

Brixworth CofE VC Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121964
Local Authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	380369
Inspection dates	19–20 September 2011
Reporting inspector	Geof Timms

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	450
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mike Nash
Headteacher	David Boucher
Date of previous school inspection	18 November 2008
School address	Froxhill Crescent Brixworth Northampton NN6 9BG
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. They observed 23 lessons and 17 teachers. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, staff and members of the governing body. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at assessment information, policies, improvement plans and safeguarding procedures. In addition, 180 parental questionnaires were scrutinised.

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

- The team explored why pupils' progress has been more inconsistent in Key Stage 2 than in Key Stage 1.
- It looked at the impact of the school's work to raise standards in mathematics.
- It scrutinised the work the school has done to adapt the curriculum to support the learning of different groups of pupils including those who demonstrate more challenging behaviour.
- It considered the impact of improvements made to the school's work in monitoring and evaluating its success.

Information about the school

This is a larger than average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average. The majority of the pupils are White British, and the proportion from other ethnic backgrounds is below average. A very small number speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average. The school has Artsmark Gold, Activemark, National Healthy Schools status and is an ECO school. The governing body runs a breakfast club for the pupils.

There is a privately run after-school club that is inspected and reported on separately.

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 that provides pupils with a good start to their education and a firm foundation for their future lives. It is understandably popular with parents and carers and a very large majority say they are happy with their children's experience at the school. Inspection findings support that positive view, as clearly pupils enjoy their work and play and make good progress building on an excellent start in the Reception Year.

The contribution pupils make to the school and wider community is outstanding and they are keen to take on the wide range of responsibilities offered to them. The school values its place at the centre of the village and wider community. Pupils have a good awareness of how to stay safe and healthy and the school's safeguarding arrangements are good. Although behaviour in the school is good and at times, such as in assemblies, outstanding, there is a small number of pupils with significant emotional and behavioural needs. Staff work hard to provide well for these pupils, to support their progress and to ensure other pupils' learning is not affected. However, this aspect of the school's nurture work is at an early stage of development and has not been evaluated in order to ensure the whole school community is aware of what is involved. Some of the staff have not been trained as fully as required and parents and carers have not been kept sufficiently aware of how those pupils' particular needs are being addressed.

Attainment is above average in reading, writing and mathematics by the time pupils leave the school. That is built on the outstanding start children get in the Reception classes and the good progress evident through Years 1 and 2. Progress in Years 3 to 6 has been less consistent in the past. However, as a result of more effective teaching, both learning and progress in those years are currently good. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make equally good progress in response to some effective interventions. In the past, attainment varied and was not as good in mathematics as in English. The school has worked hard to address that; attainment in mathematics has risen and is now close to that found in reading and writing.

Although teaching and learning are good overall, where they are less effective, work is not always matched well to what pupils know and understand already and does not always provide sufficient challenge for the most able. Teachers know their pupils well and much of the marking of work, especially in literacy, is of high quality and useful to pupils. Even so, some pupils remain unaware of what their next target

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should be and what they need to do to achieve it. The school has begun to develop a more creative curriculum and this is supporting pupils' learning well by making appropriate and meaningful links between subjects.

The school is led and managed well. The headteacher makes very effective use of the expertise of the staff and within the senior leadership team. The school's business manager has a very effective role within the senior leadership team in ensuring the smooth running of the school. Self-evaluation is good. Senior staff work very effectively to monitor and improve the quality of teaching and learning. Because of those strengths, the school has a good capacity to sustain improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure all pupils make at least good progress by:
 - providing work that is sufficiently challenging for all groups of pupils
 - ensuring all pupils know exactly how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve.
- Evaluate and improve the provision for the small number of pupils who display challenging behaviour by:
 - ensuring all staff are suitably trained in working with pupils with emotional and behavioural needs
 - keeping parents and carers informed about the school's approach in managing challenging behaviour.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils enjoy learning, make good progress and their achievement is good. That is true of all groups of pupils, including the small proportion from minority ethnic backgrounds. Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because staff set them work that is matched consistently to the next steps in learning with their specific needs in mind. For example, in one lesson, pupils with speech and language difficulties were developing a good understanding of how sentences are sequenced by providing oral instructions to others, who then wrote out the order of events. In most lessons seen, learning was good and at times outstanding. In a Year 2 class, small groups of pupils were working hard writing instructions in order to complete a recipe. They were curious and enjoyed answering the teacher's questions and discussing ideas in groups. That was effective in promoting their vocabulary, self-confidence, communication skills and understanding. Many pupils work with a good level of independence, which they enjoy. Sometimes, more-able pupils are given work that does not challenge them sufficiently. In their writing, pupils use appropriate vocabulary to express their ideas clearly and produce some lengthy pieces of work. Their reading shows accuracy and fluency often. In mathematics, pupils' skills are good, but their ability to apply this knowledge to solving mathematical problems is sometimes less well developed. Good-quality work is evident in art and design, science and information and communication technology.

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Pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They have a strong sense of common values, such as fairness. They have a secure knowledge of other cultures and good opportunities to develop their musical and artistic talents. Pupils’ excellent contribution to their local community is evident in the wide range of responsibilities they take on at school and the work they do in the local community. In the wider community, pupils take part in an excellent range of fundraising activities for those less fortunate than themselves. Pupils have a number of responsibilities involving helping each other and supporting those in need. In particular, they have strong responsibilities for controlling a lot of the new technology in school. Others work very closely to support those with specific physical needs to help them take a full part in school life.

