

# Bitterley CofE Primary School (Aided)

Inspection report

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	123535
<b>Local authority</b>	Shropshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	380681
<b>Inspection dates</b>	24–25 April 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Gerald Griffin

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>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	104
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Carmen Jennings
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jane Bishop
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	13 March 2007
<b>School address</b>	Bitterley Ludlow SY8 3HF
<b>Telephone number</b>	01584 890228
<b>Fax number</b>	01584 891572
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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
<b>Inspection date(s)</b>	24–25 April 2012
<b>Inspection number</b>	380681



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## Introduction

Inspection team

Gerald Griffin

Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector observed the teaching in ten lessons, as well as visiting a further three lessons for shorter periods to further evaluate pupils' progress and the quality of marking. A total of six teachers were observed teaching, as well as a small number of teaching assistants. The inspector held meetings with groups of pupils, two members of the governing body and staff. The inspector observed the school's work and looked at records of pupils' progress and heard them read; evaluated safeguarding documentation, records of exclusions and poor behaviour and the results of the school's checks on the quality of teaching. The inspector took account of the views of the 62 parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire.

## Information about the school

Bitterley is smaller than the average primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average. The school meets the government's current floor standard, which are the minimum standards expected by the government. In most lessons two year groups are taught together in the class. The Bitterley pre-school and the Chatterbox pre- and after-school care settings are privately managed and are inspected 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

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

## Key findings

- This is a good school in which pupils achieve well. Despite many strengths the school is not outstanding because the quality of teaching is not high enough to ensure that pupils make consistently outstanding progress in all subjects.
- Children make a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage, and their good progress continues in reading and writing in Years 1 and 2. Pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics in Years 3 to 6 and satisfactory progress in mathematics in Years 1 and 2. Year 6 attainment is above average. All groups, in all phases, achieve equally well, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.
- Teaching is effective. Teachers provide pupils with a wide range of interesting and engaging experiences. Relationships in lessons are positive and pupils enjoy their learning. Occasionally, the typically rapid pace of learning is not sustained when work is not sufficiently demanding to stretch all pupils, especially in mathematics in Years 1 and 2, where progress is satisfactory. While younger pupils' reading skills are developing well there are occasions when phonics (the sounds that letters make) work is not effectively matched to pupils' differing abilities.
- Pupils' behaviour is good and they make a strong contribution to the well-ordered school and the smooth flow of lessons. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good and they show initiative and perseverance; they can manage their own learning from an early age. They feel extremely safe in school and have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe and secure.
- The headteacher's unrelenting drive to improve the school is enthusiastically shared by staff. Since the last inspection leaders have improved standards in writing, strengthened the quality of teachers' marking and improved governance so that leaders are better held to account for the school's performance. This means that the school has the capacity to improve.

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

- By July 2012, ensure that teachers consistently secure a rapid pace of learning throughout lessons by providing work that challenges all pupils, especially in mathematics in Years 1 and 2.
- By July 2012, ensure that phonics work is always closely matched to individuals' specific needs.

## Main report

### Achievement of pupils

Parents and carers are correct in their view that pupils achieve well. Pupils are making good gains in their learning because they are well taught. Children enter Reception with knowledge, skills and understanding typical for their age. Children make good progress in all areas of learning. Progress is especially good in mathematics because the work provided for children closely matches their needs. Leaders check carefully that their assessments of children's levels and progress are accurate. This good start is built upon in later years in reading and writing. Attainment in reading at the end of Year 2 is above average. However, on occasions phonics work is not always sufficiently well matched to pupils' capabilities and this means progress in reading is not outstanding. Pupils' progress in mathematics is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 because work does not always sufficiently challenge all members of the class. As a result, some find work too easy while others struggle with work that is too difficult. Attainment in Year 6 is above average, including in reading, and pupils are two terms ahead of what is expected nationally. Good achievement and good attitudes to learning prepare pupils well for secondary school.

Much good and some outstanding learning was seen during lesson observations. In the Reception class, children are curious and enthusiastically investigate and experiment. As a result, they gain a good level of independence in managing their own learning. In one Reception lesson seen, children were making good progress in subtracting numbers and understanding number patterns independently. In a Year 5 and 6 English lesson pupils discussed their ideas in groups; worked with a good level of independence and were able to plan and write 'Wind in the Willows' stories with minimal help from the teacher. Pupils are developing their basic skills of reading, writing, communication and mathematics effectively in all subjects. For example, older pupils use graphs accurately to show their results from science experiments on forces. Nearly all pupils listen attentively, speak confidently and articulate their ideas clearly.

Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs concentrate well in

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lessons. Their good progress is secured as they are taught effectively, and are well supported to achieve their small but challenging next steps in learning, which boosts their confidence to successfully tackle more difficult work. The small number of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals make similar progress to their peers.

