

Bishop Martin CofE Primary School

Church Road, Woolton, Liverpool, Merseyside L25 5JF

Inspection dates

21–22 September 2016

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Require improvement
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The school has suffered from ineffective leadership for a number of years.
- Basic management processes, such as the performance management of teachers, are having to be put in place.
- Funding, to support disadvantaged pupils or develop sport, has in the past not been well targeted or spent.
- Middle leadership has been neglected in the past. Most subject leaders lack the experience and training to lead their subjects well.
- Teaching across the school is inconsistent, lacks rigour and limits the progress that the pupils make.
- Most pupils, including disadvantaged and most able pupils, do not make the progress that they should, across a range of subjects, because they are not sufficiently challenged in lessons.
- Assessment is not being used effectively to support learning.
- Support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities has been weak and unfocused.
- In the early years, outdoor provision is limited, not well resourced and does not support learning well.
- There is a tendency for some pupils, especially boys, to become bored and disengage in lessons.

The school has the following strengths

- Governance is strong. Governors were prepared to challenge the ineffective leadership of the school and the school is now improving.
- The pastoral care and safety of the pupils are paramount.
- Pupils are bright, ambitious and enjoy learning when they are stimulated and engaged. Pupils' attainment is high.
- A new interim executive headteacher has been appointed. Parents are positive about the recent changes she is initiating.
- Pupils receive good support from home because many parents actively involve themselves in their children's learning.
- Attendance is good and pupils enjoy coming to school.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the progress that all groups of pupils make across a range of subjects by:
 - ensuring that school leaders monitor provision in classrooms effectively in order to challenge weak practice and support those teachers who need additional training
 - making sure that performance management is effective and supports teachers' development needs
 - developing subject leaders to enable them to lead their subjects confidently and to good effect
 - ensuring that new plans to support disadvantaged pupils are embedded across the school and used appropriately to support their needs
 - developing teachers' confidence and skills across a range of subjects to enable them to pitch lessons appropriately to suit all pupils' needs and abilities
 - using assessment information effectively to inform planning and support learning
 - providing teachers with the skills and confidence to teach lessons which engage and enthuse pupils so that they immerse themselves in their learning
 - improving the library and providing pupils with a range of up-to-date books and reading materials to stimulate more of them to read regularly and for pleasure
 - improving the quality of the outdoor learning environment in the early years.
- Improve provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities by:
 - ensuring that the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) has clear systems in place to identify need at an early stage
 - making sure that funding is well spent and targeted at the specific needs of individual pupils and that they receive the appropriate support and help that they need to succeed.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- A legacy of weak management has meant that currently there has been no effective analysis of assessment information. In view of this, the progress of different groups of pupils is weak. Previous leaders were unable to accurately identify strengths and weaknesses when formulating plans to improve the school, notably in teaching and learning. The lack of focus means that monitoring activities lacked rigour and did not effectively identify steps to improve progress and achievement.
- Equal opportunities have not been promoted effectively because the needs of different groups of pupils have not been pursued with any vigour.
- The use of the pupil premium grant has not been managed effectively. This means that the individual needs of disadvantaged pupils have not been identified and the use of the grant has not been targeted towards improving outcomes for these pupils. Identification of how the grant is to be spent has recently been facilitated through the burgeoning partnership with the new executive headteacher's school (Beacon Church of England Primary School in Everton). A plan is now in place to ensure that this money is spent correctly and wisely.
- School sport premium funding has not been targeted well enough to develop staff expertise within physical education (PE) or to develop wider opportunities such as increased participation in competitive sport. Although it is a popular subject, pupils' participation in competitive sport is still too low. There is only a very limited range of extra-curricular clubs, and this was a concern raised by some parents. The school currently has a very limited recent sporting heritage.
- Money has not been spent wisely on appropriate resources to optimise impact on provision. For example, reading outcomes could be so much better if there was a well-stocked library and if pupils had better access to books. Reading corners have recently been established in most classrooms, but these are currently in the process of being fully stocked. Too many books are dated and reinforce stereotypes, for example *Topsy and Tim* and many of the Enid Blyton books.
- In November 2015, governors were very courageous in taking the unprecedented step of challenging and questioning the quality of the leadership of the school. They raised concerns that there was a lack of strategic vision and pupils were not making the progress they were capable of.
- The local authority was invited to evaluate the work of the school and provide much-needed support. As a result, the school has experienced a very turbulent two terms which culminated in the resignation of the executive headteacher at the very beginning of this term. Despite this, pupils still attained well in their end of key stage tests.
- Parents, although generally supportive, did express growing concerns about the school, notably about the lack of leadership and challenge, as well as levels of support. One in seven parents who responded on Parent View (Ofsted's online survey) would not recommend the school to another parent. Several feel that the school 'has gone backward' since it became part of a federation, and they have been 'critical of past leadership'.

