



St Mary's CofE Primary School, Bitteswell

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 120193
LEA Leicestershire
Inspection number 280758
Inspection dates 18 May 2006 to 18 May 2006
Reporting inspector Alison Cartlidge AI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	The Green
School category	Voluntary aided		Bitteswell
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Lutterworth, Leicestershire LE17 4SB
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01455 552818
Number on roll	108	Fax number	01455 552818
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs A Dean
Date of previous inspection	4 December 2000	Headteacher	Mrs M Driver

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
4 to 11	18 May 2006 - 18 May 2006	280758

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This small school has four classes, with each having more than one age group. Most pupils are of White British heritage, with no pupils having English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and the uptake of free school meals are both well below average. Children attain above the expected levels on entry to school.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school where members of staff and governors work together well to ensure that pupils follow the school aim to 'Learn, Love and Believe'. There is a clear vision for the school and a good understanding of its comparative strengths and weaknesses. Pupils' standards are well above average and achievement is good from pupils' differing starting points. However, progress in writing is slower than in reading, mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT), and pupils do not consistently write well enough. In particular, in Years 3 to 6, their work in history and geography is too superficial. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good and by the end of the Reception Year, most children are achieving and many are working beyond the expected goals for learning. Teaching is good throughout the school and pupils' differing needs are met well in most lessons. The school has a good curriculum, and an outstanding range of additional activities contributes very well to the pupils' good attitudes and behaviour. The well above average attendance is a clear indication of how much most pupils enjoy school. Pupils are cared for and supported well and the school works closely with other agencies to promote the well-being of learners. The school's evaluation of its effectiveness is matched by inspection findings. The school has developed well since the last inspection and has the capacity to improve further. It provides good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve standards in writing by raising teachers' expectations, setting pupils more challenging targets and monitoring their progress more rigorously.
- Ensure pupils in Years 3 to 6 cover history and geography topics in sufficient detail and produce written work of better quality.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' achievement is good and standards are consistently well above average, and in some years are exceptionally high. Reception pupils make good progress and by the end of the year, most are working at or beyond the expected goals for learning. These children are independent and develop particularly good reading skills.

Standards by Year 6 are well above average overall, although they are higher in reading than they are in writing. Most pupils make better than expected gains in their learning in reading, mathematics and science. However, whilst the pupils in the current Year 6 have made good progress this year, their achievement over time in writing is only satisfactory. Throughout the school, there are occasions when pupils do not take enough care or produce work of a high enough standard. In Year 2, whilst pupils write in quantity, their spelling is comparatively weak.

Pupils have good skills in ICT, but their work in history and geography is sparse and does not show enough detail.

In Years 1 to 6, pupils of differing ability achieve equally well. Overall, the school sets challenging targets for pupils at the end of Year 6 and these were met in 2005. However, targets set for pupils' writing are not consistently challenging enough.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Rates of attendance are well above average and pupils' levels of enjoyment are very high. One pupil said, 'we enjoy being at school because we learn lots of new things and have fun'. Pupils behave well and generally get on well together, though they say that there are very occasional instances of unkindness and bullying at playtimes. Pupils say that they know what to do if they have a worry and they feel that the very occasional instances of bullying are dealt with well by members of staff and 'playground friends'. Pupils usually have good attitudes towards learning, although occasionally they do not take enough care with keeping their work neat.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils have a good understanding of various faiths and cultures. The school council makes a good contribution to school life and has recently helped to improve the playground. Pupils enjoy celebrating each other's successes and show good concern for the welfare of others by raising funds for local charities. Pupils contribute well to the local community by taking responsibility for looking after the environment and taking part in community events such as maypole dancing on the village green. These activities, together with pupils' well developed basic skills, prepare them well for the world of work and their future economic well-being.

Pupils know how to stay safe and why they need to eat healthy foods. They understand the importance of exercise and enjoy the sporting activities provided by the school, excelling particularly in swimming.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is good and this a key factor in the pupils' good learning in most subjects. In the Reception Year, members of staff work together well and have good expectations, especially for pupils' independence. Lessons are well organised and there is a good pace to learning.

