

Bicton CofE Primary School

Bicton Lane, Bicton, Shrewsbury, SY3 8EH

Inspection dates 24–25 January 2013

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.

- After a good start in Reception, children achieve well. At the end of Year 6, pupils from all backgrounds have made better progress than similar pupils in other schools.
- Teaching engages pupils well because teachers plan exciting activities. Pupils learn to be independent and to do their best.
- Behaviour is good and pupils try to do the right thing. They have good social skills, are tolerant of individual differences, and they feel safe.
- There is a shared vision of the school's aims and pupils and staff are proud to belong to the school. Where pupils' progress shows signs of slowing, they are quickly helped to catch up.
- The headteacher gives teachers good guidance and support to improve. The governing body understands the school's strengths and priorities for improvement and challenges staff well.
- There is a rich and relevant range of learning activities including clubs, visits and visitors and whole school events and performances. Pupils' views of school are gathered on a regular basis, and their ideas are valued.
- Parents find staff approachable and have many opportunities to take part in school activities and learn about their children's progress.
- The school has good capacity to improve because there are robust systems for checking on pupils' progress and teaching. The information is used well to improve the school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils do not always have enough opportunity in all lessons to do their own work.
- Teachers do not always organise work in a way that ensures high levels of success for everyone, particularly in mathematics.
- Managers do not always make targets for improvements in teaching and other aspects of the school, sufficiently precise to be accurately measured.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed parts of 11 lessons taught by six teachers. Three of these were joint observations with the headteacher. Additionally, pupils were heard reading.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, staff, pupils, two governors and a representative of the Local Authority.
- The inspector took account of 30 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View). She spoke to some parents in the playground at the end of school and she received two letters from parents.
- The inspector observed the school's work, looked at a number of documents, including records and documents relating to monitoring and evaluation, behaviour, safety, safeguarding and attendance. She examined five staff questionnaires and carried out a work scrutiny with the headteacher to assess progress.

Inspection team

Kathy Hooper, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than average, although numbers have risen since the last inspection.
- The vast majority of pupils are White British, and there is a very low proportion of pupils from other cultures.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the additional funding for children in the care of the local authority and those eligible for free school meals, (the pupil premium), is below average..
- The proportion of pupils with disabilities and special educational needs is lower than average, and the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well above average.
- Pupils are taught in five classes. Pupils in Key Stage 2 are taught in mixed age classes. There are considerable variations between cohorts with respect to their abilities and needs.
- The school exceeds the government's floor standards.
- There is a pre-school centre on the school site that is not managed by the governors and was not part of this inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the achievement of all pupils, particularly in mathematics, by:
 - ensuring that teachers identify precisely what they expect different pupils to learn
 - providing as much time in lessons as possible for pupils to do their own work
 - ensuring that teachers check what different pupils have learned in all lessons.
- Improve the leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that targets for teachers are specific and measurable
 - setting goals for improvement throughout the school so that they can be measured more accurately.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- All pupils make good progress because their learning is checked termly, individual targets are set and support is provided where necessary through individual and small group work.
- Pupils' skills and understanding when they start school are broadly average. Reception children achieve well and there is a well-considered mix of activities that include teacher-led opportunities for learning of sounds, letters and numbers, and opportunities for children to choose their own activities. They are well prepared for Key Stage 1. The most able are beginning to write using sounds and letters, use laptops to practise writing with minimum support from adults, and practise counting in twos when they jump while playing outside.
- Most Year 1 pupils achieve the level they should in learning sounds and letters. By the end of Year 6, more pupils gain higher levels in tests than other pupils of a similar age.
- Pupils entitled to the pupil premium, and those with disabilities and special educational needs, achieve better than others in similar circumstances. The small number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds are very well integrated, confident and achieve as well as other pupils in the school.
- Pupils speak, read and write well. They read with understanding and expression and their writing is lively and thoughtful. Their punctuation is accurate and they present their work with pride.
- Their numeracy skills are good, and some make significant leaps in their understanding because of the challenging tasks that are set for them. Others make less progress because the learning is not always planned in small enough steps.
- While the vast majority of parents are very happy with the progress their children make, some are concerned about the limited attention given to individual children because of the exceptionally large class sizes in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6. The inspection judged that pupils continue to make good progress despite the increase in numbers.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers promote challenge and an enthusiasm for learning. In the best lessons, they ask probing questions to stimulate pupils' thinking and pupils respond very well. Pupils are often excited by their learning and work extremely well in groups.
- In a good literacy lesson, older pupils in Years 5 and 6 drew on the research they had carried out when talking to grandparents, to help them to think of questions to ask others when trying to understand the feelings of evacuees in the Second World War. They worked together, drawing on the ideas of others to develop their questions.
- Where teaching requires improvement, a few pupils struggle because they have not developed the skills and understanding necessary to contribute fully to the task. While they learn from their classmates, their progress is not as good as that of others.
- Support staff make a considerable impact on pupils' progress. Where they take large groups of pupils into other spaces to do activities, their questioning and oversight is first class. In the best

lessons, they are able to keep records of learning in the groups for which they are responsible.

