

# Bishop Ellis Catholic Primary School, Thurmaston

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	120218
<b>Local authority</b>	Leicestershire
<b>Inspection number</b>	395445
<b>Inspection dates</b>	28–29 June 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Christine Merrick

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>	327
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Sarah Brett
<b>Headteacher</b>	Suzanne Henry
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	06 May 2009
<b>School address</b>	Barkby Thorpe Lane Thurmaston Leicester LE4 8GP
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<b>Fax number</b>	0116 2697479
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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
<b>Inspection date(s)</b>	28–29 June 2012
<b>Inspection number</b>	395445



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## Introduction

Inspection team

Christine Merrick

Additional Inspector

David Wolfson

Additional Inspector

Elizabeth Needham

Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors observed 22 lessons taught by 13 teachers. They met with groups of pupils and talked to parents and carers informally at the beginning and end of the school day. Meetings were held with members of the governing body and with staff. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line Parent View survey in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at pupils' books, governors' minutes, school performance tracking data, reports relating to the monitoring of teaching and learning and the school's development plans. They heard pupils read and they also took into account the responses from 127 questionnaires from parents and carers as well as questionnaire responses from both staff and pupils.

## Information about the school

This is a larger-than-average sized primary school which has a smaller-than-average proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals. It also has a smaller-than-average proportion of pupils from ethnic minority groups and a small minority of pupils who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, who are supported by school action plus or have a statement of special educational needs, is below average. The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress. In the last two years the school has seen significant changes to staff at all levels. There is a before- and after-school club on site which is not managed by the governing body and is 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. Pupils make good progress as a result of teaching that is usually good and sometimes outstanding. This is recognised by an overwhelming majority of parents and carers and pupils. Leaders and managers are particularly successful in supporting the professional development of teachers and creating a clear vision for the school. It is not yet outstanding because teachers do not give pupils enough opportunities to develop independent learning skills.
- All groups of pupils, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, typically make good progress and a few make outstanding progress. Progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1 is particularly strong.
- Teachers plan and structure lessons very carefully so that the needs of all pupils are catered for and monitor progress well. They build excellent relationships with the pupils resulting in a very positive ethos and atmosphere in the school. Open-ended questioning and opportunities for independent work are not used often enough and sometimes teaching is overly directed.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. They develop good social skills and treat others courteously and with respect. They say that they feel safe in school and understand clearly how to keep themselves safe including when they are on-line. They have positive attitudes to learning, and are conscientious when completing tasks set and concentrate well so that lessons proceed smoothly.
- Leaders and managers are clearly focused on continued improvement and have high expectations of both staff and pupils. Teachers appreciate the opportunities provided for them to share good practice and work together, resulting in a highly cohesive team. Systems for managing performance and monitoring teaching and learning are very effective and provide both support and challenge. Most aspects of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

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are promoted well though pupils do not always have opportunities to reflect on learning.

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

- Raise the proportion of outstanding teaching by:
  - providing regular, imaginative opportunities for problem solving, investigation and involvement in open-ended tasks across the curriculum in all classes
  - ensuring that pupils are less dependent on teacher direction so that they have more opportunities to initiate and reflect upon their own learning
  - refining teachers' use of questioning so that this promotes more discussion and extends pupils' thinking
  - making sure that written feedback to pupils is developmental in all classes so that all pupils understand what they need to do to improve their work, and can act on this independently, particularly in mathematics.

## Main report

### Achievement of pupils

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills that are often below those expected for their age, particularly in language areas. They settle quickly and enjoy the activities provided. They are very proud of their success in learning to write, as when they eagerly shared their stories based on 'The Snail and the Whale'. They make rapid progress and most are much closer to average attainment by the time they enter Year 1. In Key Stage 1 this progress is maintained and, with steady progress through to the end of Year 6, attainment at the end of key stages is typically above average.

Most parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire felt that their child was making good progress. As one parent commented, 'Our child has flourished at this school and we are very happy with her progress.' Work in books is well presented and reflects the good progress made by all groups of pupils. Most disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress and some make outstanding progress. This is because of timely identification of their needs followed by appropriate intervention and support that is monitored carefully.

The school focuses well on the teaching of reading and pupils develop good early skills in the sounds that letters make (phonics). This forms a good foundation and throughout school pupils enjoy reading a wide range of material. For instance, in a Year 2 class the pupils enjoyed discussing a newspaper article about the late Princess of Wales. At the end of Year 2 attainment in reading is average and by the time they leave school the vast majority are fluent, capable readers and their attainment is above average. Evidence from tests show that there are some pupils whose

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attainment is well above average in both reading and mathematics by the end of Y6.

## Quality of teaching

Almost all parents and carers and pupils felt that teaching in the school was good. In their comments parents and carers described teachers as 'fantastic', 'excellent', 'enthusiastic and supportive' reflecting the high quality of relationships between teachers and pupils observed in school. This was evident when a very severe thunderstorm occurred during the inspection. Teachers showed great confidence and sensitivity in adapting lessons, reassuring pupils and maintaining a calm, secure atmosphere. They provide good role models for pupils and there is a very high level of trust and respect shown between all adults and pupils. This contributes significantly to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Teaching during the inspection was mostly good with some satisfactory and some outstanding teaching. Teachers work well together and as a result they have good subject knowledge across the curriculum and effective teaching strategies are shared across the school. Where teaching was outstanding, technology was used highly effectively and tasks set had a practical purpose based on real-life experience. For instance a Year 3/4 class enthusiastically engaged in writing a play for younger pupils based on their trip to a science activity park. In lessons such as this questioning skilfully deepens pupils' understanding. In other lessons questions are sometimes less successful in developing thinking and, whilst pupils are conscientious in completing all tasks set, their activities are sometimes too prescriptive.