- As a result, there has been a significant restructuring of responsibilities and a new interim executive headteacher has taken over the strategic leadership of the school from the start of this term. She has very quickly begun to address the culture of apathy and blame which had previously affected the school. Signs of improvement are already apparent.
- Middle leadership has been neglected in the past but is now a priority for development. Subject leaders lack experience and training in how to lead the subject. As such, the curriculum is covered but not developed enough to meet the needs of pupils. Subject plans are poorly defined and do not focus sharply enough on how to improve teaching and learning. Plans are now in place to link subject leaders with their counterparts in Beacon Church of England Primary School in order to access support and advice.
- Although pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are well cared for, they have not been as well supported as they should have been. The management of their provision has been weak and has not met the needs of these vulnerable pupils. A new coordinator has been appointed from the start of term. She is aware of the issues but has been in post for too little time to have made an impact.
- Parents are encouraged by the recent changes in leadership and the improvements being put into place. One parent echoed the thoughts of others: 'In just a few weeks of the new term, I am seeing very positive things happen including increased extra-curricular activities after school, improved discipline in the school yard and a general feeling of well-being among the teachers.' It is clear that the culture of the school is being transformed.
- The basic management processes which ensure the smooth running of the school are being established. For example, the performance management of staff had previously been ineffective and teachers' development needs had not been addressed. Teachers had not been challenged or supported to develop their teaching and this is reflected in their current practice, which requires improvement. Under new leadership, and with the support of the local authority, a new structure for performance management is being put into place.
- Strong Christian values permeate the school and these support pupils' spiritual, moral and social development well. There is no cohesive programme of enrichment and extra-curricular activities in place – something noted by parents as well. There is little evidence of impact on learning from visits to art galleries or museums. This represents lost opportunities to bring the curriculum to life, enrich learning and expose pupils to other cultures.
- The local authority has not shirked its responsibilities and provides good support for the school. It supported the governors when difficult decisions needed to be made about the management of the school. Additional support has been provided to get it through a difficult period. Training has helped improve outcomes in phonics. Advice has been provided to help restructure responsibilities and support has been brokered from the Beacon Church of England Primary School to strengthen leadership throughout the school.
- The school is waking up to a new dawn. Governors and school leaders are fully aware of the task ahead and are eager to ensure that the school functions effectively as soon as possible. Some improvements have already been made and there are more in the pipeline. The school has strong connections with the Beatles, since the site is where

John Lennon met Paul McCartney and the rest is history. The road ahead may be 'long and winding' but the first steps have been taken to make this a school of which the whole community can be justifiably proud.