- Marking is thorough and helpful and pupils know how to improve. Some pupils are encouraged to initial the teacher's comments once they have read them. They know their targets because teachers work with them to draw them up.
- Since the last inspection there are more opportunities for pupils to check their own work and that of others and they find this very helpful. As a result, they are becoming more independent. Some more-able pupils are sufficiently confident to challenge their teacher, such as offering other alternatives to a mathematics problem that is being discussed.
- Work is planned by teachers intended to cater for the particularly wide range of abilities and needs in mixed ability classes. Occasionally, learning is not sufficiently broken down for those pupils requiring smaller steps.
- The large number of pupils in classes in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6, reduce the opportunities for teachers to check the progress of all but a minority of pupils in each lesson.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' attitudes to learning are impeccable. They are lively but cooperative, polite and keen to learn. They do their best, even when the task is very difficult.
- Behaviour is exemplary especially where the work is very closely matched to their needs. There is no evidence of bullying. Occasional inconsiderate behaviour is promptly addressed and rewards for good behaviour are valued by pupils. There have been no exclusions.
- Any thoughtless discriminatory or derogatory language is quickly picked up and resolved. A recent audit of the pupils' views across the county shows Bicton pupils' particularly positive appreciation of differences.
- While there is a mutual respect between pupils and their teachers, in large classes there is occasionally some distracting chatter as pupils discuss points between themselves, especially when they have listened for some time to the teacher.
- Pupils' enjoyment of school is evident in their good attendance and confirmed in discussions with them. Parents report that their children are very happy in school.
- Parents believe that their children feel safe in school and pupils agree. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe in different circumstances, including dealing with cyber-bullying. Pupils are familiar with anti-bullying strategies and know where to get help if necessary.

The leadership and management are good

- Leadership is strong and management is resolute. The quality of teaching and pupils' independence are now better than at the time of the last inspection. Pupils develop lively and enquiring minds and teachers are anxious to improve their teaching. Oversight is systematic and frequent evaluations have brought about strong links between trends in pupils' progress, the quality of teaching, and whole school priorities. Support from the local authority is valued and well focused.

- Practice throughout the school community is consistent and the shared vision of the school's aims is underpinned by Christian values. As a result, pupils and their parents appreciate the staff efforts to ensure a good education for all.
- The senior leadership team is rigorous in its feedback after observing teachers in the classroom. Targets are set for improvement and every teacher is able to identify the personal benefits of this oversight. However, these targets are not always specific enough to assist teachers and managers in measuring the extent of their achievement. Professional development opportunities are well matched to teachers' needs and have helped to generate a whole school debate about learning.
- The programme of learning is rich and varied. School worship is a central part of the school's value system. There are many exciting activities such as school trips that allow pupils to spend time living away from home. Almost all pupils take advantage of these opportunities. Camping and forest school are extremely popular as are theme days when pupils work alongside pupils from other classes.
- Pupils' literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills are taught within relevant contexts. Spelling and literacy for older pupils are related to topics being studied, for example, to work on the Second World War, and reinforced across the curriculum.
- The school's good relationship with parents is the result of frequent contacts, such as parents' evenings, whole school events, and sending home evidence of pupils' successes. There are good links with the pre-school centre and other local schools in the area. Pupils benefit from good links with businesses and community groups. Safeguarding procedures are very strong. Staff are well trained and vigilant and the site is secure.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is both challenging and supportive because it is informed and knowledgeable. Governors receive good information from the school and take part in regular training. The governing body understands the schools' strengths and trends in relation to other schools and it is ambitious for Bicton's success. Pupils' progress data, staff development plans, and the headteacher's reviews are closely examined to ensure that the school makes progress. This information is used alongside committee meetings and visits to see the school in action. As a result, governors are able to ensure that steps are taken to tackle any underperformance in teachers and pupils. They have good oversight of the budget and are informed about the use of the pupil premium. As a result, the gap between the achievement of pupils who are vulnerable and others is smaller than is the case nationally. The maintenance of good standards throughout the school, the improvements in teaching and learning, behaviour, and attendance are evidence of the school's good capacity to improve.

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	123461
Local authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	403529

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	149
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Roger Ratcliffe
Headteacher	Richard Mark Davies
Date of previous school inspection	24 January 2008
Telephone number	01743 850212
Fax number	01743 851408
Email address	admin.bicton@shropshirelg.net

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