

St Bartholomews CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120551
Local Authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	363922
Inspection dates	7–8 July 2011
Reporting inspector	Roderick Passant

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	89
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Bryn Chappell
Headteacher	Sally Birks
Date of previous school inspection	27 November 2011
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The lead inspector saw four teachers teaching six lessons. In addition, he made a number of briefer visits to lessons, including older pupils' singing and brass lesson as part of the wider opportunities programme, scrutinised a range of work from Year 1 and Year 5 and saw two assemblies. In addition, brief visits were made to the school's Friday afternoon curriculum arrangements which make use of outside providers to extend the range of learning opportunities. Inspectors observed the school's work, held meetings with the headteacher, three members of the governing body including the Chair of the Governing Body, and looked at a range of documentation associated with safeguarding and school improvement planning. The questionnaire responses from 38 parents and carers, 51 pupils and nine staff were scrutinised.

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

- How effectively is the school's system for monitoring the progress of all pupils used and what does it say about current progress?
- What evidence is there that the school's leadership is making sustained improvements to pupils' progress?
- What is the balance of informal and formal systems to evaluate the work of the school?
- How effectively is the school providing for pupils' cultural development?

Information about the school

The school is much smaller than the average primary school. It serves the rural area of West Pinchbeck but approximately a third of pupils come from further afield. While most pupils are from White British heritage, 12 per cent of pupils come from a range of backgrounds, mainly Polish, so that the proportion of pupils who first language is not English is above average. Many of these pupils are at a relatively early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average although the proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is above average. A far greater proportion of pupils than is generally seen (26 per cent) have joined the school at other than normal times in the last two years. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly average.

The school has close links with a playgroup which uses the school site. This is privately run and is subject to separate inspection procedures. As part of its extended services, the school operates a family learning programme. Classes are mixed aged although the school ensures that the Reception class is taught separately in the mornings and Year 2 is taught separately in the afternoons. There have been significant staff changes since the last inspection.

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?		
The school's capacity for sustained improvement	2	

Main findings

There have been significant changes since the school was last inspected both in staffing and in the nature of its intake. It has responded well to the enriched diversity of its roll and the needs of pupils learning English as an additional language. Although there are aspects of its provision which still need to be embedded, the school is continuing to improve and provides a good education for its pupils.

Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, pupils with English as an additional language and those joining the school other than at the usual time, achieve well. Standards by the end of Year 6 are broadly average representing pupils' good progress over their time in school from their generally below average starting points.

The school encourages pupils' personal development well. Pupils are known and feel valued as individuals and are proud of their school. Across the school, in many different and often small ways, adults acknowledge the pupils, fostering their confidence and selfesteem. Almost all pupils who responded to the questionnaire felt that staff care about them. Behaviour is good. Pupils feel that occasional incidents are managed effectively and they are confident to approach staff if they feel troubled. Most pupils and all parents and carers judge the school keeps them safe. It is a friendly school with a welcoming ethos and as one pupil put it, 'It is easy to blend in.' All parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire were happy with their children's experience at the school.

Although not entirely consistent, good teaching ensures that pupils make good progress. Objectives for lessons, particularly in subjects other than English and mathematics, are not always expressed in terms that are easy for pupils to understand. Nor do they always define precisely what the teacher wants pupils to gain from the lesson. While marking is generally good guality, giving pupils a clear idea how to improve their work, in lessons, pupils are not consistently helped to evaluate their learning. This is because the criteria for successful learning by the end of the lesson are not always established with the class. As a result, opportunities for pupils to develop their independence and show initiative are lost. On occasions too, opportunities are missed to bring the class together to check and refocus pupils' learning or accelerate the pace of learning during the lesson.