### **Quality of teaching**

Parents' and carers' views that teaching is good are well founded. It is not outstanding as the match of work to pupils' capabilities could be better in mathematics and phonics, particularly in Years 1 and 2. This said, teachers have generally high expectations about what must be achieved. Teachers' questions are probing and make pupils think deeply. Teachers effectively use the many exciting and relevant learning opportunities provided to interest and engage pupils. Good use is made of resources such as games and computers to engage and motivate pupils to learn. In the Reception classes, teachers plan an appropriate balance of adult-led and child-chosen activities. Learning takes place inside and outdoors, and provision effectively develops children's understanding of the world at large and promotes their physical, creative and imaginative development effectively. Homework is set regularly in Years 1 to 6, and extends their class work well. Teachers' regular checks on pupils' knowledge and understanding during lessons are mostly used skilfully to plan the next steps in learning. However, there are occasions when the tasks set in phonics and mathematics are too easy or too difficult for some individuals. Teachers plan many opportunities to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, in religious education lessons, older pupils recently reflected on racist attitudes and how people are likely to feel when they are subjected to racism.

Teaching assistants provide valuable support for pupils, especially for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. For example, they keep notes on individuals' progress which are shared with the teacher to help with future planning. For some pupils, they report this progress on a daily basis to the child's parents and carers so that they can support their child's education at home. Marking and feedback provide pupils with a clear understanding of how they can improve their work. However, teachers do not consistently ensure that pupils follow up their comments in subsequent work.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Parents and carers, pupils and staff are right in thinking behaviour and safety are good. School records and discussions with pupils confirm that good behaviour is the norm. Pupils are enthusiastic and have positive attitudes towards school and learning in all of their lessons. They cooperate and collaborate well in groups. They have good levels of perseverance; show initiative and can think and learn for themselves. Pupils mostly manage their own behaviour well, which ensures lessons usually proceed without interruptions.

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Pupils have a very good understanding of what constitutes bullying, including cyber and prejudice-based bullying, how to avoid it and what to do if they encounter it. They say that bullying is unheard of and school records confirm that cases are very rare. Pupils are highly confident that any case of bullying would be quickly resolved by the school. They feel very safe and know precisely how to keep themselves safe, for example, when crossing the road or using the internet. Pupils take care to keep those around them safe too. Inspectors saw older pupils ensuring that Reception children could move safely and comfortably along the school's corridors.

Attendance is above average and is rising. Pupils are punctual to school and to lessons.

### **Leadership and management**

Key leaders, including the governing body, set challenging targets for school improvement. Their drive has successfully sustained the above-average attainment and good progress seen at the time of the previous inspection. Robust checks on teaching and the quality of learning are used well to plan successful actions to overcome weaknesses. For example, leaders are successful at sharpening teachers' assessments of the quality of written work, which have accelerated pupils' progress in writing. The capacity to improve further is good.

Leaders regularly check the progress of each pupil. They provide effective interventions to help pupils catch up on missed work. The needs of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are accurately assessed and used to provide them with appropriate learning programmes. The success of these programmes and interventions is regularly checked and revised to ensure they are effective. The targeted support for pupils whose circumstances have the potential to make them vulnerable is very effective. The governing body uses its good understanding of data to challenge the school robustly over its performance. This is an improvement since the last inspection.

Parents and carers' questionnaires show that they are very happy with the way the school advises them on helping their children to learn at home, for example with revision for tests. Parents and carers are correct in their view that the school is well led and managed.

The curriculum is good and provision widens pupils' horizons and raises their level of ambition. It strongly promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, it provides many opportunities for pupils to develop a strong understanding of right and wrong by reflecting on their actions and those of others. Pupils' good knowledge and understanding of a balanced diet and the need to take regular exercise are two examples of how it supports healthy lifestyles. Pupils talk enthusiastically about the many clubs and visits that are organised for them. Those in the archaeology club find their investigation of the site of the medieval village of Bitterley very exciting.

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The school has an effective safeguarding policy which is implemented effectively. It ensures government requirements are met. Leaders show clear commitment to combating discrimination and to equal opportunities as shown in the good progress made by all groups, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs and those known to be eligible for free school meals. Provision is effective in promoting a tolerant and harmonious school community.



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## 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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	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 to 31 December 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.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
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.**



26 April 2012

Dear Pupils

### **Inspection of Bitterley CofE Primary School (Aided), Ludlow, SY8 3HF**

Thank you for being so polite and friendly, and for the help you gave me, when I inspected your school recently. I enjoyed my visit and the opportunity to talk with some of you, to read your questionnaires, and to see you in lessons and at play. I especially enjoyed joining you for assembly. You are rightly proud of your school's happy atmosphere and you especially like the way you all get on so well together. Bitterley is a good school.

You told me that you enjoy school and feel extremely safe and secure. You try hard in lessons and your progress is good. Your behaviour is good in class and around the school. You have very good relationships with your teachers. You attend school regularly and are punctual. The curriculum provides plenty of exciting clubs and visits, which you enjoy. It also provides you with plenty of opportunities to think about your feelings, right and wrong, and to work together and appreciate your own and different cultures.

The headteacher, staff and governors are working together to make the school even better, and I have asked them to do two things to help you improve your learning. These are to:

- help you to always make rapid progress by making sure work is not too easy or too hard, especially in mathematics classes in Year 1 and 2
- make sure that phonics work for the younger pupils is always well matched to their abilities.

All of you can help the school by continuing to try your best in lessons and behaving and attending so well. I wish you all the best in the future.

Yours sincerely

Gerald Griffin  
Lead inspector

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