexts across the curriculum. In some subjects, pupils are adept at using assessment criteria to work out for themselves how well they are progressing but those skills are not being used well across all subjects. Pupils' good behaviour, their ability to work well cooperatively, their understanding and respect for differences in others and their persistence in sticking with a task until completed mean they are satisfactorily prepared for the next stage in their education.

Pupils' suggestions for improving their school are often taken up. They have, for example, been closely involved in shaping improvements to the catering facilities. Pupils are involved in a range of local community activities covering sport, culture and environmental projects. They play a major part in the annual Bidston Village heritage week. Overall attendance rates have been below average but the school is doing all it can to address this. Consequently, there has been a reduction in absenteeism resulting in attendance rising to close to the national average this term.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
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	4
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?

The school is a welcoming learning environment where pupils are happy and secure. Teachers make good use of accurate assessments to set them challenging and enjoyable learning activities. They closely monitor progress in lessons, providing timely and effective support when difficulties arise. Oral and written guidance on how to improve is clear and helpful to pupils and in some subjects pupils are assessing their own work. Such skills in independent working are not being fostered consistently across the curriculum. Opportunities are sometimes missed for pupils to engage in class discussions and the school's good action plan for the promotion of problem-solving skills is not yet being implemented consistently. In the education inclusion bases teaching and learning are outstanding because adults understand the difficulties pupils face and they provide a wide range of innovative learning activities which are exactly matched to need.

The curriculum is well planned to ensure an appropriate balance in the promotion of pupils' personal and academic development. For example, the programme in place to boost pupils' self-confidence is highly effective. Pupils and their families are known exceptionally well and they are justifiably confident in the school's ability to provide high-quality care and support. Throughout the school, all aspects of the school's attention to pupils' welfare are impressive. The before and after school clubs are well run and meet regulatory requirements; pupils are looked after very well. There is rigorous attention to the improvement of attendance, which is rising. The effectiveness of the measures the

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school has taken has brought a significant reduction in the number of persistent absentees. This is testimony to its ability to raise aspirations and enable pupils to make the best of what it provides.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders and managers at all levels are ambitious for the school's success and work effectively to improve pupils' rate of progress and attainment. They are led by a highly effective headteacher. Rigorous monitoring and evaluation ensure that weaknesses are pinpointed at an early stage and that timely and appropriate measures are in place to tackle them. This is particularly apparent in the exceptional overall leadership and daily management provided in the education inclusion bases. All pupils have a very positive experience of school, including potentially vulnerable pupils, whose progress is outstanding. The school's outstanding commitment to equality of opportunity for all pupils and the way it successfully tackles rare cases of discrimination underpins this experience.

The school has a good understanding of the religious, ethnic and socio-economic characteristics of the community it serves and is active in forging effective links at many levels. It has, for example, been highly effective in working with parents and carers to support their children's education. The school itself is a harmonious working community. The partnership arrangements with other institutions, schools and agencies consistently contribute to pupils' good and at times outstanding progress, and their overall well-being. The governing body is effective. Governors know the school well and strike the right balance between providing encouragement and challenge. They are closely involved in formulating the good development and action plans which clearly plot the way to further improvement. Safeguarding procedures are well established and safe working is evident in daily routines. The school provides good value for money.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

When they start school the level of children's skills varies but overall it is low. Children settle quickly and are soon happy and secure because of the excellent induction arrangements and the close links with parents and carers. Children make good progress and by the time they start in Year 1 their personal, social and emotional development and their language skills have improved, although problem solving and numeracy skills are less well developed. Overall, children achieve well by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage. This is because their safety and well-being are paramount and adults have created a caring and purposeful learning environment. The coordinator has an excellent understanding of the children's learning needs and has ensured an appropriate balance between child-initiated and adult-led activities. The learning and writing journey records she has introduced ensure that accurate assessments are made and recorded and that progress is closely monitored. Children are encouraged to try new things for themselves and be adventurous in their learning and play. Plans for extending such opportunities further in the already good outdoor areas are on the point of fruition. Children manage small tasks well and are happy to take on responsibilities for themselves. They learn to make informed choices about nutritious snacks and meals and they attend to matters of hygiene.

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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

A very small minority of parents and carers returned completed questionnaires. Almost without exception they were wholly supportive. Many took the trouble to write appreciative comments on what the school is doing for their children's personal and academic development. The very few negative returns related to individual problems and there was no pattern of dissatisfaction in these.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Bidston Village CoFE (Controlled) 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 40 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 276 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	29	73	10	25	1	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	32	80	8	20	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	25	63	14	35	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	26	65	14	35	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	27	68	13	33	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	24	60	16	40	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	21	53	17	43	1	3	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)	24	60	16	40	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	27	68	13	33	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	26	65	9	23	3	8	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	22	55	18	45	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	26	65	14	35	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	30	75	10	25	0	0	0	0

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.



15 December 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Bidston Village CofE (Controlled) Primary School, Wirral CH43 7XG

Thank you for the warm welcome we received when we visited your school. We enjoyed the two days we spent with you and were impressed by how hard you are working and your courteous behaviour to each other and adults. We only wish we had had more time to see all the interesting things you are doing in lessons and in the extra-curricular activities.

We found that your school is providing you with a good education. The care you receive is excellent and, as a result, you feel safe and secure and make good progress in your work and personal development. The adults make sure that every boy and girl has an equal chance to reach their potential. There are some pupils who make outstanding progress because of the specialist support provided.

The learning activities you are given are interesting and challenging. Many of you told us how much you enjoy such work. You also enjoy a wide range of activities outside of lessons, including trips away and being involved in local community events. You show concern for the needs of others through your fund-raising activities and you show understanding and respect for others' differences.

There are always things to do to make any school better. We have asked that you be given more help in your problem-solving work in mathematics and more opportunities in all subjects to discuss your learning as a whole class. We have also asked that the good work seen in some subjects, where pupils are assessing for themselves how well they are doing, is spread across the curriculum.

You will not receive this letter until January so we hope you enjoyed your Christmas break and the time spent with your family and friends. Our best wishes to you all.

Yours sincerely

Brian Dower

Lead inspector

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