Governance of the school

- Governors have taken difficult decisions in the best interests of the pupils of the school.
- Governors know the school well and clearly understand that provision is not good enough and that too many pupils are underperforming. This precipitated the necessary challenge to school leaders.
- Governors are working hard, in partnership with the local authority, to build up the school's capacity to improve through the appointment of an experienced interim executive headteacher. There is a clear brief to change the culture of the school and bring about rapid improvement.
- Governors are setting ambitious expectations for the school and the early signs of change are being positively commented on by parents. Governors are trained in safeguarding and safer recruitment of staff. They carry out their statutory duties well although they have not had time, under the new leadership team, to ensure that all the required information is published on the school website.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The designated safeguarding lead is passionate about the pastoral care and safety of the pupils. There are thorough systems in place for monitoring vulnerable pupils, in particular. Swift action is taken to ensure that concerns are acted on and the school works well with relevant agencies. Governors prioritise safeguarding and training has been put in place for staff and governors alike. They are fully aware of their duty to protect pupils from the dangers of radicalisation.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- There is a lack of rigour and consistency in teaching across classes which often limits the progress that pupils make.
- Expectations of what these pupils can achieve are too low in some classes. Too often, teachers do not plan tasks which challenge pupils, especially the most able. Planning provides structure to lessons, but not necessarily substance.
- Teachers sometimes go through the process of teaching without considering the learning or checking on the learning. For example, in a science lesson on circuits, pupils had completed some practical work using batteries, light bulbs and wires. Pupils then neatly drew the circuit into their books. When quizzed whether the bulb would light when one wire connection was removed from one terminal on the battery, the answer 'yes' revealed that some did not understand the concept, despite completing a neat and accurate diagram in their books.
- Teaching does not always meet the specific needs of particular groups of pupils. Tasks set do not always allow pupils of all abilities to move on quickly enough. For example, in a mathematics lesson the lower-ability pupils were working with the teaching assistant using cubes and straws to make numbers. The activity did not stretch them enough and some sat around waiting for their work to be photographed. As a result, their attention wandered.

- Similarly, the lack of challenging problems for the more able pupils means that they find some tasks too easy and do not extend their learning.
- The teaching of reading is inconsistent across the school. Daily reading records are poorly used and of little current value. Lower-ability pupils are at a disadvantage because their reading is not managed or checked on regularly.
- Pupils enjoy reading. The best regular readers, some of whom are outstanding, have clearly gained from regular access to books and positive attitudes at home. One pupil was reading the poems of Edgar Allan Poe with real gusto and meaning. He was able to talk knowledgeably about the poem 'El Dorado', explain the legend and link this to Sir Walter Raleigh and his unsuccessful search for the fabled city. However, a significant minority of pupils are not regular readers or are reading books which are too easy.
- The teaching of phonics, although improving, is still not embedded or rigorous enough. The local authority has provided training and support to teachers and teaching assistants to improve their teaching. This had led to some improvements, with lessons being more interactive and multi-sensory. However, teachers are still not confident or familiar with some of the terminology or how to tackle misconceptions. At key stage 1, pupils who read to inspectors used their phonics skills well and were reading at the appropriate level for their age.
- Apart from reading, writing and mathematics, teachers have not received the training to teach other subjects, such as science, history and geography with confidence. As a result, tasks set in these lessons often occupy pupils with low-level activities which provide some basic knowledge but do not develop understanding to any great depth.
- Pupils, although highly attaining, do not make as much progress as they should because teacher assessment is not yet being used to accurately identify their specific needs and inform the support or challenge needed. Marking varies from class to class and is not used effectively enough to inform pupils how to improve their work. The lack of follow-up to marking results in pupils not improving their understanding or the quality of their work.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Pupils are smart, well presented and keen to do well in school. They are confident and inquisitive, and politeness comes naturally to them.
- Pupils are ambitious, with many of those in Year 6 expressing a desire to progress in their studies to become lawyers or doctors, or enter other professions. This reflects the ambitions of many parents, who often provide additional tuition, especially for those pupils in their last year at school.
- Parents are very supportive of their children and many involve themselves in their children's learning. They contribute positively to a community ethos in which pupils are well cared for. As several parents remarked, 'the school has a lovely, community atmosphere. All teachers and children know and respect each other.' The school is

committed to the well-being of the pupils in its care and reflects the strong Christian values which permeate everyday life in the school.

