

Bishop Lonsdale CofE VC Primary School

Shaws Lane, Eccleshall, Stafford, ST21 6AU

Inspection dates 26–27 February 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	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.

- All groups of pupils achieve well. They make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.
- Most pupils start the Early Years Foundation Stage with knowledge, skills and understanding which are broadly in line with expectations. By the end of Year 6 attainment is above the national average in both English and mathematics.
- In 2012 a significantly high proportion of Year 6 pupils attained higher levels in both English and mathematics.
- Teaching is good. Relationships are positive. Support is effective. Teachers ask questions which promote pupils' language and learning well.
- Most parents and carers are positive about the school. They are engaged well in their children's learning through information they receive about progress, frequently hearing their children read and regularly overseeing their homework.
- Pupils generally behave well in and out of lessons. They feel safe and enjoy school. Attendance is above the national average.
- Leaders and managers, including governors, know the school well. They use this accurate understanding to drive improvements. Their success is evident in the quality of teaching and the achievement of all.
- Pupil's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well through assemblies, links with the church and visitors from a range of faiths and cultures.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Sometimes teachers do not use their assessments of pupils' knowledge and understanding well to plan activities which are suitably challenging and engaging for them all.
- Occasionally, teachers' marking is not accurate and does not show pupils how to improve or extend their learning.
- On occasion pupils are not given time to respond to, or benefit from, effective marking.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 19 lessons, taught by 10 teachers. Four of these observations were joint visits with the headteacher or senior leaders.
- Discussions were held with pupils, governors, a representative from the local authority, senior managers and teachers in charge of subjects, as well as parents and carers.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents and carers through informal discussions and 14 emails. There were six responses to the online Parent View website. As this was less than 10, details could not be accessed.
- Inspectors considered 11 responses to the staff questionnaire, and the views of pupils through both informal and pre-arranged discussions.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school's information on pupils' current progress, pupils' work, leaders' reports on lesson observations, the school's development plan, planning and monitoring documents, documents relating to safeguarding, and records relating to behaviour and attendance.

Inspection team

Jo Curd, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Dennis Brittain

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Bishop Lonsdale Church of England VC Primary School is smaller than most other primary schools. It is situated in a small market town near Stafford.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is much lower than in most other schools.
- Very few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium, additional funding given to the school to support specific groups of pupils, is smaller than in most other schools. A few pupils are looked after or known to be eligible for free school meals and none have parents in the armed forces. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The school has close links with groups in the town who provide care before and after school.
- The school currently uses two buildings which are separated by a main road. Pupils are always supervised to cross this. Building work to accommodate the whole school on one side of the road was in progress during the inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching from good to outstanding by making sure that teachers:
 - use their assessments and knowledge of pupils even more carefully to plan activities which are suitably engaging and challenging for all groups of pupils
 - help pupils to find things out for themselves and be responsible for their own learning
 - use marking to show pupils how to improve their work, and that pupils are given enough time to respond to, and learn from, the advice.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- All groups of pupils achieve well throughout the school. Over the last three years attainment has been rising. In 2012 this was well above the national average in English and mathematics. The proportion of pupils reaching higher levels in both mathematics and English was significantly above that in most other schools.
- Children achieve well in the Early Years Foundation Stage because teaching is good. They choose and use a wide range of interesting good-quality resources in the classrooms and outside.
- Effective planning in the Early Years Foundation Stage means that adults teach all groups of children in ways suitable for them. For example, the teaching assistant skilfully developed an imaginary journey on a bus with less-able children, successfully promoting their language and social skills. The teacher developed the physical skills and mathematical language of number and shape with more-able children as they worked together with modelling dough, rollers and cutters.
- Pupils make good progress in reading because phonics (the sounds that letters make) is taught well, parents and carers frequently hear their children read and pupils often read in class. In 2012 the proportion of children succeeding in the phonics check for six-year-olds was above average.
- Pupils achieve well in mathematics because teaching methods are effective and consistent across the school.
- More-able pupils achieve well because topics are interesting, parents and carers are engaged well and there is a positive, encouraging climate for learning.
- Pupils who learn more slowly, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress because they are supported well in lessons and receive further help through specific programmes and activities.
- Pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding because they are looked after or eligible for free school meals, achieve well. Although their progress in 2012 was not quite as fast as other pupils in the school it was slightly faster than the national average, particularly in mathematics. This is because any difficulties are identified quickly and extra funds are used effectively to employ additional staff to address these.
- By the end of Year 6 the attainment of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals was less than a term behind others in the school in English and very slightly above in mathematics. Very small numbers of looked-after children mean that their standards cannot be discussed without identifying them.
- Achievement is not outstanding because occasionally activities in lessons are not engaging or challenging and sometimes the effectiveness of marking is limited.
- Parents and carers are positive about their children's achievement. One parent, reflecting the views of others, said, 'The standard of learning seems to be high and on the recent progress

reports we received our children are all achieving well and reaching the required levels or above for their ages’.

