

St Mary's Bentworth Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116351
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	363853
Inspection dates	4–5 July 2011
Reporting inspector	Rowena Onions

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	98
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Maria Fordyce
Headteacher	Kate Heffer
Date of previous school inspection	9 May 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Eight lessons were observed and four teachers were seen teaching. Meetings were held with pupils, governors and staff. The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at data on pupils' progress, the school improvement plan, reports from the School Improvement Partner and a range of other documentation. Fifty two responses to the parental questionnaire were received and analysed, together with 58 pupil and eight staff responses to their respective questionnaires.

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

- The effectiveness of teaching and the curriculum in raising rates of progress of more-able pupils.
- The impact of development work aimed at increasing the opportunities for pupils to input their ideas into the way the school could be improved.
- The effectiveness of assessment in helping pupils know how to improve their work.
- The effect of the increase in shared leadership, including governance, on school improvement.

Information about the school

This smaller-than-average-sized school serves its local area in rural Hampshire. Almost all pupils are of White British origin. Only a very few speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. A below-average percentage of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities, including moderate learning, and speech, language and communication difficulties. Pupils, including those in the Early Years Foundation Stage, are mainly taught in mixed-age classes. At the time of the inspection, the headteacher had been in post for 18 months.

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

1

Main findings

St Mary's is a good school. It is improving rapidly. All aspects of the school are at least good and the school already has many outstanding features. The pupils' personal development is exemplary in a number of ways. Their high standard of behaviour not only supports their learning very well, but also ensures that the school is a happy, harmonious place. Pupils are highly conscious of the part they play in building their school community, and development work undertaken this year has ensured that their opinions are sought and acted upon. Because of outstanding care, guidance and support, pupils feel exceptionally safe and secure in the knowledge that if they should have a problem, there is always someone to turn to. Pupils want to be active, knowing that this is not only fun, but is an important aspect of keeping themselves healthy. They are keen to find ways in which the importance of healthy living can be promoted even further; for example, they want to start growing food in school.

Over the last two years, many changes have been made in the school and these have had a very significant positive effect. The headteacher has shown outstanding leadership in developing and sharing a highly aspirational vision for the school. All staff now share this and have worked hard to develop the education provided. Teaching staff are playing an increasing part in helping to lead the school. Governors are proactive and have played a very positive part in ensuring that parents and carers have been fully informed about the changes made over the last 18 months and that their concerns have been explored and, as far as possible, allayed. The strong shared desire to make improvements, alongside very detailed school self-evaluation, and the way this is leading such widespread improvements, means that the school is exceptionally well placed to sustain improvement in the future.

Children are given a very strong start to their education in the Reception Year, most importantly in the way they are shown how to enjoy learning. Throughout the rest of the school, pupils make good progress because they are taught well and because there is a very strong partnership between the school and parents and carers, which ensures that pupils' social and academic education is promoted well beyond the school day. This combination helps pupils to reach high standards by the time they leave the school. Development work has been aimed at ensuring that all pupils, including the most able, make at least good progress. This work, although not yet fully complete, is having a positive impact and all pupils are making better progress than they were a year ago. The increased knowledge that teachers have about the progress their pupils are making helps them to provide the right level of challenge for all pupils in each lesson. However, because they do not always give the pupils specific enough information about what they are expecting each of them to achieve by the end of a lesson, pupils do not always know exactly what to aim for. Pupils' desire to improve is evident in the intelligent way older pupils talk about the marking of their work, saying that they need to know more precisely

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where and how they could make it better. Inspection evidence supports their view that marking is not precise enough, especially in mathematics.

