



Blue Coat Church of England Aided Infant School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 104231
LEA Walsall
Inspection number 277107
Inspection dates 7 November 2005 to 8 November 2005
Reporting inspector Peter Clifton RISP

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

Type of school	Infant	School address	Hanch Place
School category	Voluntary aided		Walsall
Age range of pupils	3 to 7		West Midlands WS1 3AF
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01922 720740
Number on roll	295	Fax number	01922 720306
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Miss Dorothy Buchanan
Date of previous inspection	20 March 2000	Headteacher	Mrs Janet Davies

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is situated in the old part of Walsall. Since the time of the previous report, numbers have risen markedly. It is slightly larger than similar schools nationally. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is very high. There is a large proportion of pupils whose first language is not English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities has reduced over the past three years and is now low. Several of the pupils come from homes experiencing economic hardship.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Blue Coat Infant School is providing a good quality of education. Pupils have good attitudes to learning and behave well in and around the school. Parents are very satisfied with the education their children receive and often choose the school because of the Christian values it promotes. The school is improving and provides good value for money.

The quality of education in the Foundation Stage is good with some outstanding features. The planning of the areas of learning is very good and children actively enjoy their learning. Parents and governors rightly think that the nursery and reception are a strength of the school.

Children come into the nursery with below average standards. They make good progress and reach standards which are close to average by the time they enter Year 1. They continue to make good progress in Years 1 and 2 and are on track to achieve standards that are slightly above those expected.

Teaching and learning across the school are good with a significant strength in the Foundation Stage. Teaching assistants provide high quality support. The curriculum is satisfactory. It is well organised and new approaches to the teaching of literacy are working well. However, there are weaknesses in the provision for information and communication technology (ICT). The school provides a safe environment for pupils to learn effectively.

The headteacher and senior staff are providing a strong drive for improvement. The school's self-evaluation is accurate and based on effective monitoring. Inspectors agree with the judgements made. The school improvement plan identifies the areas that need to be developed. Issues from the previous inspection have nearly all been tackled well and the capacity for improvement is good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the provision for ICT to enhance learning opportunities for pupils.
- Improve pupils' involvement in the assessment of their own learning so that they can identify ways in which they might improve.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

At the time of the previous inspection, standards in reading, mathematics and science were average, but standards in writing were below average. Since then, overall results have been average but too few pupils have achieved the higher levels of attainment in writing.

Children come into the nursery with below average standards. In the two key areas of mathematics and literacy, the standards on entry are well below average. By the time they reach the end of the Foundation Stage, standards have improved in all areas of

learning but especially in personal, social and physical development, where progress is very good. By the time pupils start Year 1, standards in mathematics and literacy are close to average. Progress through Years 1 and 2 is good and standards are now slightly above average and improving. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics show improvement from the results in 2005 because there is a marked increase in the proportion of pupils on track to achieve Level 3.

Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress, as do pupils who do not speak English at home. Pupils with different ethnic backgrounds achieve as well as others because of the well targeted support they receive. The exception to this is a small number of Pakistani pupils who have not done as well as expected, and this is because of taking extended holidays in term time. The school almost reached the challenging targets it set for itself in 2005

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy coming to school, have positive attitudes to learning, and behave well in classes. They feel safe in school and report little bullying. They are confident that they could approach any adult in the school for help should a problem arise.

Attendance is below average, mainly because of pupils being taken on extended holidays. The school has made good progress in tackling this issue and has met its targets for improving attendance, set in consultation with the local authority.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Collective worship provides good opportunities for pupils to reflect on issues such as looking after the environment. Pupils demonstrate a good understanding of right and wrong through the care and concern they show towards each other. They fundraise for a number of different charities at home and abroad and are aware of and respect the different cultures represented in the school.

Pupils understand the need for being active and eating healthily. Playtimes are lively and pupils are good natured. The school council members have a range of responsibilities around the school, for example, acting as playground helpers, which they enjoy. The progress the pupils make in basic literacy and numeracy skills prepares them well for junior school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Classes are happy and productive because relationships are good and teachers know their pupils well. Most teaching engages and motivates pupils, enabling them to make good progress in building basic skills, especially in literacy. Less able pupils, those with learning difficulties and those who

do not speak English at home make good progress as a result of high quality support from teaching assistants working in close consultation with teachers.