- Pupils feel safe and understand how to stay safe. They are aware of the dangers posed by the internet. They identified that bullying, including homophobic and racist bullying, is rare and they are confident that should such incidents occur they will be very quickly dealt with.
- Concerns were expressed by several parents about the support that their children received. As one parent identified, 'the school is a great school for children who do not have any special requirements, or need extra help'. Parents of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are 'unsure how funding is being distributed'.
- Although parents acknowledge that teachers are very approachable, home-school communication presents a mixed picture with a significant minority of parents feeling that the school does not keep them well informed, especially about specific detail concerning their children's progress.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- The school has a very quiet, subdued atmosphere. Walking into a classroom one is struck by a passive apathy and a lack of excitement from the pupils about what they are learning. Inspectors noted that boys, in particular, became disengaged when activities provided did not excite their interest.
- Pupils show great pride in their achievement but not always in their work. Poor handwriting and presentation, especially among boys and lower-ability pupils, impedes progress. As a result, behaviour for learning is not good and many pupils do not go that 'extra mile' to really make an effort with their work.
- Lessons are not generally disrupted by poor behaviour, although younger pupils did identify some silly behaviour interrupting their concentration at times. Overall, behaviour is well managed in the classrooms and around the school.
- Attendance is good and above the national average. Persistent absenteeism is very low. It is well managed and monitored by the office staff, with any concerning pattern of absence quickly identified and challenged.

Outcomes for pupils

Require improvement

- Attainment is good but this has masked the fact that, from their starting points, the progress of most pupils is not good enough. They have not been sufficiently supported or challenged and too many do not reach their full potential. School leaders have, for too long, focused on attainment and failed to understand the nuances of progress.
- Too few higher-ability pupils attain higher standards, apart from in mathematics where they are able to apply their understanding of mathematical concepts to solve a range of problems. Lower-ability pupils struggle because the teaching does not enable them to build up their understanding.
- Most pupils who have special education needs and/or disabilities do not make sufficient progress because their needs are not being identified sufficiently well to enable appropriate support to be provided. The use of intervention and teaching assistant support is too variable.

- Funding for the small numbers of disadvantaged pupils has not been targeted well and most of these pupils continue to lag behind all pupils nationally. This is especially noticeable at key stage 1, where the difference is not diminishing. The school has no clear strategies in place to ensure that this difference diminishes quickly enough.
- Boys, in particular, do not achieve well in the lower school and are significantly outperformed by the girls, who show greater maturity and application in their work. Boys do catch up in key stage 2, however, and this difference is less noticeable. Parents themselves remarked that they felt their children have 'been taught better the further they have gone up the school'. Pupils also expressed similar sentiments.
- There has been a dramatic improvement in the number of pupils who reached the expected standard in the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1. This had lagged below the national average until 2016, when all but two pupils reached the expected standard. This was, in part, due to changes initiated when the local authority intervened in the school earlier this year. Teaching is now delivered more effectively in smaller ability groups and this has had an impact.
- Standards have traditionally been high. In 2016, outcomes for pupils at the end of key stage 2 were among the highest in Liverpool. Over two thirds of the pupils attained the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics combined. This was well above the national average. However, only one pupil attained the higher standard.
- Pupils make variable progress across a range of subjects other than English and mathematics. Science is covered in greater depth in some classes than in others. The quality of investigation also varies, with pupils not taking sufficient care in the presentation and graphing of their data or in the evaluation of their research.
- There is a similar picture in outcomes in history and geography, with too much acceptance by teachers of poor work and presentation. There is a lack of challenge for the most able pupils, who are often occupied by low-level tasks or worksheets.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- Most children enter the Reception class with skills and knowledge which are above those typical for their age. From their starting point they generally make at least expected progress.
- The proportion of children reaching a good level of development in 2016 was well above the national average and reflects an improving trend over the last few years. However, outcomes in writing are not as good as they should be.
- The management of the early years provision is still in its infancy. Strategic management has been weak. School leaders have not provided adequate guidance or support to ensure that relatively inexperienced, but dedicated, staff have a clear sense of direction or understanding of what is required. Pupil premium funding has been used centrally and has not been delegated to support the very few children entitled to it in the Reception class.
- Children settle quickly because most are ready for school and eager to learn. However, they experience a leisurely start to their life at school. Adults make frequent references to play rather than learning. Similarly, a lack of urgency is exemplified in the delay in assessing children's starting points, which, in turn, has a knock-on effect in assigning them to groups for phonics teaching, and the most able children are not being identified quickly enough.

