



Bridstow CofE Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 116869
LEA Herefordshire
Inspection number 279928
Inspection dates 13 March 2006 to 13 March 2006
Reporting inspector Ian Knight AI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Bridstow
School category	Voluntary aided		Ross-on-Wye
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Herefordshire HR9 6PZ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01989 562623
Number on roll	99	Fax number	01989 564 662
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Andrew Morris
Date of previous inspection	20 November 2000	Headteacher	Mr Paul Sockett

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This small voluntary aided Church of England School serves the village of Bridstow near Ross-on-Wye and the surrounding area of Herefordshire. Almost all pupils are White British, with a few who are of mixed heritage. No pupils are believed to speak English as an additional language. Few pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties or disabilities is about average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Inspectors confirm the school's view that it provides a satisfactory education for its pupils and offers satisfactory value for money. In Reception, children make good progress from broadly average starting points as a result of good teaching and a well-planned curriculum. Progress throughout Years 1 to 6 is satisfactory and pupils leave school having achieved average standards for their age. Although teaching in Years 1 to 6 is satisfactory, planning is based on a curriculum that does not make enough meaningful links between subjects. Consequently, opportunities are lost to make teaching efficient and to really cement learning. This particularly affects the most capable in the class because they are not always given suitably challenging work. Parents and pupils report that the school provides a remarkably positive and supportive atmosphere in which pupils can learn and grow. The quality of care and guidance provided by the school is excellent and results in pupils' outstanding personal development, including their exemplary behaviour. They enjoy lessons, get on well with adults and each other, and the playground is a sea of smiling faces at playtime. The school values each individual highly and makes strenuous efforts to meet all their needs.

The headteacher has a clear vision for the school, but in the past he had a very heavy teaching load that severely limited the time available to drive improvements vigorously. As a result, the checking of the school's work was largely informal and this has led to a lack of rigour in plans for improving the school. Nevertheless, the school's strengths and weaknesses are accurately identified and the modest improvement in achievement shows that the capacity to improve is satisfactory.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the achievement of more able pupils by ensuring they are always given suitably challenging work.
- Create meaningful links between subjects so as to make planning and teaching more efficient.
- Ensure that the results of monitoring and evaluation activities are used more rigorously to identify key priorities for improvement, and that the school improvement plan includes specific actions and criteria by which to measure their success.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Children enter Reception with standards that are within the average range. They make good progress, especially in their personal and social development, and most have attained the expected standards when they enter Year 1. Pupils make satisfactory progress in Years 1 and 2 and attain average standards. There has been a modest trend of improvement in standards over the last few years. Satisfactory progress continues throughout Years 3 to 6 and standards in Year 6 are also average. Following a period of modest improvement, Year 6 test results fell in 2005, although those pupils achieved well in mathematics. However, as year groups are small, judgements cannot be based

on one year's results. The school sets challenging targets for performance, based on pupils' prior attainment, and is on track to meet them this year.

Although progress is restricted in Years 1 to 6 by the way in which the curriculum is organised, no groups underachieve significantly. Nevertheless, the most capable are not consistently challenged enough. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities are supported effectively in classes to make the same satisfactory progress as their peers.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development is outstanding. They are extremely friendly, polite and confident learners who behave exceptionally well. The school successfully fosters very positive relationships between adults and pupils of all ages. As one pupil exclaimed, 'The people are the best thing about this school!'. The headteacher's positive example is followed by all adults, ensuring that pupils feel part of a caring family. As a result, pupils really enjoy coming to school and talk with pleasure about their lessons. Attendance is above average.

Strong Christian values permeate school life and pupils have a mature sense of right and wrong. They have a good knowledge of their own culture and a secure knowledge of other cultures, although this could be stronger. Different values, such as friendship, are used as foci for learning so pupils have a good understanding of the needs of others. All this contributes to their good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

From the time they start school, pupils develop a good understanding of the importance of staying safe and healthy. They make a good contribution to the community. For example, older pupils have a good sense of their role as young citizens within the school through their voice in the school council and take their responsibilities for gathering the views of their younger friends seriously. Pupils are prepared well for life beyond school and are developing good basic skills, for example when running the tuck shop, which will help equip them for their future working lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Although there are variations between classes, the overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Good teaching for Reception children is firmly rooted in a clear understanding of how they learn and uses imaginative methods to keep learning fresh. In all classes, good relationships between teachers and pupils, and between pupils themselves, enable lessons to proceed in an atmosphere of mutual respect. Searching questions that test pupils' understanding are used effectively, although explanations are occasionally not clear enough for pupils to be sure what they need to do.