A key factor in the promotion of good progress is the use of the school's systems for monitoring, sustained focus, and evaluation of pupils' progress. The school knows where pupils are in their learning, identifies early the need for additional support and draws on a wide range of strategies to ensure that pupils are helped over difficulties. The school's leadership has an accurate perception of the school's strengths and what it needs to develop further and this is articulated in a clear development plan. Staff are committed to improving the school, a commitment shared by the governing body. The focus on improving teaching and learning has meant that pupils' progress across the school has

improved. Guided reading has improved attainment in reading. Progress in English has improved and the school has invested in a phonics (letters and sounds) programme to develop pupils' writing skills. Standards in mathematics have also improved. The school has good capacity for ongoing improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that teacher's objectives for lessons, particularly in lessons other than English and mathematics, define precisely in simple terms what it is they want the pupils to learn and that during the lesson there are regular checks on their learning.
- In order to allow pupils to use their initiative and develop their independence as learners, ensure that pupils know what they are expected to achieve by the end of the lesson or unit of work by establishing the criteria for success, so that pupils can judge how successful they have been and can take steps to improve.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

Pupils behave well in lessons. They listen to their teacher, concentrate well and work at a good rate on their various tasks. Older pupils make good use of dictionaries and displays to support their work. Pupils have good opportunities to work together, sharing and rehearsing their ideas. They speak confidently, using standard English because they often report back to the class and give extended answers to questions. Younger pupils were able to discuss and make sensible suggestions for their improvements to their fair test and in their science work there was a clear stress on acquiring subject-specific language. Older pupils are confident readers and there is a strong sustained focus on developing a rich vocabulary. Pupils clearly engaged well with The Hound of the Baskerville, creating precise descriptions of the main characters. Presentation of written work is variable. Older pupils clearly enjoy mathematics and set about solving the problem of the weight of the swimming pool with enthusiasm, working together well to establish appropriate strategies, although some pupils lost sight of the priorities in developing their presentation.

Pupils learning English as additional language make good progress because they have individual learning plans which are based on their particular needs. The whole school study of Poland, involving parents and carers, ensured that these pupils feel valued. There is strong informal support from their buddies and peers so that they are fully included in the life of the school, providing good formal and informal opportunities to develop their language skills. A bi-lingual teaching assistant and Polish-speaking governor provide additional sources of support. The phonics programme and other intervention strategies, including one-to-one support, develop their language skills in a systematic manner.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because the school draws on a wide range of intervention strategies. These provide systematic support in language and mathematics skills matched to the careful analysis of individual pupils' needs. Teachers work with specific focus groups, moving around the class and planning identifies appropriate challenge and support particularly in English and mathematics.

Teaching assistants provide stability and are experienced and skilled. Teachers and assistants bring the small-step progress of many of the interventions into the classroom so that learning is broken down into small steps. Pupils with support plans for behaviour and emotional issues generally make good progress, learning to take responsibility for their

2

actions because staff manage behaviour in a positive way and are consistent in their expectations. Almost all parents and carers feel that the school manages occasional incidents of unacceptable behaviour well. More-able pupils are now challenged effectively, particularly in mathematics.

Pupils have a good understanding of what goes to make up a healthy lifestyle and the importance of nutrition and exercise. They have good opportunities for exercise through swimming, physical education and many participate in the various sporting clubs run through the school's sports partnership. Pupils make a good contribution to the school and local community. They take their various roles and responsibilities, such as house captains and junior road safety officers, seriously. Older pupils are very aware of their importance as role models and keep an eye out for younger pupils. The school council is influential in school affairs deciding, for example, what clubs should operate. The result is that about 90% of pupils attend at least one club. There are strong links with the church and the school participates in many local festivals. Pupils demonstrate their compassion through charity fundraising organising their 'Pudsey' event for Children in Need. Given pupils' academic skills and personal development, the school provides a sound foundation for their future school careers. Attendance is broadly average.

Pupils are confident and have good self-esteem. They respect and have mature attitudes towards other's abilities, needs and backgrounds and, as a result, the school is a friendly, inclusive and cohesive community. Pupils are involved in creating the school's 'golden rules' and learn to take responsibility for their actions. The school's Christian ethos provides a strong moral framework and there are good opportunities to work and play together. Pupils have a good understanding of other faiths and a developing empathy for others' beliefs.

