



# Archbishop Benson CofE Primary School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 112012  
**LEA** Cornwall  
**Inspection number** 278829  
**Inspection dates** 15 June 2006 to 16 June 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Margaret Dickinson AI

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Bodmin Road
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided		Truro
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11		Cornwall TR1 1BN
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01872 273185
<b>Number on roll</b>	433	<b>Fax number</b>	01872 262280
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr Jonny Alford
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	25 September 2000	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Penny Shilston

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Archbishop Benson Church of England Primary School is the largest church school in Cornwall. As a deanery school, it serves a wide area and children come from a range of social and economic backgrounds. The overall standards on entry to Reception are broadly average, although they do vary from year to year. Many of those children who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities are in the younger age groups within the school. There have been quite a lot of changes in staffing over the last two years, including changes in senior leadership. The headteacher had been in post a little over six weeks at the time of the inspection.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

### **Grade: 2**

Archbishop Benson is a good school that gives good value for money. Inspectors agree with the school's view that it provides a good education. They found some aspects to be even better than the school thought.

Provision in Reception is good and children make good progress. They are taught well. Most reach the expected levels by Year 1 and a significant minority exceed them. Pupils make good progress in the rest of the school and, by the time they leave, standards are significantly higher than national averages.

Teaching is good and sometimes outstanding, especially when teachers make lessons interesting and lively and plan challenging work. Pupils make good progress in most year groups but not consistently across the school because of variations in the quality of teaching. Pupils' personal development is outstanding, supported by the excellent attention to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. They behave extremely well and have a positive approach to school life. Several said they 'loved' school. Pupils receive excellent personal guidance and support. Each child's well-being is at the heart of everyone's work. There is some good practice in setting individual academic targets for pupils and involving them in their own learning. Pupils' progress is regularly checked but the data is not monitored or analysed sufficiently to ensure all pupils make even progress across the school.

The curriculum is good. Provision for the creative arts and physical education is particularly strong. There are some imaginative links between subjects, for example, designing and making slippers then using computer software to make a film to advertise them, with text, music and images. An outstanding feature is the impressive range of activities, visits and special events which enrich pupils' learning. These strengths in the school's provision have a very positive effect upon the pupils' attitudes, their enjoyment of school and the good progress they make. Leadership and management are good at all levels and there is a strong spirit of teamwork. The school is in a very strong position to improve further and build upon the good progress made since the last inspection.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Where teaching is predominantly satisfactory, increase the pace and challenge of teaching and the variety of teaching approaches, to strengthen the quality of pupils' learning.
- Further develop the use of data to analyse how well all pupils are progressing from year to year, including particular groups such as vulnerable children and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities or particular abilities and talents.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Throughout the school, pupils achieve well because of the good provision for their learning. Children in Reception thrive in a lively and stimulating environment and make

good progress in relation to their starting points, particularly in reading and in their personal and social development. The majority of children reach expected levels by the time they enter Year 1 with some exceeding them.

All pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who may be vulnerable, make good progress from Year 1 to 6. The school has had a number of different teachers in Years 1 and 2 over the last year or two and progress has been satisfactory at times rather than good. However, whilst some pockets of satisfactory progress still exist, standards are above average by Year 2 and, overall, pupils make good progress. This continues until Year 6, when overall standards are significantly higher than average. The school sets suitably challenging targets for pupils which are met well. Pupils do particularly well in English, which has been a main focus for the school. Last year, for instance, almost all pupils in Year 6 reached the expected level and nearly half gained the higher Level 5. Pupils also achieve particularly well in physical education, art and music because of the strong emphasis on these subjects.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding. Pupils respect and look out for one another. They are very welcoming, cheerful and exceptionally polite. Conversations flow easily. One older pupil talked very fondly about first joining the school in Year 2 when 'The first thing I got was a smile.' Pupils have excellent attitudes and very much enjoy school, especially the sports activities, music and singing. They know what is right and wrong and hold strong moral values. Behaviour is outstanding. Pupils say that any bullying or misbehaviour is dealt with fairly. Pupils know about other faiths and cultures, including their special Cornish culture. They raise considerable sums of money for charitable causes. The school council makes an effective contribution to the school community and its members take on their responsibilities with enthusiasm and pride. Pupils generally eat healthily and all take regular exercise because provision for physical education is particularly good. They have great fun in the morning 'wake up - shake up' sessions. Pupils feel very safe and secure in school and follow safe practices. Attendance rates are satisfactory. Pupils develop a good range of personal skills and grow in self-confidence. They are very well prepared for their next stage of education and later life.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching and learning are good with some outstanding features. In Reception, teachers plan a good range of activities that meet children's needs well. Children with particular difficulties are encouraged and supported very well to help them succeed. Where teaching is strongest in Years 1 to 6, teachers know exactly what different groups of