Assessment and tracking data are used to identify pupils in danger of underachievement and in setting targets, initially in writing. The targets help pupils understand how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. They even remind each other about their targets! The marking of their work is helpful for pupils and also helps inform teachers' future planning. However, the school has identified that the planning for lessons in classes with two year groups in them is often too detailed to be workable and has a particular impact on the progress of the most capable. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities and lower attainers are supported well, lessening the impact of the overcrowded curriculum on their progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. Children in Reception get off to a flying start through a well planned range of practical first-hand experiences. Although all National Curriculum subjects are taught in Years 1 to 6, not enough links are made between subjects so that time is not used as efficiently as it could be. This does not affect pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities as much as others because of the good support they receive in lessons. However, it does have an impact on the consistency of challenge that the most capable receive. The school is rightly reviewing the current plans.

There is a good range of clubs, such as art, country dancing, football and music. A good programme of personal, social and health education ensures that pupils learn how to make sensible choices and develop very respectful personal relationships.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The quality of the school's care guidance and support is outstanding. The school provides a very friendly and calm learning environment underpinned by Christian values, in which pupils are highly valued and respected as individuals. Pupils' safety is paramount. Child protection and health and safety arrangements are robust and staff vetting is meticulous. Parents are very happy with the care their children receive. Relationships between adults and pupils are first rate so that pupils are very confident to seek adult advice or support when they need it. Support for vulnerable pupils and those with complex needs is a particular strength. The school works very closely with external agencies and parents to ensure that pupils' needs are met.

Marking and support in lessons provide pupils with good guidance about how to improve the quality of their work. The use of individual learning targets is developing well. Pupils like the writing targets and say, 'They help to remind us'. They particularly value marking each other's work because, 'It gives us something to think about'.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. There is a strong sense of teamwork between the headteacher and the whole school family. They share a clearly articulated vision of a school in which all individuals are valued. This is clearly evident in classrooms and is a significant factor in the outstanding personal development of pupils in the school.

Until this school year, the headteacher had a very heavy teaching load and this had a significant impact on the actions he could take to really drive the school forward. As a result, activities to check the quality of the school's work were mainly informal and did not always result in written reports or actions. Observations of teaching this year, however, have been carried out rigorously, clearly identifying both strengths and areas for improvement. This, together with the modest improvement in the school's results, indicates the school has a satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

The school's self-evaluation is satisfactory. The current improvement plan is more workable than previous plans and is the result of appropriate consultation with parents and other interested parties. It includes a rigorous analysis of performance data but it is not clear how this has been used in deciding its priorities. Also lacking in clarity are the actions to support those priorities and how their success might be measured.

The chair of governors has a very clear knowledge of the school and understands its strengths and weaknesses very well. Governors in general are very supportive and have the pupils' best interests at heart. Their role in holding the school to account is developing well.

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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?	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	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?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	2	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

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	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?	1	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?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	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	3	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

Thank you for being so polite and welcoming when we came to your school. We really enjoyed talking to you and looking at your work. It was lovely to see your happy, smiling faces at playtime, even though it was cold! I am writing to tell you what we thought about your school.

We were pleased to see that you all get along so well together. The adults really care about every one of you. They also help you to behave really well and enjoy school. This helps your teachers in lessons. Reception children do well because they have lots of interesting activities to do.

However, there are things we think would help the school to get better. The plans teachers use to help them teach you have too much in them and the quickest learners don't always learn as much as they could. The school is already working to improve this, and we've asked them to carry on with that. Your headteacher wasn't able until recently to check just how well the school is doing because he spent so much time teaching. He's got more time now, so we've asked him to do this so that he can decide what needs to be done to make the school even better