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

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	3
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	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	3
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 manage the mixed-aged classes effectively, have good relationships with the pupils and know them well. They create a purposeful ethos in lessons, build pupils' confidence through humour and targeted praise, and recognise their achievements. As a result, pupils are not afraid of making a mistake because, they say, 'We're not told off if we are wrong.' Planning is detailed and work matched carefully to the needs of pupils, particularly in English and mathematics. There is good teamwork with teaching assistants who provide effective support. On occasion, even in good lessons, the pace of learning could be even sharper. This is because teachers do not always define precisely what they want pupils to gain from the lesson and, working back from this point, the steps and checks on progress needed to achieve the goal.

The school's work on using specialised assessment materials has helped teachers' awareness of the next steps needed because they have developed greater accuracy in their marking. This is detailed and helpful and followed through to ensure that pupils respond. The criteria for successful learning are not always shared with pupils and thus opportunities are missed to further develop pupils' initiative and independence. Staff have good subject knowledge and are confident to manage open-ended situations.

The curriculum makes a significant contribution to pupils' personal development and enjoyment of learning through the creative and practical approach which links subjects together within a thematic approach. Information and communication technology is now

more integrated into pupils' learning and has improved since the last inspection. The thematic approach provides a range of contexts to develop pupils' writing. A strong feature is the flexibility and tailoring to meet the needs of individuals and needs of specific groups. Science is a strong feature along with music. Extensive use is made of other providers to extend pupils' learning experiences. The school takes seriously its role in preparing pupils for a culturally diverse society and exploring aspects of other countries' cultures is included in their Friday afternoon alternative curriculum. In addition, the curriculum is enriched by theme days, problem-solving weeks, trips and enrichment activities to broaden pupils' experiences.

The school works closely with families and individual pupils to support their learning. Support is targeted effectively, with creative and flexible deployment of staff to ensure that pupils are supported well. The school makes effective use of specialist agencies to provide additional support. There are good transition arrangements into the Reception class. The school rigorously follows up unexplained absence, telephoning parents and carers on the first day of absence.

The quality of teaching	2
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	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

These are the grades for the quality of provision

How effective are leadership and management?

There is evident strong teamwork amongst staff and shared commitment to the pupils, their success and to school improvement. There has been a sustained focus on successfully improving teaching and learning. In their questionnaires, all staff felt proud to be part of the school and knew what the school was trying to achieve. Staff collectively monitor their work and develop their skills in evaluation through, for example shared moderation of assessment or scrutiny of pupils' work. School improvement priorities are developed through formal consultation and a wide range of internal and external sources, and have led to improvements. The school has brokered a package of external support to help develop pupils' writing further and made significant investment in a phonics programme to help in this process.

The governing body is effective. The Chair of the Governing Body talked about a new dynamic in the governing body, reflected in their support for and commitment to the school's further improvement. Governors provide good strategic leadership and appropriate challenge because they monitor the work of the school through their links with classes and through their involvement in specific aspects of the school. They have good first-hand experience of the school which, coupled with the good information they receive from the school's leadership, ensures that they are well informed. There is a transparent, open relationship with the school's leaders and the governing body is influential in the

school's decision-making process. The views of parents and carers are sought formally through questionnaires and also informally. The governing body is rigorous in ensuring that staff and pupils are safe. Safeguarding is good because there is evidence of good systematic record-keeping from initial concerns to action with clear record of conversations with appropriate agencies.

The school is working to narrow the gap between pupils' attainment and national averages and is ensuring that all pupils make good progress. For example, almost all pupils made at least the expected two levels progress this year from their end of Year 2 tests. It is also reflected in the fact that the attainment of pupils with more pronounced learning difficulties was above average in 2010. There is little difference between boys' and girls' attitudes or performance in lessons.

