



# Bishop Ellis Catholic Primary School

Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 120218  
**LEA** Leicestershire  
**Inspection number** 280769  
**Inspection dates** 5 July 2006 to 6 July 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Ian Knight AI

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Barkby Thorpe Lane
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided		Thurmaston
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11		Leicester, Leicestershire LE4 8GP
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	0116 2695510
<b>Number on roll</b>	314	<b>Fax number</b>	0116 2697479
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr Anthony Cross
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	26 June 2000	<b>Headteacher</b>	Ms Gail Neill

<b>Age group</b> 4 to 11	<b>Inspection dates</b> 5 July 2006 - 6 July 2006	<b>Inspection number</b> 280769
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Bishop Ellis is larger than most primary schools and serves the area of Thurmaston, on the northern edge of Leicester. Around half of the pupils travel to school by bus. The socio-economic background of pupils is mixed, but average overall. Most pupils are White British with a few coming from other cultural backgrounds. No pupils who speak English as an additional language are at the early stages of language acquisition. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is a little below average.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

'I would highly recommend Bishop Ellis to any parent, for consistency of teaching, positive attitudes to learning, caring ethos of the whole school and response to special needs issues', wrote one parent. This reflects the inspectors' view of this good school, which is also the school's own evaluation. It is good because of strong leadership and management, reflected in successful efforts to improve standards, especially in mathematics, whilst maintaining the school's strong Catholic ethos. Value for money is good. The school strives to ensure that all pupils do as well as they can. This is exemplified in the outstanding provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities that results in their very good progress. Good provision in Reception ensures that children make good progress when they start school, which is sustained throughout the school because of good teaching. Progress in mathematics is very good due to the school's successful strategies for improving learning. However, standards in writing, whilst improving, are not yet in line with those in mathematics and science. Overall, the school has improved at a good rate since its last inspection and the success of its current strategies indicates that it has a good capacity to keep improving.

Outstanding provision for pupils' care and guidance results in polite, pleasant, well rounded individuals who really enjoy school and who demonstrate exemplary behaviour and attitudes to learning. Pupils' spiritual development is excellent. Good provision is made for pupils to understand their own and western culture, but the school recognises that more could be done in terms of preparing pupils for life in today's multicultural society.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Implement the planned actions in the school development plan to improve standards in writing.
- Provide more opportunities to prepare pupils for life in multicultural Britain.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well in the school. Children's attainment when they start in Reception is close to the level expected for their age, though weaker in communication, language and literacy. They make good progress and reach the expected levels by the time they start Year 1. Pupils currently in Year 2 started with lower standards than usual, and they have made good progress to reach average standards. Good progress is sustained across the school so that by the end of Year 6 pupils reach above average standards, except in English which is average. Standards are lower in writing than in other areas, and this is rightly identified as an area of focus. Effective action has begun to improve standards of writing in Year 6, with the effect that the proportion gaining the higher Level 5 has improved markedly this year.

School records show that, in the past, progress was slower at the beginning of Key Stage 2, and this is a factor in the lower standards in writing seen in Year 6. Nevertheless, no groups underachieve. Progress in mathematics is very good because of improvements made in teaching. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are supported exceptionally well and make very good progress towards their individual targets. The school sets challenging targets for all pupils' performance and is successful in reaching these.

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

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils' personal development is outstanding because of pupils' excellent spiritual, moral and social development. The school plans ample opportunities for pupils to reflect and wonder at things which amaze and puzzle them in the natural and man-made worlds and life in general. They respond readily to these experiences. They also regularly reflect on their own learning in lessons, and sensitive opportunities for personal reflection are provided in assemblies and in religious education lessons. Their understanding of living in a multicultural society, whilst satisfactory, is less well developed.

Pupils say how much they enjoy school and this enthusiasm for learning is clearly evident in all activities and reflected in their good attendance. Pupils develop exceptionally good relationships with each other and with adults. They understand and adopt safe practices. Pupils' excellent behaviour and attitudes result in them concentrating very well, working hard and thereby achieving well in lessons.

Pupils develop a mature sense of responsibility, showing concern for the needs of others; for example, acting as playground and bus buddies and raising funds for charities. Pupils say they feel no threat from bullying. They feel safe and are confident to seek help from staff should any problems arise. They understand the principles of leading healthy lifestyles, enjoying regular opportunities to eat fruit and drink water and to participate in sporting activities. Pupils make an especially positive contribution to the life of the school community, for example through their involvement in the School Council.

