

Birdham Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	125972
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	381161
Inspection dates	10–11 May 2012
Lead inspector	Michael Pye

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	150
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Joyce Henson
Headteacher	Peter Johnson
Date of previous school inspection	28 February 2008
School address	Crooked Lane Chichester PO20 7HB
Telephone number	01243 512399
Fax number	01243 513453
Email address	office@birdham.w-sussex.sch.uk

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Michael Pye

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector observed nine lessons, including those involving linking letters and sound. A total of five teachers were seen teaching. The inspector looked at pupils' work and heard pupils read. He held meetings with members of the governing body, pupils and staff. The inspector took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work and looked at data relating to pupils' attainment and progress. The school's development plan, lesson and curriculum plans, governing body documentation and school policies and procedures, particularly those relating to the health, safety and safeguarding of pupils, were scrutinised. The inspectors also looked at 84 questionnaires completed by parents and carers as well as those returned by staff and pupils.

Information about the school

Pupils in this smaller than average-sized primary school come from a predominantly White British background. The proportion of pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs is below average. The main group consists of pupils with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. The proportion of pupils at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well below average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average. The Early Years Foundation Stage provision is provided in the mixed Reception and Year 1 class. The school has a number of national awards relating to environmental and sustainability issues. The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	1
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- This is a good school. It has some excellent aspects but is not yet outstanding overall because, on occasions, inconsistencies in the quality of teaching slow pupils' progress.
- Pupils' achievement is good. A minority of pupils make outstanding progress. Pupils' attainment is well above average by the end of Year 6. Standards in reading are above average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6.
- The quality of teaching is good. A strength is in the quality of relationships between adults and pupils. This helps ensure that pupils show very high levels of engagement and enthusiasm for their learning. There are variations in the quality of teaching. For example, not all teachers use higher order questioning skills to further challenge pupils' understanding. Also opportunities are lost to encourage pupils to evaluate each other's work, for example during end of lesson review sessions. Pupils benefit from good marking of their work in literacy. In mathematics, however, opportunities are sometimes missed to encourage the pupils to reflect on their achievements and to provide sufficient clear direction about how to improve.
- The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding. The great range of sustainability initiatives, such as the work involving an electric car, helps give pupils' ownership of their learning and boosts their self-respect and respect for others and the world around them.
- Leadership and management are good. There are distinct strengths in the attributes of the highly experienced headteacher and the governors. Together, they have succeeded in establishing a strong shared vision for the success of the school. The leadership of teaching and the management of performance are good. Senior leaders understand their teachers' strengths and areas for development well. The curriculum is stimulating and provides some excellent

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opportunities for reinforcing the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' already good attainment and progress through eradicating the inconsistencies in teaching by ensuring that:
 - teachers consistently provide clear messages to pupils in mathematics that encourage them to think deeply about their marked work and about how to improve
 - all teachers give consistent opportunities for pupils to comment on their own and others' work during review sessions
 - teachers use questioning that consistently challenges all pupils.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

The overwhelming majority of parents or carers who returned the questionnaire believe that their child makes good progress. Inspection evidence also judged progress to be good overall. Children enter the school with expected levels of skills and knowledge, but with aspects of literacy and numeracy being weak. The majority of children make good overall progress and meet or exceed their early learning goals by the time they enter Year 1.

The school's commitment to delivering a linking sounds-to-letters programme (phonics) is bringing success. Year 2 readers naturally dismantle difficult words, and sound them out accurately. These skills are accompanied by good levels of comprehension. In adult-led sessions, Reception children respond with high levels of enthusiasm as they explore sounds such as 'th', prior to moving onto higher and lower case letters. Pupils say they thoroughly enjoy reading. In Year 2, pupils build well on regular opportunities to read to adults and are beginning to use expression when reading. They demonstrate a secure understanding of punctuation, including speech marks, and reach above average standards. Pupils have good opportunities through the curriculum to write for different purposes. They write letters, reports and accounts such as 'The Best Day of My Holidays'. By Year 6, pupils are writing in complex sentences with a very good range of technical and other vocabulary. Older pupils use extended vocabulary, such as 'constructed' and 'created' and described material used when writing an account of how they built a shelter.

Good progress is also seen in mathematics. Younger pupils develop a secure knowledge of numbers when identifying missing numbers to 100. Older pupils work with confidence when using fractions and decimals and with simple and complex shapes.

All groups make good progress, including those who are known to be entitled to free

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school meals. In 2011, the boys attained less well than the girls, although they too were above average. In data seen and in current work, there is no observed difference in the progress of these groups. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make similar progress to their peers.

In work seen, the attainment levels of pupils are well above the average, reflecting the good and, for a minority, excellent progress of pupils, including those few from ethnic minority groups. Pupils participate fully, enjoy the challenge of their school work and are eager to answer questions.

Parents and carers praise the school with comments such as, 'A wonderful school' and 'We couldn't be happier'. The vast majority of them wrote that they would recommend it to another parent.

Quality of teaching

The overwhelming proportion of pupils, parents and carers who returned their questionnaire believe teaching to be good. Inspection evidence supports this judgement. Lessons are characterised by increasing challenge. The pupils respond exceptionally well to the work, saying, 'Teachers make lessons fun' and 'I like the hard work'. This is the result of teachers using their secure subject knowledge to plan work that tests the pupils learning and motivate them. Reception children were well motivated by their use of animal masks and a model boat (to mirror the story they are reading), prior to exploring subtraction as one animal left the boat. Challenge was increased well as more than one animal was asked to join or leave the boat. In an English lesson, in Year 2, pupils were challenged by different learning tasks such as ordering words given to them. Others wrote their own openings in ever more difficult sentences whilst linking them to their history topic. One pupil used word processing to develop the story, using the opener, 'First I went on the train...' In literacy, pupils benefit extremely well from some focused marking. In mathematics, whilst the marking is regular, there is a need for all teachers to make clear the next steps in their learning and to provide further challenge for pupils. Similarly in questioning, not all teachers use skills such as returning to a pupil to further challenge his or her understanding. A good range of resources are used to support pupils' learning, with older pupils showing clear understanding of capacity when shown a range of different-sized containers.

Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are identified quickly. They are supported well in class by teaching assistants who receive good guidance from teachers. Consequently these pupils make the same progress, from their different starting points, as others in the class.

The curriculum consistently engages the pupils. In particular, the pupils talk of creative writing opportunities taking the attractive school grounds for inspiration, using autumn leaves in pattern work and visiting the ox-bow lake to study tadpoles. A highly consistent aspect of lessons is the mutual respect shown as pupils listen to their peers. This undoubtedly shows the excellent moral and social development of

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pupils.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

The vast majority of pupils behave extremely well in lessons and around the school. Most pupils who completed the questionnaires believe behaviour to be good, and the overwhelming majority of parents and carers believed this to be so. There is a prolonged trend of no exclusions or racist incidents, and behaviour over time is outstanding. Pupils care for each other extremely well and are very friendly, respectful and polite. The very well-established Birdham Contract makes clear the shared expectations of behaviour and attitudes, to which adults and pupils manifestly adhere. It undoubtedly contributes significantly to the views of the overwhelming number of pupils who completed the questionnaire, that they feel safe in school.

Pupils felt that bullying of any kind is rare; 'We don't usually get any of this,' said one pupil. They have a good understanding of the different types of bullying, including cyber and emotional bullying. They clearly understand the wisdom of having checks on the use of the school's internet.

In the 'sharing assembly', high levels of pride are shown as pupils, including those in Reception, display their work. Natural applause from the audience recognised the achievements of their peers in many areas of school life. The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellently addressed. Consequently pupils have extremely positive attitudes to learning, they collaborate very well with each other, and are sensitive to each other's needs. They are enthusiastic, thoughtful and caring. As a result, attendance is above average.

Pupils make an exceptional contribution to a safe, learning environment when planning and participating in the various sustainable projects. They said that their work teaches them to take care of each other as well as the environment. They respond particularly well to this and other responsibilities, for example when quietly collecting material for recycling at the end of the day.

Leadership and management

The determined and highly focused leadership of the headteacher is based on a very clear idea for school development based around a caring Christian philosophy coupled with an emphasis on the maintenance of good and better teaching. This has been successfully achieved, although some inconsistencies remain in the quality of teaching. Teachers benefit from feedback relating to their personal practice. Leaders give very appropriate attention to the learning environment, and consequently the school has a number of stimulating displays of work in which pupils take pride. Leadership responsibilities have been effectively distributed; for example, all staff participate in data analysis prior to identifying those pupils who require further help and guidance in lessons. An established cycle of monitoring exists, and the consequent accurate self-evaluation leads to most appropriate development points being identified. For example, despite good levels of phonics teaching, the school,

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typically, is not satisfied and is researching other strategies to improve on current delivery. Senior leaders use performance management targets well to benefit individuals and the school, whilst the link to teachers' professional development is well made.

The highly experienced governing body are very well informed about the school through visits and reports. This enables them to raise questions about school performance. They carry out rigorous checks on all adults who work with the pupils. Annual child protection training takes place, with staff having to sign that they have read the essential policies relating to child protection. Consequently all safeguarding arrangements are effective.

Equality of opportunity is at the heart of the school and, within this ethos of demonstrably high respect, there is an absence of discrimination. In collective worship, all pupils have an opportunity to help, and to play and listen to music. Additionally, the end of year talent show gives all pupils the opportunity to showcase their skills.

Evidence of good capacity to improve further is evident in the imaginative curriculum which manifestly meets the needs of pupils. In addition, the environment has been extremely well developed to reinforce messages for pupils about sustainability. The Eco-classroom, with its solar panels and science experiments, provides pupils with a stimulating and creative environment. The curriculum also provides good opportunities for pupils to use their basic skills, including information and communication technology. Leadership has ensured that the curriculum promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development extremely well through providing highly imaginative tasks which challenge pupils.

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).

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.



14 May 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Birdham Church of England School, Chichester PO20 7HB

You may remember my recent visit. You were eager to tell me about your school and I listened carefully to what you told me. Like you, I judge yours to be a good school.

There are many things that are good about your school. I particularly liked the way that the children get a good start in Reception.

You all make good progress to reach standards that are above those expected for children at the end of Year 2 and Year 6.

You told me that you enjoy school – I saw this for myself! Your very good attendance levels also show this. Well done! I especially liked the way you show respect for each other and the adults. You behave very well and take seriously the responsibilities you get – I liked the way the recycling monitors at the end of the day do their work quietly but efficiently. You obviously enjoy the work you do regarding the environment. You also told me that you feel very safe in school and you have an excellent understanding of how to stay healthy and safe.

You benefit from good teaching. You told me, and I saw for myself, that lessons are 'fun' and that you like being challenged. I have asked that the school makes sure that all your teachers ask you questions that test you, and that you are given more opportunities to discuss your own and others' work at the end of lessons. Teachers mark your work regularly and give you targets in your assessment work. However, in day-to-day marking in mathematics, opportunities are missed to further challenge you and to make very clear how to improve your work. You can help by asking your teachers if you are not sure how to improve your work.

Thank you once again for your help and I wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Michael Pye
Lead inspector

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