



Blue Coat CofE Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 115734
LEA Gloucestershire
Inspection number 285342
Inspection dates 16 May 2006 to 16 May 2006
Reporting inspector Christopher Schenk HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools the authority to inspect any school in England. The inspection is to be treated as a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary	School address	Symn Lane
School category	Voluntary aided		Wotton-under-Edge
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Gloucestershire GL12 7BD
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01453 525020
Number on roll	328	Fax number	01453 521080
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	
Date of previous inspection	15 May 2006	Headteacher	Mr P W Williams

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors who observed six lessons or parts of lessons and talked to the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, subject coordinators, the chair of governors and a group of Year 6 pupils. He also read the school's self-evaluation and supporting documents and looked at samples of pupils' work. He analysed 170 questionnaires returned by parents and looked at the results of a parental survey conducted by the school in January 2006.

Description of the school

The Blue Coat Church of England Primary School was founded in 1693. It moved to its present premises, a well designed and spacious building in attractive grounds, in February 2000. The school is a little larger than average and serves a mixed community that is relatively prosperous. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below the national average. Only a small number of pupils are from minority ethnic groups and very few speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils identified as having learning difficulties or disabilities is around the national average, but the proportion with statements of special educational need is above average and their needs cover a range of learning difficulties and disabilities.

A voluntary committee runs a pre-school, as well as before and after school care facilities, in the school's premises. These facilities were inspected by a childcare inspector from Ofsted at the same time as the school's inspection took place. Her report can be found on the Ofsted website.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

'We get a wide range of experiences. The school is really good: everyone is friendly and makes you feel good about what you have done.' This is how a group of Year 6 pupils summed up the school they are about to leave. It is an outstandingly good school which gives its pupils a wide range of exceptionally well planned learning experiences that motivate them, channel their enthusiasm and help them to make good progress. Music, art and sport flourish within the school and a very high proportion of pupils learn to play an instrument. There are many after-school clubs which are well attended. Visits and visitors are frequent and carefully planned to broaden the pupils' horizons. For example, artists visit from time to time to involve the pupils in the creation of large scale works of art that now adorn the school. Teachers from the local secondary school, a specialist language college, visit once a week to give the older pupils taster courses in French, German and Japanese.

Enterprise education is a strong feature. On the day of the inspection, a practical re-enactment of the parable of the talents took place. Older pupils had invested a pound each in an enterprise designed to raise money for Christian Aid. Those who manufactured food, drinks or goods for sale in the school made some profit; those who volunteered their services, packing bags in a local supermarket, made much more. Pupils are very aware of global issues and of the needs of the developing world. They also have contacts with schools in Sweden, Norway and Poland through the Comenius project. However, their understanding of the cultures represented in modern Britain is too limited.

Pupils are well taught and they are enthusiastic learners. They make good progress throughout the school. The high standards that pupils reach have not made the school complacent. The teachers are always looking for ways to become even better. Three years ago, they identified that, in common with many other schools, boys were not doing as well as girls in their writing. From a realisation that boys write best from first-hand experiences, they have successfully worked together to bring the boys' writing up to the level of the girls, giving them plenty of interesting things to write about by teaching through topics that make strong links between subjects. More recently, mathematics results were found to be relatively weaker than those in English and science. By analysing the results carefully, the areas for development were identified, notably the need for greater emphasis on mathematical vocabulary. Teachers throughout the school have worked together and have already brought about some improvement. Further initiatives are planned, for example, parents' evenings, in response to a survey in which many parents said they did not feel confident in helping their children with mathematics because they were unsure about the methods being taught.

The two Reception classes give children in the Foundation Stage an outstandingly good education. The teachers understand the importance of rhythm, pattern and movement in young children's learning. Music plays a strong part in the daily routines and dance is linked to the physical skills needed in writing, following a programme of work developed in Holland. The school is part of a project to improve the transition

between Reception and Year 1 and is finding further ways in which Key Stage 1 teachers can build on the strengths of the Foundation Stage.

Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make outstandingly good progress. Their needs are carefully identified and they are given specific support to overcome their difficulties. Great care is taken to ensure that they are fully included in all aspects of the school's life. Monitoring shows that, for example, they take part in after school clubs as much as the other pupils and they are proportionally represented on the elected school council. Because they are strongly encouraged, and their self-confidence is built up, they respond to their teachers' high expectations and many of them catch up with their class-mates. A small number of pupils with learning difficulties are also identified as having particular gifts and talents. The school is now well placed to identify the strengths of pupils with learning difficulties more systematically.

The progress of pupils in English and mathematics is carefully assessed, and pupils know how well they are doing and what they need to do next in order to improve. The school has been looking at systems for tracking this progress in greater detail, though it is not evident that such systems are needed. The progress that pupils make in the specific skills of other subjects is not systematically assessed. It would be particularly beneficial to develop broader assessment to ensure that subject-specific skills are being developed within the integrated topic approach that the school adopted two years ago.

Parents are very pleased with the school. A questionnaire sent out at the time of the inspection met with an overwhelmingly positive response. One parent's comment is typical of many: 'The school encourages each pupil to grow, not just academically but as a whole person forming a firm foundation for future life.'

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils make good progress throughout the school and reach high standards in English and mathematics, and particularly high standards in science. They also achieve well in other subjects, notably music, art and physical education. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make particularly good progress and in many cases reach standards in line with national expectations.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils are enthusiastic and enjoy their learning greatly. They lead a healthy lifestyle and know how to stay safe. They make a good contribution to the school and to the wider community. They are outstandingly well prepared for their future economic well-being by the high standards they reach in basic skills, their excellent teamwork and the many opportunities they are given to develop their enterprise. They also benefit from an after school club in which adults come to talk about their jobs.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The teaching is good. Teachers gain a great deal from planning together. They are open about their strengths and weaknesses and, as a result, they are able to share their expertise effectively. The learning is also good because the pupils are highly motivated and are encouraged to learn from each other.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

This is outstanding because the school combines a rich programme of stimulating activities and experiences with very good underlying structures that ensure that all pupils are making steady progress in their key skills. There have been considerable developments over the last few years, with greater integration between subjects leading to increased motivation. Pupils have been surveyed to find out what they think of the integrated topics: nearly all say that they prefer them to separate subjects.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

This is outstanding because of the combination of very good pastoral care with equally good academic guidance and support. The pupils are clear about their targets in English and mathematics and are given regular guidance about what they need to do to improve. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are particularly well supported.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The headteacher is an enterprising, optimistic and effective leader. As a pupil commented, 'He really encourages you: he always tells you the positives and not the negatives.' With the support of the deputy, who makes a strong contribution to the success of pupils with learning difficulties, he enables teachers and other staff to work together very well for the good of the pupils. Subject coordinators have played an important part in recent improvements and the staff as a whole are always open to new ideas. The governors give exceptionally good support. They are involved and informed at a level of detail that enables them to ask pertinent questions and hold the school to account, so that strategic decisions are always in the best interests of the pupils.

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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?	1	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	1	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	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	1	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	2	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	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?	1	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?	1	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	1	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	1	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	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 very much for your welcome when I came to inspect your school yesterday. Some of you told me about what you like about your school: 'We get a wide range of experiences. The school is really good: everyone is friendly and makes you feel good about what you have done.' I think you are absolutely right. The range of learning experiences you are given is outstanding. You are also right that your headteacher and teachers encourage you very strongly and this makes you want to do your best.

I was impressed by your enthusiasm for learning and by your good behaviour and excellent teamwork. I think that you are doing very well at school and learning a lot of useful lessons for life. The older pupils came up with some good ideas for raising money for Christian Aid and I was able to buy some of the products that you had made. I am looking forward to seeing my sunflowers grow. Some of you discovered that you can make even more money by offering a service. I was delighted to hear how much you had raised by packing bags at the local supermarket.

I talked to the head, the deputy and the chair of governors before I left. Your teachers are always looking for ways to make the school even better, so I made a few suggestions. You learn a lot about the rest of the world and you have a good understanding of the needs of developing countries. I would like you to find out more about the different cultures and communities in Britain today. Your teachers keep a careful track of how you are doing in English and mathematics and they tell you your targets so that you know how to improve. I have asked them to think about how they can keep closer track of your progress in other subjects as well.