Pupils are well prepared for their future economic well-being by developing their basic skills of English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT). Recent school initiatives about independent learning encourage teamwork skills well.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Good teaching is the main reason for the good achievement in the school. In Reception, adults know when to intervene and make good use of questioning. Throughout the school, writing is promoted well in all subjects, and particularly good examples were seen in religious education and mathematics, as well as in English lessons. Pupils have

individual targets for writing that they know and can refer to. The quality of writing is improving steadily as a result of this focus.

Progress in mathematics is particularly good because teaching focuses squarely on understanding as well as the acquisition of skills. Good questioning ensures that pupils have to think hard and give reasons as well as answers. The use of 'speaking partners' ensures that all pupils are involved.

Opportunities have improved for pupils to practise the skills of research and independent learning. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 produced high-quality presentations of their findings about mountains, making good use of ICT. However, the school acknowledges that this is an area to be further developed.

Teaching assistants are skilled and support groups or individuals well, especially those with learning difficulties and disabilities, who make very good progress towards their targets as a result.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is good. Mathematics, for example, is particularly well planned. A factor in the steady improvement in writing is the way that the school is successfully encouraging pupils to apply their writing skills in all subjects. The curriculum in Reception meets these young learners' needs well. The outdoor area is particularly well organised, although the indoor is less stimulating. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is excellent. As one parent said of her son, 'Within a few weeks it was noticed he was behind with his reading and writing and he attended an extra class that was a really good help. Not only did he learn to read and write properly, it also helped with his confidence.'

There is a good programme for enriching pupils' experience which adds to their learning. Pupils in Year 6 are able to go on a residential visit each year, there are regular themed days and weeks, and specialist visitors to school support learning, all of which are hugely enjoyed by pupils. Strong and effective links with Catholic secondary schools allow for specialist teaching in science and the arts.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

The quality of care, guidance and support for pupils is outstanding, exemplified by the comment of one parent that the teachers 'always go the extra mile, nothing is too much trouble'. Procedures to keep pupils safe are robust and effective so that pupils feel very safe in school, knowing that any concerns will be dealt with promptly and effectively. The very good procedures to help children about to start school include visits and eating a school lunch with their new peers. These ensure new children quickly become familiar with the school and settle in well.

Pastoral support, securely based in the school's Catholic ethos, is excellent. Any pupils in need are monitored carefully by senior staff and have individual plans. For example,

a pupil became ill, affecting both her attendance and her ability to work in class. Her parents said that, 'This was managed brilliantly by the school, in a balanced and caring response ... As a family, we felt supported in ensuring our daughter was able to gain from learning in school'. Pupils' academic progress is monitored regularly by teachers. Target setting and marking ensure that pupils have a clear understanding of how well they are doing, especially in English.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Good leadership and management at all levels are driving standards up whilst maintaining the school's strong Catholic ethos. The headteacher and staff share a clear vision of a school within which pupils are valued and achieve their potential, and strive to attain it. At the same time, Catholic values are promoted well in all activities, being a major factor in the excellent pastoral care in the school and the positive relationships. Self-evaluation is good and leadership and management contribute well to school improvement. For example, following concerted action and a consistent approach, standards in mathematics have improved and pupils make very good progress.

Current strategies to improve writing are also successful. However, improvement is less rapid because of the need for the impact of school initiatives to work its way through the school. The school's self-evaluation is good because of the strong systems for monitoring and evaluating lessons, and the strong involvement of staff and governors in this process. It is realised in the good school improvement plan. Pupils' views are also an important part of the process, obtained through the School Council and its 'ideas box'. Parents are consulted on specific issues and a questionnaire is used to canvass their views. Consultation with them could be improved even further by inviting general comments about how the school might improve.

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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	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

<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>	1	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**

Dear Pupils

Thank you for being so helpful and welcoming when we visited your school. We really enjoyed chatting with you and seeing how well you work and get along. We particularly enjoyed looking at the older pupils' work on mountains in the hall. I'm writing to tell you what we found out about the school.

You do very well in mathematics because your teachers know how to make sure you really understand what you're learning, and that helps you to remember and use it. You always work very hard in school, enjoy lessons and behave extremely well. The school takes superb care of you all, especially those of you with particular needs. The headteacher and other teachers know the school well and know what they want to do to make it better.

We've asked the school to do some things to make it even better. Although your writing is improving, it still isn't as good as mathematics and science, and we've asked the school to carry on trying to improve it. You learn lots about your own culture, but not as much about others, and that's important because Britain and Leicester are multicultural, so we've asked the school to do a bit more on this.

I hope all of you carry on working as hard as we saw and do well. Some of you will be leaving to go to secondary school shortly. Bishop Ellis has made sure that you are well prepared.

Yours sincerely

Ian Knight Lead Inspector