

St Bartholomew's Church of England Primary School

Willowcroft, Quorn, Loughborough, LE12 8HQ

Inspection dates 1–2 November 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Children make good progress in the Reception class because the teaching is good.
- Pupils achieve well throughout the school and standards are above average by the end of Year 2 and well above average by the end of Year 6. The progress made by Year 6 pupils in the last school year was the highest of any recent year. Able pupils do particularly well.
- Reading is taught well. Pupils make good progress and develop good skills in tackling unfamiliar texts.
- Pupils enjoy school, feel very safe and are consistently well behaved.
- Attendance is above average and pupils are rarely late for school.
- Senior leaders and governors are highly motivated, with a well-judged vision for further improvement.
- More rigorous approaches to the monitoring of teaching and learning and the management of teachers' performance are already contributing to improved learning by pupils.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- While teaching overall is good, and pupils routinely make good progress, some lessons lack pace and challenge and do not motivate or inspire pupils effectively.
- Teachers' marking does not give pupils clear guidance about how to improve their work.
- Although disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are now making improved progress, some inconsistencies remain in organisation, planning and provision for these pupils.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 23 lessons, of which three were joint observations with senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with a group of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and another governor, with the school's middle and senior leaders, with the headteacher-designate and, by telephone, with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 47 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View).
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of school documentation, including records of the monitoring of teaching, the school improvement plan, records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding, and extracts from the school's tracking of pupils' progress. A scrutiny of pupils' written work was also undertaken and inspectors listened to pupils reading.

Inspection team

George Logan, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Sa'ad Khaldi

Additional Inspector

Renee Robinson

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Bartholomew's is a larger-than-average primary school. Pupil numbers have risen since the last inspection because the school accommodation has been redeveloped and extended.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. Very few pupils are at an early stage of learning English.
- The proportion of pupils supported by school action, at school action plus or with a statement of special educational need is well below average.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and for whom the school receives additional income (the pupil premium) is well below the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school has gained a number of awards, including the International School Award, the ActiveMark, Arts Mark and Church Schools awards and has recently had its Healthy Schools status renewed.
- After a tenure of 21 years, the previous headteacher retired in July 2012. Currently, one of the school's existing assistant headteachers has been appointed as acting headteacher, prior to the headteacher-designate taking up her post in January 2013.
- The school shares its site with a private nursery school. This is inspected separately.
- The school hosts onsite breakfast and after-school clubs. These are managed independently and inspected separately.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Deploy the school's effective performance management strategies to ensure that a higher proportion of teaching is graded outstanding, ensuring in particular that:
 - the quality of teaching is improved in those less inspiring lessons where the pace of learning is relatively slow and the work is too easy
 - teachers' planning sharply identifies appropriate tasks and activities to match the learning needs of each group of pupils
 - teachers' planning consistently identifies the role of additional adults in any lesson
 - the marking of pupils' written work is more thorough, identifying appropriate next steps in pupils' learning
 - pupils have opportunities to respond to those areas for development identified in the marking of their work.
- Build upon recent improvements in the provision for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, to ensure:
 - a thorough audit of the deployment of learning support staff, so that there is a closer match between identified needs and the availability of appropriate support
 - closer and more frequent monitoring of the progress made by these pupils
 - regular evaluation of the effectiveness of any additional teaching that is provided.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- In most years, children start in Reception with skills above those expected for their age. Almost all reach, and many exceed, the levels expected by the end of the year, so that their progress is good. This represents an improvement on the last inspection, where some Reception children were in mixed-year classes and both provision and outcomes were much less consistent.
- Attainment by the end of Year 2, although marginally lower in 2012, reflecting the particular group of pupils, is usually above average. Older pupils continue to make good progress, so that attainment by the end of Year 6 is well above average, with a high proportion of pupils attaining the challenging Level 5 in all subjects, and some now tackling work at even higher levels. The progress pupils make has improved steadily year on year. Increased pupil numbers and, as a consequence, the implementation of single-year classes has, in the school's view, contributed to more efficient teaching and improved progress.
- Pupils' improving progress reflects effective, though recent, interventions to raise the quality of teaching and assessment, as well as the school's successful strategy to ensure that pupils have a good understanding of the sounds which letters represent (phonics). This underpins pupils' strongly established skills in reading. The school has implemented an effective programme to ensure that pupils acquire the clear, well-formed handwriting style which is evident throughout the school.
- The school has deployed pupil premium funding to provide additional support for the development of core skills in literacy and numeracy. Recognising some historic underperformance by younger, and sometimes less able, pupils, leaders have focused additional support in small groups. This has had a demonstrable impact upon the achievement of these pupils, including those in receipt of free school meals.
- The support for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs has improved. Having identified some inconsistency in the progress of these pupils, the school has implemented a range of successful interventions which now meet pupils' needs more successfully. Although some further fine-tuning is needed, these changes have ensured that the majority of these pupils are now making better progress, similar to other pupils.

The quality of teaching is good

- In most lessons, routines are well-established and relationships are good. In an outstanding Year 6 religious education lesson, with a focus on spiritual places, pupils demonstrated a very high level of engagement and involvement. They showed maximum concentration and cooperation, so that the session progressed seamlessly and learning was excellent.
- Effective learning in the Reception classes is supported by a wide range of well-planned activities. A successful induction programme ensures that children are well prepared for school, settle quickly and sustain attention well. Effective intervention by adults ensures that children work well cooperatively and develop independence.
- The teaching of reading, and the progress made, is good across the school. Pupils receive a systematic and effective grounding in recognising the sounds letters make.