Because there has been a need to prioritise development and change in the school, there are aspects of the curriculum that the school has not yet had time to improve. Although pupils have opportunity to apply what they have learned in lessons in English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) in topic work, this is not yet systematically planned and does not play the part it might in helping pupils to make even better progress. Additionally, pupils lack sufficient opportunity to learn about and discuss issues related to cultural diversity, especially that which exists in the United Kingdom.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Move the quality of teaching from good to outstanding by ensuring that:
 - all pupils know exactly what they are aiming to achieve by the end of a lesson
 - feedback, especially marking, is precise in showing pupils how and where they could improve their work.
- Develop the curriculum by:
 - systematically planning opportunities for pupils to apply skills learned in English, mathematics and ICT lessons across a range of subjects and situations
 - providing pupils with more opportunities to learn about and discuss cultural diversity, especially in relation to the United Kingdom.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Pupils are very enthusiastic about school. In lessons, they show interest and an admirable ability to think deeply about what they are doing. In an English lesson in Year 6, for example, pupils showed they were able not only to analyse the form of a poem about the sea, but to recognise the emotions the writer was aiming to evoke in the reader. From the youngest age, pupils are highly supportive of each other. Pupils in Year 1, for instance, add greatly to the experiences of reception children through the way they work and play together. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities actively enjoy the extra activities provided for them and they make good progress. The improvement work to ensure that more-able pupils make the best possible progress, although not fully complete, is raising rates of progress very successfully. The impact of work to increase pupils' input into school improvement can be seen in the way they talk about things they have helped with, for example, saying that the building of a 'trim trail' has increased opportunity for pupils to play cooperatively, as well as actively, at playtime. It is also evident in the way they discuss ways in which they consider aspects of teaching, for example marking, could be improved. Pupils play an active part in village life, for example running stalls at the village fete, and they are aware that activities like recycling mean that they can make a small contribution to the world-wide community and they are very keen to do this. Pupils' strong sense of fairness and respect for others, along with their outstanding behaviour, exemplifies their strong spiritual, moral and social development. A lack of knowledge of cultural diversity, especially that in the United Kingdom, currently inhibits them from translating their very positive attitudes into a better level of cultural

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development. Although high attainment and rates of attendance mean that pupils are well prepared for their futures, the school is correct in identifying that in order to make this aspect outstanding, pupils need more opportunity to learn to apply their basic skills and knowledge across a range of subjects and situations.

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	1
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	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	1
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?

Teachers form very effective relationships with their pupils which not only ensure well-disciplined lessons, but also promote pupils' wish to succeed. Teachers use their strong subject knowledge to provide clear explanations and to question pupils in a way that deepens their level of thinking. Very productive use is made of partnerships between teachers and highly skilled teaching assistants, especially in support of lower-attaining pupils. Over the last year, assessment processes have been developed so that teachers now have access to, and increasing responsibility for analysing, detailed information about the attainment and progress of their pupils. They are using this well in planning lessons at the correct level for their pupils. Although they now inform pupils of a general expectation of what they will achieve by the end of a lesson and are usually clear in their own minds what they are expecting from different groups, they are not yet specific enough in relaying this to the pupils to promote outstanding progress. The new assessment procedures mean that the guidance given to pupils is becoming more useful to them, especially in improving their writing. Pupils are provided with feedback, including through marking, but this is

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often a generalised comment, such as saying to pupils that they should have used more adjectives in a piece of writing, rather than showing them examples of places where they could have used them to enhance the text.

The curriculum is successful in helping pupils to develop strong basic skills. Enrichment activities such as residential trips and weeks when the whole school focuses on one subject, provide pupils with highlights that greatly increase their enthusiasm for school, as well as broadening their experiences. The application of skills is a weaker element of the curriculum which the school is now seeking to improve. The curriculum actively supports pupils' health and well-being. This, the emphasis on knowing and supporting the individual and rigorous procedures to ensure the safety of all, make the care, guidance and support provided outstanding. There is attention to detail, so that, although there are high levels of attendance, the school is still rightly seeking to reduce the taking of holidays in term-time. The school is particularly successful in promoting the well-being of some more vulnerable pupils but, because each individual is valued, all pupils are significant beneficiaries of high quality care.

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?

The headteacher has been extremely successful in presenting, promoting and sharing a strong, principled vision for the development of the school. The right of every child to as good an education as possible is a key underlying philosophy of the school and this, together with robust checking of progress, has ensured that gaps, such as the less consistent progress of more-able pupils, are rapidly closing. This is promoting high levels of equality of opportunity. There is a strong sense of teamwork among staff with a shared determination to reach the high goals they have set for themselves. Systems for school self-evaluation have become increasingly robust, with class teachers becoming more systematically involved than they were 18 months ago. The resulting evaluation is generally accurate, although, because the leadership has such high standards, it sometimes underestimates the school's strengths. The evaluation has been translated into a correctly prioritised agenda of aspects of provision needing development. Many positive initiatives have been put in place that have successfully dealt with the most important aspects of this agenda. Progress in writing has improved and work to improve the use of assessment in the classroom is also having positive impact. Because there has been a need to increase the leadership skills of staff, the leadership of teaching and learning has not yet been as widely shared as the headteacher and governors aim to make it. However, there is the energy and capacity among staff to ensure that this is fully addressed.