The school's commitment to educating its pupils to participate in a diverse society is reflected in its action plan to develop community cohesion. It knows its local community well and ensures, through its curriculum, that the school community is cohesive with pupils respecting others' backgrounds. The achievement assembly included 35 parents, carers and family members creating a warm family atmosphere. Links with a local school have been developed but links with schools abroad have yet to be established.

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	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
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

These are the grades for leadership and management

Early Years Foundation Stage

The proportion of children whose development is typical for their age varies from year to year. In the past, children's skills and experiences on entry have been below those expected for their ages. The current, more-able intake is on track to achieve particularly well. Adults create a warm, purposeful ethos in which children make good progress, behave and work well together, developing their independence. This is reflected in the way they tackled their mathematics challenge and tidied away the various resources.

Children enjoy learning and are proud of their work and accomplishments. They develop in confidence, explaining, for example, to the rest of the class why they took their particular photo of a pattern and about the way they work with older children. Adults work well together because joint planning is detailed and staff are clear about their roles. Ongoing assessment is used effectively to identify children's next steps in their learning.

Adults model good speaking skills and listen particularly well to what children have to say, encouraging, questioning and developing rich opportunities for children to talk. The introduction of phonics work is accelerating children's reading and writing skills. Good resources are set up well to reinforce learning and allow children choices. The headteacher is currently acting as the Early Years Foundation Stage leader and has made good use of assessment data to identify further developments. There have been improvements in provision, such as partial covering of the courtyard area to enhance outdoor learning and the zoning of learning areas within the classroom. The school has also successfully tackled the key issue from the last report relating to encourage less formal teaching. Staff have visited outstanding settings gathering ideas for further development.

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	
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

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Views of parents and carers

The positive responses to the questionnaire are above average. Thirteen parents and carers wrote additional comments received during the inspection. Five of these were critical comments, although these were often raised within a positive picture and were generally to do with the need for improved communication. The school publishes a regular newsletter and created a website. Both give information about the themes that the pupils will be exploring in class along with other information. The school also subscribes to a text messaging service. Eight comments were very supportive of the school. These stressed the inclusive and welcoming nature of the school and made positive comments about the school's leadership.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Bartholomews CofE 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 inspector received 38 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 89 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	24	63	14	37	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	31	82	7	18	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	17	45	20	53	1	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	19	50	18	47	1	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	19	50	19	50	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	23	61	14	37	1	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	16	42	22	58	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)	22	58	16	42	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	17	45	19	50	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	18	47	17	45	1	3	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	20	53	18	47	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	21	55	15	39	1	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	23	61	15	39	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

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.

What inspection judgements mean

Overall effectiveness of schools

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	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:	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.
	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.

11 July 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Bartholomews CofE Primary School, Spalding, PE11 3QJ

Thank you for making me so welcome in your school. My particular thanks go to those Year 6 pupils who gave up part of their lunchtime to talk to me. Your thoughtful answers to my questions were very helpful.

This is a good school and you are right to be proud of it. Your attainment at the end of Year 6 is similar to that found in many schools. Most of you enjoy school. You make good progress from your various starting points and achieve well. Your behaviour is good. You told me that hardly anyone is ever picked on. I am glad that you feel confident to approach an adult if you feel upset by something and that you feel that any problems are sorted out quickly. You help create a friendly school which is welcoming. You have very grown-up attitudes towards other children's needs, reflected in the 'friendship stop' in the playground.

You make good progress because your teachers have a good range of skills, create fun ways for you to learn, and adults care about you a great deal. I asked the headteacher to work with staff to ensure that they are very clear in lessons what it is that they want you to learn, and check on your progress during the lessons. I have also asked the staff to more consistently help you become less reliant on them by ensuring that you know how to judge how well you have done in a lesson. This is so that you can take more responsibility for your learning and set about improving your work.

This school has undergone a number of changes but has improved since it was last inspected and staff and governors are committed to see this improvement continue. You can help in this process by ensuring that you attend regularly, that it remains a friendly school, and that you continue to do your best by working in partnership with your teachers.

Yours sincerely

Roderick Passant Lead inspector



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