The quality of teaching is good

- Relationships are good. Pupils are happy and generally enjoy learning. The parent of a child with special educational needs said, ‘Due to the caring nature and community spirit of the school my son has been nurtured and guided and has come on in leaps and bounds’.
- Topics are broad, interesting and relevant. Links between subjects are good, for example, pupils in Key Stage 2 developed their reading, writing and information and technology skills well, as they made computer presentations about the Severn and Amazon rivers in a geography lesson.
- Reading, writing and mathematics are all taught well. For example, children in the Nursery class were taught phonics through songs and stories whilst children in the Reception class were taught about capacity through working with water and a range of jugs, pots and containers.
- Teachers and teaching assistants are knowledgeable and skilful in using strategies to engage and support disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. For example, they used visual timetables to show pupils activities and routines for the day.
- Additional staffing paid for from pupil premium funding helps the behaviour, learning and attitudes of eligible pupils. This was particularly evident when a group of older pupils were fully engaged and inspired reading and answering questions about a book in a small support group for English.
- Parents and carers are generally pleased with the improvements in teaching, including developments in the reading scheme, handwriting and the information they receive about their children’s learning.
- Regular homework, including ‘sentence building’ where pupils develop skills of spelling, vocabulary and grammar through writing different words within sentences, successfully helps their achievement. Parents and carers have welcomed pupils’ ‘sentence-building homework books’ as they know what homework pupils have, where it is and how well they have done it.
- Teaching is not outstanding because occasionally teachers do not use their knowledge of pupils well enough to plan and provide activities which are engaging and challenging for them all. This occasionally slows the pace of lessons and engagement of pupils and means that they do not achieve quite as well as they could.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils enjoy school and are keen to attend. There is a happy, positive atmosphere around the school. Several parents and carers commented how much the children love their school. The parent of some pupils who joined after the Early Years Foundation Stage commented that ‘they have been welcomed into the school and have settled in very well’.
- Pupils are positive, polite and helpful. They support each other and show care and concern to those around them.
- Pupils are interested in, and respectful to, a wide variety of people and cultures. They learn

about Chinese New Year, learn Indian dances, made African masks and played African drums. They learn about Christianity through assemblies, visits to church and religious education. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered well.

- Pupils have a good understanding of inappropriate behaviour including verbal, physical and cyber bullying. They know how to keep themselves and others safe and who to tell if they have any concerns. Most parents and carers are also confident that pupils are safe and well looked after.
- Instances of challenging behaviour are very rare and managed well. A few pupils who have had less successful starts elsewhere, settle quickly and do well.
- Occasionally pupils are distracted in lessons and sometimes chat in activities instead of concentrating and working diligently. When asked about behaviour, most pupils acknowledge that there is sometimes too much off-task talking which means that some pupils do not do as much work as they could.

The leadership and management are good

- Since starting at the school three years ago, the headteacher has made many successful changes and improvements. He has given more responsibilities to the senior leadership team and made sure that leaders at all levels are trained and able to drive their subjects and the school forward.
- Through effective teamwork, shared vision and ambition, leaders have successfully driven improvements in achievement, the quality of teaching, engagement with parents and carers and in the development of school buildings.
- Leaders have developed assessment procedures and make sure that parents and carers are informed of these. Teachers use these well to prepare topics and target support. Occasionally they use them less effectively to plan activities which are suitably challenging for all.
- The local authority has played a significant part in providing staff training in leadership and teaching, including paired lesson observations to sharpen senior leaders' evaluations and judgements.
- Parents and carers value the improvements. One said, 'I think the headteacher's determination to improve literacy in the school is fantastic and I've noticed that my own child's reading and writing has progressed superbly'.
- The governance of the school:
 - Governors have a good knowledge about the quality of teaching, how well pupils are doing in relation to others nationally and the impact of pupil premium funding. They are astute, experienced and challenging and have been highly instrumental in driving school improvements and developments. They are all linked with a subject coordinator and have close contact to oversee these. Systems for managing and improving the performance of all teaching staff, including leaders, are effective. Governors take full responsibility for managing the performance and salary of the head teacher and are fully involved in rewarding teachers for the impact they have on pupils' achievement. They know what the school is doing to reward good teaching and address any underperformance, thereby successfully driving equality of opportunity and combating discrimination. They give high priority to safety and see that all aspects of safeguarding meet requirements and are secure.

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	124296
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	406230

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	207
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Angela Webb
Headteacher	Christopher Middleton
Date of previous school inspection	19 October 2010
Telephone number	01785 850388
Fax number	01785 850388
Email address	headteacher@lonsdale.staffs.sch.uk

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