Pupils' work is marked well and frequently sets targets for improvement. Pupils' knowledge of what they need to do to improve is satisfactory. However, they are not always sufficiently involved in assessing their own work or identifying next steps. This slows down learning, especially for more able pupils. In a small number of lessons, pupils sit for too long on the carpet.

There is some outstanding teaching in one of the reception classes. For example, children planned for 'Kipper's Birthday', making wrapping paper and play dough cakes with candles and writing invitations. Teaching is very effective in promoting early literacy skills.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is balanced and satisfactorily meets the needs of learners. It is organised effectively so that pupils enjoy what they do. Recent changes to the planning of literacy lessons are working well. The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is very good, with added opportunities to use the good range of outdoor activities and make choices to support children's independence. The school's curriculum promotes healthy lifestyles well.

A range of interesting visits and visitors such as an African drummer enrich the curriculum well. Pupils in all age groups take advantage of the extra-curricular activities provided. 'Maths club' successfully gives opportunities for parents to learn more about how to support their children's work in mathematics. School performances, fund-raising initiatives and theme weeks, such as 'multicultural week', add significantly to the opportunities for pupils' learning.

The provision for ICT has weaknesses and this is mainly because there is insufficient access to computers in Years 1 and 2. As a result, the use of ICT across the curriculum is underdeveloped, especially for research, data-handling and word-processing.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The welfare of learners is at the heart of the school's work and firmly based on Christian principles, whilst respecting and valuing the differing religions and cultures of many of its pupils. This is a strength of the school and one reason why parents choose it for their children. Child protection arrangements work well and provision for health and safety is good.

The school's new system for tracking pupils' progress is very good. It is providing a clear picture of progress and all staff have good information. It is helping identify where support is most needed.

The school council gives opportunities for pupils' views to be taken into account and acted upon. Any perceived bullying or racist incidents are taken seriously and dealt

with effectively so pupils know that this type of behaviour is unacceptable. The staff provide good role models and foster good relationships. Pupils are involved in drawing up classroom rules. Visual timetables help those with language or behavioural difficulties to understand routines. Pupils are effectively supported and guided in their personal development.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher is providing strong leadership. Equality of opportunity is well promoted and the progress of pupils is carefully tracked. The senior managers in the school make decisions based on the needs of pupils and they are successfully promoting good achievement and continuing improvement. The co-ordinators for literacy and numeracy manage their subjects very well and are prepared to be innovative. The school's evaluation of its own performance is effective. Strengths and weaknesses are clearly understood and are all being tackled firmly through the school's improvement plan. Governors and teachers are involved in the school's self-evaluation processes, which are good. Recent improvements in the standards of literacy are evident because of changes made in teaching and the curriculum. The governing body took the decision to appoint teaching assistants with high-level skills and they are providing very good support to teachers. The school's view of its strengths and weaknesses matches well with that of the inspectors. It provides good value for money and has a good capacity for further improvement.

The school has tackled nearly all the issues identified in the previous report well and some of these, such as the work of the coordinators, are now strengths. The one exception to this is in the provision of ICT, where standards are not high enough, but funding has now been made available to remedy this.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Blue Coat C of E (VA) Infant School Hanch Place Walsall West Midlands WS1 3AF

9 November 2005

Dear Pupils

Thank you for welcoming us to your school. We enjoyed talking to you in lessons and during your playtimes. You gave us a lot of information about what you like and dislike and this was a great help to us.

What we most liked about your school:

The exciting things you do in nursery and reception classes.

How you work and play together well.

Your good attitudes and hard work.

Your school is improving because of the hard work of your headteacher and others.

We have asked your headteacher and others to work on:

Giving you more opportunities to use computers.

Helping you understand more clearly how to get better at your work.

We enjoyed the visit and hope your school continues to improve.

Yours sincerely

Peter Clifton Lead Inspector