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It is to the credit of headteacher, staff and governors that relationships with parents and carers are strong. Initiatives, such as that which brings parents and carers into school on a daily basis to assist pupils with their reading, and opportunities like the governors' forum which allows parents and carers to ask questions about the school, have been very successful in promoting parental links and positive opinion. The governing body is particularly proactive in the way it supports the headteacher in fulfilling her role. Governors very systematically hold the school to account for pupils' progress. The school is diligent in ensuring pupils are properly safeguarded through very tight systems for child protection, good staff training and regular checking of health and safety provision. The school knows its local community well and has very successfully put in place measures to enhance cohesion within school, in the local community and internationally. An audit of the provision, however, shows that there is a need to strengthen this work with respect to cohesion within the United Kingdom.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
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	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
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	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter the school with levels of skills and knowledge that are above those expected for their age. The wide range of indoor and outdoor activities available to them promotes good learning and a very pronounced enthusiasm for school and working. For example, the enthusiasm with which children independently wrote their version of the story, *The Rainbow Fish*, as well as their level of skill, was remarkable. Strong leadership has ensured that the new arrangements in which the reception children are taught alongside Year 1 have been expertly managed. Very skilled classroom organisation and very strong teamwork between the teacher and the teaching assistant mean that children in the Reception Year benefit from being taught alongside older pupils, while being given good opportunity to learn in a way that is appropriate for their age. Activities, such as a challenge to see which group of children could make the best sandcastle, promote not

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only cooperative play but also a sense of learning being fun! As a result, by the end of the year, almost all of the children have attained the skills and knowledge expected for their age and most have attainments in excess of this. The strength of the way the children's self-confidence has been promoted was evident during the inspection when half the group happily became part of the Reception class in another local school, while the remaining children greeted and worked with great aplomb with a similar group visiting from the same school.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

An above-average proportion of returned questionnaires show that the school enjoys the very positive support of the large majority of parents and carers. They particularly like that their children are kept safe and that they like school. Many parents and carers are very positive about the headteacher's leadership and the changes that have been made. Inspectors' judgements match these positive opinions. A small minority of parents and carers feel their suggestions and concerns are not acted upon. Inspection evidence shows that there are many ways for parents and carers to express their opinions and, where possible, these have been acted on. Remaining concerns are largely connected with a change in the way some classes will be organised in the coming year. Inspection evidence shows that when this happened last year, it was very well managed to the benefit of the pupils involved. A small number express concerns that higher-attaining pupils do not make good enough progress. As identified in this report, this is an aspect of the school that is rapidly improving.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Mary's Bentworth Church of England 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 52 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 98 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	30	58	21	40	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	43	83	9	17	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	23	44	26	50	3	6	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	25	48	20	38	4	8	2	4
The teaching is good at this school	29	56	21	40	1	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	22	42	25	48	4	8	1	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	24	46	28	54	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	52	16	31	4	8	1	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	28	54	20	39	1	2	2	4
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	25	48	22	42	1	2	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	23	44	20	38	8	15	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	29	56	20	38	1	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	29	56	20	38	0	0	1	2

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	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 2010 to 31 December 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see 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.

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

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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.



6 July 2011

Dear Children

**Inspection of St Mary's Bentworth Church of England Primary School,
Bentworth GU34 5RE**

We really enjoyed our time in your school and one of the highlights was discussing things with you. We think you are right to think yours is a good school. Some of the things we liked best were:

- that your school is helping you to grow up to be thoughtful and hard-working
- the good progress you make in English and mathematics
- the very strong start that is given to those of you in the Reception Year
- your exemplary behaviour and the way you respect and support each other
- the very significant contribution you make in helping your school community to run well and to improve
- the good teaching you receive that helps you to be interested in your work
- the way your teachers and other staff take care of each and every one of you which makes you feel very safe and secure
- the energy your headteacher, governing body and other staff put into trying to make your school an even better place.

We think you are very fortunate to have such an exceptional headteacher, who fully deserves the respect you have for her. To make things even better we have asked your school to:

- make sure that each of you knows what you are aiming to achieve in each lesson and that marking is precise in showing you how you could improve your work
- give you more chance to apply what you have learned in English, mathematics and ICT lessons in other work and to give you more opportunity to learn about and discuss the different way of life of others living in the United Kingdom.

We know that you will be able to discuss with your headteacher and teachers some ways in which these improvements can be made.

Yours sincerely

Rowena Onions

Lead inspector

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