pupils need to do. They have very high expectations of pupils and pupils are very keen to learn and succeed. In a mathematics lesson, for example, the concentration was quite intense as pupils were determined to complete long division calculations. In a very successful lesson on thinking skills, the teacher used imaginative methods and an excellent range of questions, which prompted all pupils to listen intently and engage in a lively discussion. In a minority of lessons when teaching and learning are satisfactory, lessons do not have enough pace and variety and pupils begin to lose enthusiasm. Work is not always matched carefully enough to pupils' differing capabilities. Pupils especially enjoy practical lessons, such as sports and music, and say they would like 'more lively English and mathematics lessons'.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is good with some outstanding features. In Reception, the children benefit from regular access to outdoor activities. These are well planned and organised and promote children's creative, physical and social development well. Throughout the school, good links are made between many subjects. The school plans a very wide range of creative and artistic opportunities. Special events and themed weeks, such as Arts Festival Week and Environment Week, provide memorable opportunities for pupils. Pupils' learning is greatly enriched by many visits in the locality and further afield. Pupils say that they enjoy these visits and learn a lot from them. The school organises a very good range of out-of-school activities and clubs. The strengths in the curriculum boost pupils' enjoyment of school and encourage them to lead active and healthy lives and develop a wide range of interests.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The quality of care is outstanding. The headteacher has a very rigorous and thorough approach to ensuring pupils' safety. A very caring and watchful eye is kept over those who, for whatever reason, are more vulnerable so that they can do well in school. Arrangements for child protection are good and staff are fully trained. The school maintains very close working relationships with families and outside agencies.

Academic guidance for pupils is good. Some pupils in Year 6, for example, have specific individual targets, which are challenging. They are used to assessing their own work and making honest evaluations of where they think the next step is. The school recognises that this good practice needs to be more consistently spread among all classes and in more subjects. For example, an audit of physical education has confirmed more work is needed to ensure pupils are achieving their very best.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Changes in senior leadership over the last year led to the school judging leadership and management as satisfactory but inspectors found this has been over cautious and

leadership is in fact good. Prior to the headteacher's appointment six weeks ago, the acting headteacher provided very effective leadership, taking the school successfully through a period of instability while keeping any disruption to pupils' learning to a minimum. Progress has been satisfactory rather than good in a few classes and there is still some way to go before all pupils make consistently good progress. The school's evaluation of its own effectiveness is mostly accurate and takes into account the views of parents, pupils and governors. If anything, the school has been modest in judging its effectiveness. Governors have a good awareness of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and provide a good strategic lead. Subjects are led well. Good attention has been paid to improving English, for example, which has had a positive effect upon pupils' standards in both reading and writing.

The new headteacher is providing very clear and carefully-paced leadership. She has the support and trust of staff, parents and pupils. There is a strong spirit of teamwork in the school. The headteacher has rightly identified that information from assessments could be used more effectively to support pupils' progress. The school does not use data fully to monitor how well different groups of pupils are doing or to check that each pupil makes enough progress over time.

Progress since the last inspection has been good and the clear strengths in leadership mean the school is in a very strong position to improve further.

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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>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2	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

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	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

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

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
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**

As you know, we visited your school recently. We really enjoyed meeting you and talking to you about your work. Thank you for helping us and making us feel so welcome. We wanted to write to you to let you know what we thought about your school.

Some of the good things we found:

- You do well in school and reach very high standards by the time you leave Archbishop Benson because you are taught well.
- You help to make the school a special place because you are kind and caring, you get on well with one another and behave extremely well.
- The school organises a huge range of interesting activities for you to help make school fun and many of you told us about all the trips and special events which you especially enjoy.
- The school cares for you exceptionally well to make sure you are all safe and happy in school.

We have asked the headteacher, staff and governors to work on two things to make your school even better:

- Some of you told us you would like more lively lessons and we think you are right. In some lessons, we think teachers could plan more varied and interesting activities and some of you could manage harder work.
- Teachers check regularly how well you are doing. We would like the school to use this information more to help all of you make good progress as you move through each year and from class to class.