



St Cuthbert's Church of England Infants School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 123778
LEA Somerset
Inspection number 281557
Inspection dates 13 June 2006 to 14 June 2006
Reporting inspector Alwyne Jolly AI

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

Type of school	Infant	School address	Keward Walk
School category	Voluntary controlled		Wells
Age range of pupils	4 to 7		Somerset BA5 1TZ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01749 672591
Number on roll	156	Fax number	01749 670769
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	
Date of previous inspection	9 October 2000	Headteacher	Mrs Vicky Flicker

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
4 to 7	13 June 2006 - 14 June 2006	281557

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a small school for children aged from four to seven years. Numbers on roll are dropping because there are not so many young families in the area as there were. When children join the school, their abilities are generally at the level expected for their age. The proportion of children with learning difficulties is below average. Very few pupils come from minority ethnic groups and almost all speak English at home. The proportion of children known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The school has been awarded the Basic Skills Quality Mark twice. It has also achieved the Artsmark Silver Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school which gives sound value for money. It has emerged successfully from a period of change in its leadership and has an accurate view of its own performance. The leadership team have a clear vision of what needs to be done and all indications are that standards are now rising. However, the necessary actions to bring about further improvement and fulfil all statutory requirements have not been implemented quickly enough with specific, measurable targets and to precise deadlines.

The personal development of pupils is a strength and fulfils the school's mission statement 'to leave in place happy memories for all pupils'. Parents and pupils are proud of the school and appreciative of the staff, whom they support well. A parent observed, 'They have created an environment where the children have every opportunity to learn and grow'. Pupils enjoy school, behave well and benefit from a stimulating curriculum.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory, ensuring that pupils' achievement in almost all areas is at least satisfactory. Although standards are average by the end of the Reception Year, they are rising because of the improved quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage from last September. Standards are average at the end of Year 2. However, too many able pupils underachieve in writing because there is not a specific focus on their needs. The school has recognised the need to introduce individual targets for pupils to help them to improve. Raising standards in writing has been identified as a whole-school priority and there are clear signs of improvement. In response to the previous inspection, pupils use their information and communication technology (ICT) skills effectively in other subjects.

What the school should do to improve further

- ensure that teachers provide more challenging work and clearer targets for able pupils so that they achieve better standards, particularly in writing
- ensure the school meets all statutory requirements with greater urgency
- ensure that specific targets for school improvement are set so that senior staff and governors can monitor the process more effectively and measure success.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and standards are broadly average. Children under five achieve satisfactorily and are on course to meet the expected level in all six areas of learning. Although standards are satisfactory, children's development in communication, language and literacy is the weakest feature. Boys currently heavily outnumber girls in both Reception classes and achieve less well in this aspect. This has been identified and is being tackled. Over the past year, there has been an increased emphasis on phonics and the development of writing which has had a positive impact

on progress. Good use is made of observations and assessments in planning and identifying next steps in learning.

Standards in Year 2 are average, reflecting satisfactory progress in Years 1 and 2. The 2005 test results were not significantly different from average in almost all aspects. However, the proportion of pupils attaining the expected Level 2 in writing was below average and the proportion of pupils attaining the higher Level 3 was also below average in both science and writing.

The provisional Year 2 test results for 2006 are better and show that an apparent dip in performance in 2004 and 2005 has been halted. Clear improvement is indicated in mathematics and reading and the proportion of pupils attaining the higher level in science and writing, whilst still low, has increased. Pupils do not always meet the targets set for them. Pupils with learning difficulties achieve well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal and social development is good. Attendance is above average, behaviour is good and pupils enjoy school. Responsibilities given to older pupils at lunchtime and during assemblies develop a strong sense of community. This is further enhanced by the elected school council, where pupils offer ideas for school improvement. By managing their own budget, pupils on the school council are able to develop the money-handling skills needed for future economic well-being. The school has taken part in a number of local events and contributes well to the local community.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, cultural and social development is good. Pupils learn about other religions, and a range of visitors enhance their experiences. Assemblies have a clear spiritual element, emphasising the Christian ethos of the school.