Teachers' planning ensures that lessons are very well organised. In the Early Years Foundation Stage activities include a good mixture of play-based and teacher-led tasks both inside and out, such as when a group of boys enjoyed using musical instruments to represent sounds in the outdoor environment such as the wind in the trees. Lessons throughout the school are delivered at a good pace so that pupils remain engaged and motivated. Clear objectives and steps to success ensure that in all classes pupils understand well what they need to do. Individual targets ensure that they know what aspects of their work need improvement. In many classes this is followed up by explicit written feedback on how that improvement might be achieved. This is not yet consistent across school as in other classes feedback is supportive and encouraging, but does not always give enough direction for development, particularly in mathematics.

Teaching for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is very effective. Teachers know all pupils well and have high expectations of them. They make good use of assessment during lessons to tackle misconceptions early and provide additional support where necessary. For some this includes one-to-one support or the use of e-book readers to motivate and enthuse. Teaching assistants are used well to engage pupils in lessons so that these pupils make at least good and sometimes outstanding progress.

## Behaviour and safety of pupils

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Attendance and punctuality are consistently above average and reflect the level of enjoyment and enthusiasm of pupils in school. The school is highly inclusive and works very successfully with the very small number of pupils with behaviour difficulties. In partnership with families, and external agencies where appropriate, the behaviour of these pupils improves significantly over time. The vast majority of pupils are courteous, polite and respectful to both adults and peers. This contributes to the safe, secure atmosphere in school and the caring ethos that can be seen as older pupils look after younger ones on the playground.

A large majority of parents and carers and pupils felt that behaviour was good in school and where parents and carers were aware of instances of unacceptable behaviour most felt the school managed this well. Pupils were also aware of occasional instances of difficult behaviour but they have a good understanding of expectations and high levels of trust in the fairness of the school's systems for managing this. Pupils told inspectors that bullying was rare and that, if there were any instances, then teachers dealt with it quickly and effectively. Pupils were very knowledgeable about the possibility of different types of bullying and were able to explain how to keep themselves safe generally, for instance when they were using computers.

Pupils are diligent workers during lessons. When set tasks such as the completion of sections from text books they concentrate well, work quietly and do not disturb each other. When working together they are respectful and cooperate well. Because teaching is sometimes highly structured, not all pupils have enough opportunities to develop the skills needed to make decisions about their own learning, and think independently. For instance, talk in pairs is more often used to discuss the right answer required by the teacher than to develop original ideas and imaginative solutions to problems.

### **Leadership and management**

There have been significant changes to leadership and management at all levels since the last inspection, including the governing body. This turnover has been successfully managed and middle managers are excited and enthused by their roles. The introduction of termly meetings for teachers and phase leaders to discuss tracking data and identify actions needed, and weekly management meetings to discuss any emerging concerns, ensure that they have a good understanding of strengths and areas for improvement in pupils' progress. All leaders and managers have a detailed understanding of data, evaluate it well and use the information it gives them to sustain good or better progress for all pupils. Leadership and management of provision for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are excellent. Very careful monitoring of progress and strong partnerships with outside agencies ensures that these pupils' needs are met extremely well. The school successfully promotes equality and tackles all kinds of discrimination effectively.

The headteacher and acting deputy headteacher have a well-developed vision for the

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school and through effective performance management systems, targeted professional development and support for teachers, they communicate consistently high expectations. Focused development planning and a strong team ethos result in improved teaching and learning. This can be seen in improvements to the teaching of mathematics throughout school and in the provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage. Capacity for future development is therefore strong.

The governing body has good systems for monitoring the work of the school. Members visit lessons, look at samples of work and evaluate data. They have substantial skills in a range of areas and are able to challenge the school constructively as well as offer support and encouragement. They ensure that all safeguarding requirements are met and regularly monitor their implementation to ensure that pupils are safe.

The curriculum is enriched by visits, visitors, special events and cultural exchanges such as the Indian music and dance sessions, the French theatre group, and the creation of a mural designed by the children. This contributes well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.



## 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.**



2 July 2012

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Bishop Ellis Catholic Primary school, Thurmaston Leicester, LE4 8GP**

Thank you for the very warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school. We were very interested in what you told us and in the information you gave us in your questionnaires. We think that your school is a good school because so many of you usually make good progress in your learning. You told us that this was because you enjoy school and because the teaching is good.

We agree with you about these things. There are many other reasons why your school is a good school too. Almost all of you behave well and treat each other with respect. This makes the school a safe and happy place to be. You work hard and do what your teachers ask as well as you can. When you have difficulties, there are adults to help you whether it is with behaviour or with your work. The school is well led and managed by the headteacher and her leadership team.

We have asked your teachers to make your school even better by:

- making more of their teaching outstanding by:
  - giving you more opportunities for problem solving
  - allowing you to take more decisions about your learning
  - making sure the questions they ask need you to think more and not just find the right answer
  - making sure you always know how you can make your work better.

You have a part to play in this. You need to continue to work hard, behave well and enjoy school. I am sure that you will do this.

Yours sincerely

Christine Merrick  
Lead inspector

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