- While teaching is mostly good, ensuring that pupils make good progress over time, practice is uneven across the school. Rapid progress in Years 5 and 6 has typically off-set slower progress elsewhere. The school has only recently begun to tackle this inconsistency, and while there is already evidence of good impact, there is more to do to ensure consistency of pace and challenge in lessons.
- While the best lessons are inspirational, this still represents a small proportion of the total. Pupils sometimes disengage because the work is the same for all pupils, and therefore too easy for some and too difficult for others. Also, the pace and style of the teaching does not always engage pupils' interest. The role of support staff is not always clearly defined in teachers' planning and it is not made clear to staff exactly what they should be achieving.
- Where learning is best, the pace of the lesson is brisk and assessment is used well to ensure that work is matched closely to pupils' needs. However, the school recognises that some arrangements have only recently been introduced for assessing progress and making sure that pupils know how well they are doing. In a few classes, pupils understand exactly what they need to achieve next in writing and mathematics and this is referred to in their written work. However, this is not consistent across the school. The marking of pupils' written work only occasionally indicates the next steps that pupils need to take to move their learning on.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' behaviour is good. Where teaching engages pupils fully, behaviour is often outstanding. Pupils mostly show enthusiasm for learning, are well motivated, courteous, and enjoy school. Even when teaching is less than inspiring, pupils are very tolerant. Most parents and carers who expressed a view feel that behaviour is good.
- School records indicate that exclusions are rare and pupils have few concerns about behaviour. Isolated incidents are dealt with effectively. There are no recorded racist incidents and few episodes of inappropriate behaviour. Significant disruption of lessons is rare. Where such incidents occur, well-established procedures ensure that they are managed effectively. Pupils have considerable confidence in the adults around them.
- The school is an inclusive community and provides for pupils with an increasingly wide range of needs, including physical, behavioural and learning needs. Pupils with behavioural difficulties or who are identified as vulnerable are supported effectively.
- There are no current reports of bullying of any type. Pupils understand that bullying may take different forms, such as internet bullying or in response to gender or physical differences.
- Pupils have a good understanding of risk, supported well by the school's input on personal safety, particularly in relation to road safety, e-safety and fire safety.
- Attendance is above average. Persistent absence is rare. Pupils almost always arrive at school punctually.

The leadership and management are good

- Despite the steady improvement in pupils' progress, the interim leadership team, together with the headteacher-designate, has undertaken a thorough audit of all aspects of provision. They recognise that, despite the school's successes, and given the commitment of staff and

governors, much can be done to make it even more effective.

- School self-evaluation is rigorous and accurate. The school knows itself well and has a well-judged agenda for further improvement. Monitoring and evaluation are thorough and accurate. Targets in the the school development plan are closely linked to the further improvement of teaching and learning.
- School leaders have focused on improving the quality of teaching. Performance management processes are thorough and are beginning to have an impact. Staff now have improved opportunities for professional development, including observing good practice in other schools. Middle managers demonstrate good capacity, but have not, hitherto, been sufficiently empowered to carry out their roles. This issue is now being addressed.
- The new leadership team has prioritised a systematic review of the deployment and impact of learning support staff in order to better support the increasing proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. At present, support is unevenly and sometimes inefficiently deployed. In addition, there has been too little timely analysis of how quickly and effectively these pupils have been learning and how useful any extra teaching support has been. This has meant that some of the pupils with special educational needs could fall behind with this going undetected for some time.
- The school has received appropriate support from its local authority, at the level typically available to a good school.
- Progress since the last inspection has been good. The school successfully demonstrates that it currently has good capacity to improve.
- The curriculum prioritises the key areas of reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils are provided with good opportunities to extend their learning outside the ordinary school day, including through clubs. The outdoor learning environment for Early Years Foundation Stage children, although adequate, is lacking in stimulation and is an area for further development.
- Pupils' spiritual and moral development is strongly supported through highly-effective and meaningful collective worship sessions and through religious education. Pupils have well-developed social skills and speak with confidence. Cultural awareness is promoted well through the curriculum, and through charitable, church and international links.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have been closely involved in managing this period of transition. They have shown effective strategic leadership in their management of change and this has ensured that the process has been both smooth and creative for the school community. Governors value current increased opportunities to be actively involved and to challenge school leaders. They are working very closely with both the acting headteacher and the headteacher-designate to identify those changes which are considered crucial if provision is to be further improved. They recognise that inherited decisions, through which a high proportion of the current staff are at, or close to, the top of the higher pay scale, may well compromise future flexibility, and they are aware of the need to tie pay and promotion to teachers' effectiveness. Governors have a good understanding of the school's context and of how well pupils achieve. They have been involved in decisions relating to the deployment of pupil premium funding and in the analysis and review of its impact. Governors also ensure, along with senior leaders, that all safeguarding arrangements are robust and, at the time of the inspection, effective.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	120153
Local authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	403427

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary Controlled School
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	414
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Martin Bujdoso
Headteacher	Christopher Patrick (Acting Head)
Date of previous school inspection	14 January 2008
Telephone number	01509 412250
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