- Children are valued, kept safe and well cared for. Handover, both in the mornings and after school, is well managed. There are no breaches of statutory requirements
- Parents are happy with the transition process into school and links with home or local nurseries. This ensures that positive relationships are quickly established. Transition arrangements into Year 1 are more limited.
- Children settle into routines very quickly. They cooperate well with one another, take turns and share. Girls are more persistent and stay on task longer than the boys, who drift from one activity to another.
- Girls tend to dominate mark-making areas, whereas boys tend to dominate the outside area and building activities. Insufficient effort is being made to break down stereotypes.
- The inside area is well planned and adequately resourced, equipment is accessible and there are clearly defined areas for various tasks such as mark-making or use of number. The two outdoor areas are more limited and less well organised. Currently, there is a lack of space outside for children to pursue a wider range of activities which support their physical development.

School details

Unique reference number	104621
Local authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	10002965

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	213
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Joan Adams
Interim executive headteacher	Sally Aspinwall
Telephone number	01514 286 295
Website	https://bishopmartince.co.uk
Email address	bishopmartin-ao@bmgfederation.liverpool.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	10–11 May 2012

Information about this school

- This school is smaller than the average primary school.
- The proportion of pupils entitled to additional support through the pupil premium is very low.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average. There are no pupils who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage and there are very few pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

- The executive headteacher resigned from post at the start of the new academic year and has been replaced by an interim executive headteacher from the Beacon Church of England Primary School in Everton.
- In September 2013, the school federated with Garston Church of England Primary School, with an executive headteacher in charge over the two schools. The federation is governed by one federated governing body.
- The school runs a breakfast and after-school club on a daily basis for its own pupils.
- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about performance data, the school curriculum, the school's pupil premium grant, the PE and sport premium, SEN and disabilities information report and child protection on its website.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in all classes in the school. They looked at phonics teaching, listened to a several groups of pupils read and observed pupils at break, lunchtime and around the school.
- On the first day, Her Majesty’s Inspector conducted two series of short visits to classrooms across the school, accompanied by the interim executive headteacher, looking at outcomes and engagement in lessons.
- On the second day, Her Majesty’s Inspector conducted a similar exercise looking at provision for reading across the school, including the school library.
- Inspectors scrutinised and evaluated pupils’ work across a range of subjects, especially English, mathematics, and topic work, which included science, history and geography.
- A wide range of documentation was looked at, including school policies, local authority reports, monitoring files on the quality of teaching, self-evaluation and procedures to safeguard pupils.
- Inspectors met with school leaders, staff, five governors and two representatives from the local authority.
- Meetings were held with two groups of pupils to discuss their work, how safe they felt and what they thought about the school. Inspectors also talked to many other pupils during lessons and around the school. There were 72 responses to the online pupil questionnaire which were also taken into account.
- The 82 responses from the online questionnaire ‘Parent View’ were considered. Inspectors also talked briefly to a small number of parents who were collecting their children from school at the end of the first day or bringing them to school at the start of the second day.
- There were 19 staff questionnaire responses, which were taken into account, as were several conversations with staff and support staff across the school.

Inspection team

Leszek Iwaskow, lead inspector	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Michael Platt	Ofsted Inspector
John Shutt	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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