There is an orderly atmosphere around school. Pupils feel confident that they can talk to teachers if they are unhappy. Pupils like playtimes and enjoy meeting children from the neighbouring junior school at lunchtimes. This promotes good relationships and links. Pupils understand the need to adopt healthy lifestyles by drinking water, taking regular exercise and eating healthily.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory throughout the school. Teachers foster good relationships with pupils, who respond well so there is a positive atmosphere in classrooms. Learning support assistants are effective in helping pupils, especially those who have learning difficulties. One very positive development since the last inspection is the greater use of ICT in teaching. The regular use of computers linked to interactive whiteboards is particularly effective and stimulates pupils' learning. The school is committed to improving pupils' learning and is developing its own approach

based on a commercial programme. A pamphlet written by pupils declares, 'At our school we try to help ourselves to learn'. This approach, still at an early stage, is starting to help pupils realise the importance of concentration, listening carefully, teamwork and individual thinking.

The procedures for checking how well pupils are doing are satisfactory and are used to feed into planning. Pupils' work is marked regularly and positively. However, the school recognises that pupils' targets for improvement are often not specific or measurable so they have little impact on raising standards. Work in lessons is not always planned carefully enough to meet the needs of different abilities, particularly the more able.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Curriculum provision is good. A broad range of interesting work ensures that pupils enjoy coming to school and effectively develops the key basic skills in literacy and numeracy. This has been recognised by the award of the Basic Skills Quality Mark. One parent said that her son would 'come in the holidays if he could!'. The curriculum offers a wide range of opportunities to stimulate the pupils' interests. This begins in Reception, where children's early development is nurtured carefully and their experiences broadened so that they make secure progress in all areas. A range of activities, related to reading, mathematical games and science, enrich the curriculum in Years 1 and 2. Specific enrichment days are supplemented by an annual Arts Week. The school's wholehearted commitment to art, music, dance and drama has been endorsed by the Artsmark Silver Award. There is also a good range of clubs. Improved ICT provision and its effective use have also had a positive impact in several subjects. Planned activities do not sufficiently take into consideration the needs of pupils whom the school has identified as more able.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The care, guidance and support for pupils are satisfactory. Pupils are given sound academic advice. Assessment data is gathered in all classes and this is analysed in order to identify strengths and weaknesses across the school. It is not used effectively enough to track and monitor the progress of individual children in all year groups. The school is beginning to set individual targets for pupils in writing. Not all pupils have enough specific guidance about how they can meet their targets.

Provision for children with learning difficulties is good. Individual education plans have clear targets, criteria for achievement and strategies for support.

Health and safety procedures are reviewed regularly and risk assessments are in place. Pupils are taught about safety procedures. The school works closely with parents and other agencies to support pupils, particularly vulnerable pupils or those at risk. Child protection arrangements are in place.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. There have been two changes of headship since the last inspection and the current headteacher has piloted the school most securely through this period of change and uncertainty. There is a positive ethos in the school and a stimulating learning environment. Pupils' achievements are valued. Parents and pupils believe their views are listened to and good links are made with other schools and the community. The leadership team evaluates the school's work accurately. It has identified the main priorities for improvement. These are fed into the School Improvement Plan, which is a thorough document. Its effectiveness in driving up standards has been limited by imprecise and difficult to measure targets. Consequently, the monitoring and evaluation of how well the school is moving forward tends to be supportive, rather than challenging.

Nonetheless, the school has made sensible contingency plans for the possibility of a continuing falling roll. Resources are deployed satisfactorily and the views of parents and pupils are sought. Good leadership has been evident in key areas such as literacy, numeracy and the Foundation Stage so that the 2006 provisional results and the current work seen reflects an improving picture, which confirms the school's capacity to improve

The governing body has also been beset by many changes and does not currently have its full complement. Good strategies are in place to respond to the views of parents, such as the monthly governors' surgery. The governors have identified clearly that they are not fulfilling a number of statutory requirements and have prepared an action plan. However, they have been too slow in implementing the necessary actions.

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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?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	3	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	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	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	3	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?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3	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	2	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	3	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	3	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	No
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 helping us when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking to you and looking at your work. These are the things that we are most pleased about:

all your teachers and learning support assistants are helpful to those children who find it difficult to learn

your behaviour and attendance are good

you are taught many interesting things and enjoy school

you are encouraged to keep fit and healthy.

We have asked the teachers and governors to make the school even better and have suggested that:

those children who are good at writing have harder work to do and are given targets to help them improve even more

the school plan has clear targets and covers everything it needs to do by law.

We hope that you continue to enjoy school and carry on working hard.