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	2
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	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	2
The extent of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Good teaching and learning have a positive impact on the good progress evident in the school. The best teaching is effective in developing pupils’ thinking skills. For example, in an outstanding science lesson, pupils discussed and shared their ideas for ways of testing materials before devising appropriate experiments. Behaviour in lessons is largely good and has a positive impact on learning. At times, a few pupils find it hard to maintain their focus and teachers do not always intervene sufficiently to keep them on task. Work to include pupils with learning and physical needs is very effective. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils’ progress, for example, by supporting and monitoring learning in a calm, professional and

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

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independent manner. Teachers assess pupils’ progress regularly, but do not always help them fully to understand what they need to do to reach the next level.

The school has a good curriculum. It is effective in meeting pupils’ needs and supporting the strong progress they make. There is a good range of extra-curricular and enrichment activities. The care, guidance and support provided for pupils are effective. That encourages their above-average attendance and provides them with a safe, healthy environment where they are well cared for and looked after if they are hurt or worried. Pupils with significant medical needs are successfully and fully included and looked after. In addition, there is evidence that, when needed, the school provides strong support for families. The governing body’s breakfast club provides pupils with a calm start to the day and supports their welfare effectively.

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	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher’s and senior leaders’ challenging and clearly articulated targets for the school are shared by the staff. In the questionnaires completed, all said they were proud to be a member of staff at the school. Leaders, backed up by productive partnerships with the local authority and external consultants, have provided successful training that has honed teachers' skills, for example, in improving pupils' understanding of what makes a good piece of writing. The governing body works hard on behalf of the school. It has a clear understanding of the available data and challenges the school robustly on its performance. Its links with parents and carers are good, although the governing body is aware that the school needs to find ways of improving this even further. The governing body strives to ensure that its composition reflects the skills needed by the school.

The school has good systems in place to ensure pupils enjoy equal opportunities, especially through its ‘nurturing school’ policy. The good progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities shows that its policies have a positive impact. Safety and safeguarding are given a high priority. Child protection procedures meet current safeguarding requirements fully and are robust and updated regularly. The checks that the school makes on the suitability of adults to work with pupils are rigorous. Lessons on safety and safeguarding provide pupils with a very strong understanding of how to keep themselves safe.

The school is good at engaging the support of parents and carers for their children's

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learning at home. For example, it arranges for curriculum sessions to take place so they are aware of what is being taught. It provides parents and carers with specific information about how they can help their children. The school is a happy and harmonious community in which most pupils integrate well. Its promotion of wider community cohesion is well developed, with some excellent opportunities for pupils to contribute to the well-being of those with differing needs. The school has good plans for the extension of its national and global links. It provides opportunities for the site to be used for community projects and pupils work in harmony with many local businesses and charities.

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	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

Early Years Foundation Stage

The provision in the Reception classes is outstanding and, understandably, has been used as an exemplar by other practitioners. The Early Years Foundation Stage is led and managed excellently and this has been maintained during a period of staff changes. A major strength of the provision is the induction process to support children and their parents and carers when starting school. The impact of that work is strikingly evident in the very calm, active learning ethos that has been created quickly in all three classes. The work is having a very positive effect on how children have settled and on how well they are working and playing together. There are excellent relationships between the adults and the children and this encourages the children’s full participation in activities. The Reception classes are very well resourced. Excellent use is made of the good and recently expanded outdoor classroom. Activities are well planned and allow for a range of teacher-directed learning, as well as opportunities for children to follow their own interests. Adults observe and assess children’s learning continually and use a range of methods for recording their findings. The data show that excellent progress is made from

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children’s broadly typical levels of attainment on entry, so that many exceed the expected levels by the time they start in Year 1.

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

Of the parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire, the large majority are happy with the school’s work and say their children enjoy school. That is supported by the evidence of the inspection. A minority are concerned about how well the schools works with the small number of pupils who, occasionally, exhibit challenging behaviour and this is an aspect the school has yet to address fully. Because of that, a minority of parents and carers are unclear how well the school meets some individual children’s needs. Inspectors looked closely at how the school manages behaviour and found that it is working well to support a range of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and that behaviour in school is nearly always good.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

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

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 180 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 450 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	94	53	78	44	7	4	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	100	56	75	42	1	1	2	1
The school informs me about my child’s progress	54	30	111	62	11	6	2	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	55	31	95	54	18	10	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	70	39	96	54	8	4	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	71	40	93	52	11	6	2	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	74	42	95	53	6	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)	81	46	85	48	3	2	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	59	33	94	53	19	11	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	44	25	83	48	33	19	3	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	53	30	102	58	13	7	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	74	42	93	53	4	2	2	1
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	82	46	88	49	5	3	3	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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 08 April 2011 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.



21 September 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Brixworth CofE VC Primary School, Northampton, NN6 9BG

Thank you for the way you welcomed us to your school recently. We enjoyed our visit and talking to many of you about your school. We were impressed with how well you had started the new school year and settled so quickly into your new classes.

We found that yours is a good school. Teaching is good and teachers provide you with an interesting curriculum to help you learn. You told us how much you enjoy being at the school and learning new things. Teachers and other adults are working hard to help you to learn and you help them by behaving well in lessons. Even so, the school needs to look at its efforts to help those of you who find concentrating on work more difficult and improve how this is done. You make an outstanding contribution to the school in the way you help each other, take on a wide range of jobs and responsibilities, and you play an important role in the life of the village and wider community also.

You reach good levels in your work, especially in reading, writing and mathematics. Clearly, You enjoy physical education, musical and artistic activities also. There are times when the teachers do not always give you work that challenges you enough. We have also asked the teachers to make it clearer to you how well you are doing and what you need to do to reach the next level.

Thank you again for your help during the inspection. Enjoy your time at Brixworth and keep working hard!

Yours sincerely

Geof Timms
Lead inspector (on behalf of the inspection team)

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