

# Bishops Castle Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	123354
<b>Local authority</b>	Shropshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	380641
<b>Inspection dates</b>	14–15 March 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	David Evans

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>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	142
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Marie McLeish
<b>Headteacher</b>	Andrew Barker
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	17 November 2008
<b>School address</b>	Oak Meadow Bishops Castle SY9 5PA
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<b>Fax number</b>	01588 638418
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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
<b>Inspection date(s)</b>	14–15 March 2012
<b>Inspection number</b>	380641



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## Introduction

Inspection team

David Evans

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector observed six teachers and nine lessons, which constituted four and a half hours of inspection time. Three of the lessons were joint observations with the headteacher. In addition, the inspector made short visits to a few sessions where support is provided by teaching assistants and two assemblies. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and school staff, including senior and middle managers. Parents and carers were met informally during the inspection. The inspector took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work and looked at a variety of documentation including samples of pupils' work, teachers' planning, the school's systems for tracking pupils' progress, the recently revised self-evaluation and school improvement planning, curriculum and safeguarding documentation. In addition, the inspector took account of responses to questionnaires from 54 parents and carers, 10 staff and 40 pupils.

## Information about the school

This is a smaller than average size primary school serving the small town of Bishops Castle and the surrounding area. Almost all pupils are from White British background with a very few from minority ethnic communities. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is below that found in most schools, however the proportion supported with school action plus or a statement of special educational needs is higher. The number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly average. The school meets the current floor standard. The school has achieved the, Activemark, the Safer Schools Award and has achieved the gold Healthy Schools status.

At the time of the inspection one teacher was on long-term sickness absence and two supply teachers were covering this role.

**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

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>3</b>

## Key findings

- This is a satisfactory and improving school, which has an accurate understanding of its effectiveness and how to improve further. It is not yet good because teaching, and achievement in reading and writing are not consistently good.
- Pupils' achievement is satisfactory, and attainment is broadly average and improving. In the recent past, the rate of progress had not been good enough in reading and writing. This weakness is being tackled successfully so that all groups of pupils, including those with special needs, are now making improved progress. However, there are too few opportunities for pupils to develop independent learning skills and to practise their core skills in subjects across the curriculum.
- Behaviour and safety are good. There is a culture of respect in the school that is highly valued by pupils and parents and carers alike and pupils are most considerate towards one another. They say there is no bullying of any kind. Pupils feel safe in school and the overwhelming majority of parental questionnaires confirm that parents and carers are confident of their children's safety.
- Teaching is typically satisfactory and increasingly is good. Improvements in the quality of teaching have ensured that the majority of pupils enjoy school and are now making better progress in lessons. Satisfactory lessons do not take full account of the wide range of pupils' abilities or interests.
- Leadership and management are satisfactory. The leadership of teaching and the management of performance by the headteacher are driving improvement and ensuring that more of the teaching is good. The role of middle managers is being developed further. The governing body provides a good level of challenge and support.

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Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment and accelerate pupils' progress, especially in reading and writing, so that all pupils achieve their potential by:
  - providing more regular opportunities for pupils to work independently and to develop and deepen their literacy knowledge and skills;
  - plan more opportunities for pupils to practise and reinforce their literacy skills across the full range of subjects.
  
- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better by:
  - sharing the most effective practices in school through professional development opportunities;
  - planning lessons which ensure appropriate challenge for the full range of abilities in each class.
  
- Develop further the role of middle managers in the school by ensuring that they support the head teacher in strategic planning, monitoring and evaluating performance and contribute fully to school improvement.

## Main report

### Achievement of pupils

Attainment is broadly average. Children join the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and abilities that are below those expected of four-year-olds. Until recently, pupils have not made sufficient progress, particularly in reading and writing. This weakness has been rigorously addressed and the quality of learning is improving. The Early Years Foundation Stage prepares solid foundations for children's learning as they progress into Year 1. Pupils' progress in reading by the end of Year 2 is improving and fast approaching average as they apply their knowledge of letters and sounds appropriately. Achievement is also improving as they develop better use of vocabulary when reading and writing. The improvements are reflected in the school's records and since September most pupils have made at least satisfactory progress. Pupils' attainment in reading is now average in Year 6, but higher order skills such as comprehension, deduction and inference are not developed consistently throughout the school.

The school's systematic approach to teaching letters and sounds is improving pupils' ability to speak more clearly and to read, write and spell with greater accuracy. The school is developing in pupils a love of books that is increasing their understanding of different types and styles of text. Pupils' writing is often imaginative and engaging. This was evident in Years 1 and 2 as pupils started to create their own versions of a story they had read.

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Improvements in progress are linked to increasingly better use of assessment which is now used more effectively to measure how well individual pupils and groups are achieving and to target improvements. Some pupils, notably boys, those with additional learning needs and those known to be eligible for free school meals, had fallen the furthest behind but are now making the fastest progress. Intervention and support activities are carefully evaluated to make sure they are having sufficient impact and, as a result, pupils with additional needs are increasingly well supported. Individual targets are being used well to intensify the focus on the next small steps in learning and to involve pupils in evaluating their own learning. Pupils' positive attitudes to their learning make a good contribution. For example, in a stimulating Year 6 English lesson, they were very enthusiastic, collaborated well, sustained concentration and made good progress. The work in pupils' books confirms that the pace of progress is speeding up and most parents and carers who returned the inspection questionnaires consider that their children make good progress. Pupils' books often show that they have too few opportunities to work at length and develop their ideas and skills fully across the range of subjects.

**Quality of teaching**

Most parents and carers believe that teaching in the school is good and that children are making good progress, a view shared by pupils. Inspection evidence agreed with the headteacher's judgement that both are satisfactory. The teaching seen during the inspection was at least satisfactory and about half was good. This confirms the school's monitoring records which show that the quality of teaching is improving steadily.