Throughout the school, teachers plan interesting work that motivates and engages pupils and successfully builds on what they have already learnt. Teachers mostly have good expectations for pupils' achievement, although they do not always expect enough of the pupils in the presentation, quality and quantity of written work, particularly in history and geography. Good use is made of interactive whiteboards to introduce new ideas, for example in Years 3 and 4 the teacher demonstrated how to measure angles.

Teachers are conscientious about marking work. They frequently give verbal feedback or add written comments that help pupils understand how they can improve their work, though this is not yet consistently good across the school and is sometimes over positive.

Hardworking teaching assistants give good support, especially when they are working with groups of pupils such as those with learning difficulties.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The good curriculum meets the needs and interests of learners successfully, including those in the Reception Year. Creativity is fostered imaginatively and the curriculum is further enhanced by the good opportunities for older pupils to learn Spanish. There is a good focus on developing basic skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT, though pupils have too few opportunities to produce good quality writing, especially in history and geography, where the coverage of topics is often too superficial in Years 3 to 6. The school promotes healthy and safe lifestyles successfully, for example by encouraging pupils to eat fruit at playtimes and to walk to school.

There is an outstanding range of visits and visitors that brings subjects alive and contributes significantly to pupils' academic and personal development. For example, a visit to a primary school in London has greatly extended pupils' understanding of different faiths and cultures and pupils have improved their knowledge of wild birds by working with members of a conservation society. There is a good range of well attended out-of-school activities that help to make school interesting and enjoyable.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. The school has a welcoming atmosphere and pupils are safe and very happy. The school works very well with parents and outside agencies to safeguard pupils' well-being, and child protection procedures are fully in place.

Academic support is good overall. Assessment procedures are well established and teachers know pupils' individual needs well. However, the school has only recently started to collect assessment information each term to ensure that pupils who have not made enough progress in writing can be given greater support or challenge. There has not been enough time for these arrangements to have had a clear impact on pupils' progress.

Good procedures for introducing new pupils into the Reception Year help them to settle quickly.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher and other members of staff, work together closely with governors, and have a thorough knowledge of the school through the careful monitoring of teaching, learning and standards. Areas for improvement are correctly identified and suitable plans are made to bring about the necessary changes to raise standards further. For example, in response to concerns about the progress pupils make in writing, the school has changed the curriculum to include more opportunities for drama to increase pupils' motivation and to extend their vocabularies in preparation for writing topics. This approach is starting to have a positive impact on pupils' work.

School self-evaluation is good. There is an accurate understanding of school effectiveness and how it can be improved. Test results are analysed and the progress of individuals is monitored carefully. The school works well with external agencies to promote the well-being of all pupils.

Governors provide good support for the school and carry out their duties well. They monitor the work of the school conscientiously, and they have correctly identified the need to focus their attention more specifically on whole school priorities. Parents and pupils are given very good opportunities to share their views and to contribute to the school's self-evaluation process. For example, parents are invited to attend school development planning meetings. Parents are very positive about the school and make an excellent contribution towards their children's learning. Many parents attend workshops in the Reception class to support the teaching of reading. Clear actions plans for improvement have helped the school to move forward at a good pace since the last inspection and ensure that the school is well placed to improve further.

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	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

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	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?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	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

Thank you for welcoming the inspectors to your school and for showing us your work. You were very polite and friendly.

What we liked most about your school

You are very good at reading, mathematics and science.

Members of staff help you to learn well and to behave sensibly.

Your teachers are kind and caring and look after you well.

The headteacher, members of staff and governors are working hard to make the school even better.

Your parents and carers are very pleased that you enjoy coming to this school so much.

What we have asked your school to do now

Help you to improve your writing.

Ensure that those of you who are in Years 3 to 6 cover history and geography topics in more detail and produce better work.

We thoroughly enjoyed listening to you and watching you learn. We wish you all well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Alison Cartlidge Lead Inspector