



St Benedict's Church of England Voluntary Aided Junior School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 123833
LEA Somerset
Inspection number 281573
Inspection dates 28 September 2005 to 29 September 2005
Reporting inspector David Curtis RISP

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

Type of school	Junior	School address	Benedict Street
School category	Voluntary aided		Glastonbury
Age range of pupils	7 to 11		Somerset BA6 9EX
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01458 831811
Number on roll	289	Fax number	01458 832 261
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	
Date of previous inspection	4 December 2000	Headteacher	Mr Chris Lewis

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is situated in the centre of Glastonbury. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is above average and several receive additional funding to meet their needs. In the last two years, eight teachers have left and six have joined this 10-class school. In recent years, there has been an increase in the number of pupils joining the school other than at the start of the school year. Pupils' attainment when they start Year 3 is average. Most pupils are of White British heritage.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school judges its own effectiveness to be satisfactory, a view supported by the inspection. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

After the last inspection, there was a significant decline in standards in 2001 and 2002. Many pupils at that time were underachieving and standards were well below average. As a result of the new headteacher's determination to build a team to support him in improving the school, standards have improved and are broadly average. Teaching and learning are satisfactory, with improvements in teaching since the appointment of the headteacher contributing to rising standards. Pupils' progress is satisfactory. Parents recognise and value the hard work of the headteacher in improving the school. Pupils like school and their attitudes to work are positive. They enjoy learning.

Standards in writing are below average and pupils are not sufficiently aware as to how they can improve their writing. The school has made great strides in improving its assessment of pupils' standards and progress, but it is not secure in using this information to set targets for future improvement. The school's improvement plan has good targets aimed at raising standards. However, these targets are too numerous and the outcomes have no means by which they can be measured. The school has the capacity to improve further on the secure building blocks it has put in place. Progress since the last inspection has been satisfactory, especially in relation to raising standards. Pupils' behaviour has improved considerably and is good.

Grade 3

What the school should do to improve further

- raise standards in writing and help pupils to understand more clearly how they can improve their work
- use assessment information more effectively to set targets for future learning and enable pupils and parents to contribute to this process
- ensure that the school improvement plan has specific and measurable targets that are clearly linked to raising standards.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

After a significant fall in 2001 and 2002, when they were well below average, standards have improved since 2003 and this is reflected in better results in the 2005 national tests. A particular cause for celebration is the considerable increase in the proportion of pupils achieving the higher Level 5 in mathematics and science in 2005. This confirms that the school has tackled the underachievement of more-able pupils because work is much more challenging. In 2005, the school exceeded its targets for pupils achieving Level 5. It has set further challenging targets for 2006.

Achievement is satisfactory and standards are broadly average, except in writing. Pupils do not spend enough time writing at length and on occasions their progress is hindered by using too many photocopied worksheets which need one-word or short-phrase answers. In addition, pupils do not have a clear understanding of how they can improve their writing. However, they are fluent and confident readers, and their speaking and listening skills are good. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress in lessons. They receive high quality support from well trained teaching assistants. The school works hard to make English more exciting for boys in order to improve their progress. It has successfully raised standards in design and technology, which was identified as a weakness in the last report. Standards in this subject are now satisfactory.

Grade 3

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Parents agree wholeheartedly that their children like school. It is very evident that pupils particularly enjoy coming to school. They behave well in lessons, at breaks and when they move around the school. Pupils' attitudes are positive and they work hard in lessons. Cries of 'I've done it! I've done it!' and 'It was much easier today because I understand now!' show how pupils enjoy celebrating their own successes.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Through collective worship, pupils have good time for reflection. Moral and social development is a strong feature of the expectations pupils set themselves in classes and through the school council. Through lessons in geography and history and from visiting speakers, such as an Indian dancer, pupils develop a good understanding of other cultures.

Pupils know the importance of healthy eating. They relish sport and the many sports clubs the school provides: 40 pupils regularly attend the cross country club. Through the school council, and lessons in personal, social and health education, pupils develop a good awareness of citizenship. Pupils make a strong contribution to many local events, including carol singing in Glastonbury Abbey. They regularly raise money to support charities and have bought sheep for families in Somalia as part of their understanding of how they can help those who are less fortunate.

Attendance has improved since the last inspection and is satisfactory.

Grade 2

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The school has worked hard to help pupils develop good attitudes towards learning and positive relationships. This has been successful and pupils enjoy their work and actively participate in most lessons.

A result of this improvement in behaviour and attitudes is that pupils work much harder. This, in turn, has contributed to the noticeable improvement in standards in the last two years.