Lessons are well organised with clear routines and opportunities for pupils to develop good personal and social skills, such as working collaboratively and discussing their learning. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and this is having a positive impact on their learning. Lessons have clear learning objectives and these are underpinned by steps to learning which show what successful learning will look like. On occasions, activities are sometimes pitched incorrectly for some, with the work being too easy or too hard which does not provide suitable challenge for pupils of different abilities.

In the best lessons, pupils are actively involved throughout and teachers maintain a good pace, skilfully targeting questions at individuals and groups to probe and extend their learning. Where the planned curriculum supports academic and personal skills well, teachers use topic work to extend and develop pupils' basic skills and they relate the learning to real life to make learning relevant and gain the interest of the pupils. For example, Year 6 pupils acted as film-makers and explored the good and bad features of sustainability, developed their note-taking skills and discussed their findings. In lessons that are satisfactory, there are a number of activities which keep the pupils busy but do not extend their learning. Teachers mark pupils' books consistently and pupils respond to the marking by amending their work. Individual targets in reading and writing help pupils and staff to understand what has been

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achieved and identify the next steps.

## **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Nearly all the parents and carers who responded to the questionnaires rightly believe that pupils' behaviour is good. Good attendance rates reflect how much pupils enjoy their time in school. Pupils are generally punctual. There is a strong sense of spirituality and moral responsibility throughout the school, which is underpinned by warm and trusting relationships between pupils and staff. Pupils feel safe and trust that the staff will deal with any very rare incidents of bullying, such as cyber bullying or those based on gender. The school's records, which are carefully logged and reported to the local authority, show, and pupils confirm, that incidents of racism are extremely rare and dealt with effectively. Pupils are very considerate and cooperate well in lessons.

Pupils accept that everyone has something to offer and they encourage each other to do well. For example, Year 6 pupils, unprompted, encouraged younger pupils to contribute in discussion with adults, typifying how mature and supportive pupils are across the school. Both boys and girls and pupils from different ethnic minority backgrounds mix very well, reflecting the positive and supportive climate for learning and socialising, as well as the consideration that pupils afford each other. Pupils whose circumstances deem them most vulnerable feel very safe and secure in school because there is strong pastoral support and very good attention is given to this aspect of the school's work. Elected school councillors enjoy representing and helping other pupils.

## **Leadership and management**

The commitment of the headteacher and staff to achieving the best for the pupils is clear. The headteacher has established effective systems to monitor, evaluate and improve teaching and learning. Professional development of staff is well planned and effective in driving up the quality of teaching and learning. Middle leaders, under the guidance of the headteacher, are developing their expertise appropriately, but they do not yet provide effective support to the headteacher and do not contribute fully to the process of school improvement. As a consequence, middle leaders do not always monitor progress and adapt lesson planning to ensure that all pupils are sufficiently challenged.

The school's self-evaluation is accurate and well founded. The governing body holds the school to account well and members fulfill all their statutory responsibilities. They have an effective committee structure for monitoring and discussion, as well as established and allocated responsibilities to work with subject leaders or others who lead on aspects of the school's work.

The efforts made to improve teaching, the positive behaviour and pupils' good attitudes to learning have been vital to the improvements in achievement now evident. The curriculum is satisfactory and notable improvements have been secured.

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It promotes pupils' personal development, health and safety well. The curriculum is enriched by a good range of visits, visitors and clubs; and the school choir is a notable feature of school life. The curriculum is especially successful at promoting pupils' spiritual, moral and social development. This is reflected, for example, in pupils' willingness to have a go at new things and in the way that pupils are sensitive to others' needs. There are also stimulating links with schools in various parts of the world.

The school promotes equality of opportunity satisfactorily. It tackles any form of discrimination robustly and ensures that all pupils have equal access to all activities. Safeguarding requirements are fully met and child protection procedures and training are effective. They are given high priority in this inclusive school and contribute to all pupils, from the least to most vulnerable, feeling safe and well-cared-for. Parents and carers praise the school for this, commenting especially on the provision made for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs.

The school's successes in improving teaching, pupils' positive attitudes to learning, together with the commitment of staff and the determined leadership shown by the headteacher demonstrate that the school has a good capacity for continuing to sustain its journey of improvement.



## 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	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

**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.**



16 March 2012

Dear Pupils,

**Inspection of Bishops Castle Primary School, Bishops Castle, SY9 5PA**

I am writing to say thank you for your help when I inspected your school recently. You may recall I spoke with many of you and you were very helpful with your comments. Thank you to those of you who filled in questionnaires giving me your views about the school.

I was very impressed with your polite and courteous attitude to me and pleased to see the sensible way you behave around school. I liked the way you play happily together and work hard in lessons. You say that you feel safe in school and your parents and carers agree. I was very pleased to see that you take little time off from school. Well done!

The teachers are very kind and helpful, and want you all to do your best. You go to a satisfactory school where you are making progress and everyone cares for you exceptionally well. However, I want the headteacher and governing body to make your school even better. To that end, I have suggested some ways in which teachers can help you all make good, rather than just satisfactory, progress in lessons. Key to these is for teachers to be sure always to match work to your different capabilities. You can help by telling teachers whenever you find the work you are given is too easy or too hard. I have also asked teachers to ensure that you practise your reading and writing skills regularly in other subjects across the curriculum.

I have asked all those who lead and manage the school regularly to check how well you are doing and make sure that every lesson helps you to improve your learning so you can all reach higher standards

All of you can help the school to move forward by continuing to work hard. I wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

David Evans  
Lead inspector

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