In most lessons, teachers use their good subject knowledge to plan work that meets the needs of the pupils well. More-able pupils are challenged effectively, with the result that more of them achieved the higher levels in national tests. Teaching assistants give valuable support by providing further explanations, particularly for those with learning difficulties. In a small number of lessons, the different expectations of groups of pupils in the class has not been identified clearly enough which contributes to these pupils not making sufficient progress.

The marking of pupils' work is helpful in telling pupils how well they are doing. However, pupils are not sufficiently well informed about the steps they need to take to improve their work. As a result, pupils do not make sufficient progress, especially in writing.

Grade 3

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum meets the needs of the pupils satisfactorily and is effective in supporting pupils' personal development. Support from outside agencies is successfully helping pupils and their families who are experiencing difficulties. Pupils feel valued as individuals and show respect towards each other. Work is usually adapted well to meet the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and teachers have a good understanding of their individual needs. Suitable arrangements are in place to support pupils' health awareness and their capacity to keep safe.

The school is beginning to develop links between different curriculum areas. This is allowing pupils to have a greater appreciation of the importance of writing for different purposes and audiences. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used effectively in other subjects.

Extra-curricular provision is good. Pupils speak highly of the opportunities the school provides for activities during lunchtime and after school.

Attendance is satisfactory and the range of activities on offer is wide. The school often arranges whole day activities with a specific focus, such as Indian dancing, and these are memorable events for the pupils.

Grade 3

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The quality of care provided by the school is good. Pupils are confident that there is always someone to discuss personal issues with and that they would be supported. Parents think that the school provides a caring and safe place for their children. Several

are particularly complimentary about the good example provided by the headteacher. The school's child protection procedures are effective.

School reports give parents helpful information about their child's progress and most pupils have a general understanding of how well they are doing. The school is developing ways to involve pupils in setting their own targets, but these are not securely established or used regularly enough.

The school has good links with parents. They support and encourage their children at school. This contributes to the positive attitudes of pupils and their achievements. Parents and pupils report that the school is free from bullying and oppressive behaviour because these are dealt with quickly and effectively. This is a good improvement since the last inspection.

Grade 2

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory, and have a number of strengths. The headteacher and staff have high aspirations, a sense of purpose and commitment to meeting the needs of all the pupils. On his appointment in 2002, the headteacher identified the key areas which needed to be improved – behaviour, teaching and learning and standards. He has built a committed and competent staff team who work in close partnership with him in improving the school. Governors understand the strengths and weaknesses of the school and give good support to the headteacher. However, they do not hold senior staff sufficiently accountable for the standards achieved in the school.

The school's senior management team works closely with the headteacher and members of the team are equally committed to school improvement. As a team, they have made a considerable contribution to improving standards in the school following the noticeable decline in 2001 and 2002.

Together with the headteacher, they show an honest recognition of the school's current effectiveness. They know the strengths of the school and have a good understanding of what needs to be improved. The school's self-evaluation has been effective, particularly in the last two years, identifying what needs to improve.

The school improvement plan is rightly focused on raising standards. However, it contains too many targets for one year, and it is difficult to see how success in achieving many of the targets will be measured. The regular monitoring of teaching and learning in the classroom by the headteacher, governors, curriculum leaders' and local education authority (LEA) inspectors provides clear evidence that the quality of teaching is improving. Pupils' needs are at the heart of the day-to-day life of the school; equality of opportunity is well-promoted and supported. The school has recovered from a significant deficit and has a balanced budget. Staff who support the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are well trained and effective. The school has the capacity to improve further.

Grade 3

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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	NA	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	3	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?	3	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?	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	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	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

30th September 2005

Dear Pupils

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed talking to you, both in lessons and around the school. We were impressed with many of the things we saw and here are some of them:

you work hard in lessons and enjoy your work

you behave well

you are good at reading and you listen carefully to your teachers; when you answer questions, you speak clearly and confidently

you like the many lunchtime and after-school clubs that teachers run for you; many of you enjoy music and sport

you are good friends with each other and the school council told us there is no bullying in your school

you are very proud when you receive stickers and certificates for working hard in lessons.

To make your school even better, we have asked your teachers to:

help you to do better in writing and show you more clearly how to improve your work

use all the information they have better to set the right targets for you, and involve you and your parents when doing this

set clear targets for themselves on how they will help you to do better.

Thank you again for being so polite and friendly.

Yours sincerely

David Curtis Lead Inspector