

St Bartholomews's Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100726
Local Authority	Lewisham
Inspection number	285864
Inspection dates	18–19 March 2008
Reporting inspector	Norma Ball

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	282
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Miss S Bryce
Headteacher	Miss J Bonner
Date of previous school inspection	21 January 2003
School address	The Peak Sydenham London SE26 4LJ
Telephone number	020 8699 8537
Fax number	020 8699 5625

Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

St. Bartholomew's is a larger than average primary school. Pupils come from a wide range of backgrounds reflecting the ethnic and cultural diversity of the area the school serves. A much higher than average number of pupils comes from minority ethnic backgrounds but the proportion for whom English is an additional language is average. The proportion of pupils who find learning difficult is below average with the majority having moderate learning difficulties. There are no pupils with physical difficulties. The number of pupils with a statement of educational need is small. The school admission numbers result in mixed-age classes through the school from Reception to Year 6. The school holds the Activemark and Sportsmark awards.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

St Bartholemew's provides a good quality of education and has a happy, caring ethos. Its Christian values permeate the day-to-day lives of all pupils. The majority of parents are pleased with the school referring to its 'strong sense of community' and 'lovely atmosphere'. However, a number of parents expressed concerns particularly relating to the poor condition of the premises and playground. Inspection evidence supports these concerns.

The standards reached by pupils are above average by the end of Year 6. Teachers create a lively and enthusiastic ethos in their classes which makes the pupils keen to learn. The curriculum is good. Interesting links have been established between subjects and an enterprising range of extra-curricular activities enriches pupils' learning experiences. Pupils feel secure and confident in school and good care and support ensures they make good progress. Standards have fluctuated in recent years but have shown steady improvement as a result of a range of successful initiatives which have been introduced. Good standards have been maintained in Years 3 to 6. Progress in Years 1 and 2, particularly in writing, is improving and is satisfactory, however younger pupils do not make the same good progress as pupils in Years 3 to 6.

As a result of good pastoral work, almost all pupils behave well, enjoy school and feel secure. Pupils understand about staying safe and healthy. They contribute enthusiastically to their school and local community, for example, they make regular visits to a local day care centre. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well so they gain confidence and respect the needs of others. Pupils are well prepared for the future through their good progress, good personal development and the rich experiences they gain.

All pupils receive good care, support and guidance, especially those who do not find learning easy. Links with agencies underpin the good care provided in school. Pupils receive good academic guidance and staff are beginning to develop skills in setting targets to plot clearly the next steps in their learning. The curriculum meets pupils' needs well and provides good learning experiences outside the classroom. The quality of teaching is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 where pupils make satisfactory progress and achieve average standards. Good teaching in Years 3 to 6 leads to good progress. By the time pupils leave the school they attain standards above the national average. The quality of teaching is carefully monitored and effective support is provided by senior managers especially for new staff who are still refining their teaching skills. Planning to ensure that tasks are carefully structured to meet the needs of pupils of different ability is improving but still not fully effective in accelerating the progress of younger pupils. Work is marked regularly but the quality of marking is variable and does not always help pupils identify how to improve their work.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher works in close partnership with the deputy headteacher and their complementary skills are providing clear and effective leadership for the school. A comprehensive programme of lesson observations, monitoring of planning and tracking of the pupils' progress has identified areas for improvement in Reception and Years 1 and 2. The careful intervention of senior leaders is having a beneficial impact on supporting staff to improve the quality of their teaching and raise standards especially in Years 1 and 2. Staff responsibilities have been re-organised providing new middle management teams who are enthusiastic about their new roles. Governors know the school well and offer effective support and challenge in equal measure. All issues identified in the last report have been addressed successfully. The school is not complacent and has a good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children enjoy being at school and mix happily together because of the caring approach of staff. They start school with skills that are similar to those expected for their age whilst showing weaknesses in linking letters to sounds, writing, communication for thinking and calculation. Most children make satisfactory progress in all areas of their learning and good progress in communicating their ideas. Successful induction arrangements ensure that children settle quickly and feel secure. The maintenance of good links with parents ensures they are kept well informed about their children's development. Within a colourful, stimulating environment in Reception there are well-directed, theme-based activities. However, the curriculum is not consistent for all reception-age children. In the two mixed-age classes, the work planned does not always cater specifically for both Reception and Year 1 pupils and as a result, there are fewer opportunities for Reception children to learn through play. Staff work well as a team and carefully and regularly assess children's progress to identify those who need extra support and encouragement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise the quality of teaching to that of the best.
- Ensure that all pupils understand what they need to do next to make better progress through setting clear targets and using evaluative marking.
- Strengthen planning in the Foundation Stage to ensure that all Reception children have appropriate opportunities to learn through play.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils make good progress in their time in school and by the time they leave Year 6 they attain standards which are above the national average. Pupils begin school with abilities that are in line with those expected of four-year-olds. They make satisfactory progress in Years 1 and 2, reaching standards that are average in reading and mathematics and above average in writing. In Years 3 to 6 pupils make good progress, attaining standards that are above average by the end of Year 6. Standards have fluctuated over the past five years but have improved as a result of a range of effective initiatives such as setting pupils in ability groups in English, mathematics and science in Year 5 and 6. The use of booster classes also helps pupils who have been identified as underachieving. In Years 1 and 2, pupils are making good progress in writing, especially extended writing, because the school has made this a focus for development. New reading schemes, a more systematic approach to the use of phonics and an emphasis on developing pupils' comprehension of texts are showing early signs that they too are having a positive impact on improving English skills for all age groups. The school caters well for pupils who find learning difficult and they make good progress because of the carefully structured support they receive.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy school and want to learn and this is reflected in good and punctual attendance. The school is an inclusive community in which everyone is valued. Behaviour is good, although in a few lessons, pupils are not fully challenged with interesting work and become distracted

so that short periods of learning time are lost. Pupils accept responsibilities with pride. For example, Year 6 play leaders support other pupils at break times and contribute successfully to making lunch and break times enjoyable occasions. Bullying and name calling are rare. Pupils are confident that any bullying is dealt with quickly and sensitively. Pupils' views are valued and they enjoy working and playing together. They understand about eating healthy food and exercising and have a clear awareness of how to stay safe. The school has a calm Christian ethos and assemblies are reflective and meaningful. Pupils have a good understanding of other faiths and cultures and enthusiastically support a range of charities. Their good social skills, sense of responsibility and the standards they attain ensure they are well prepared for life beyond school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Pupils enjoy learning and have confidence in their teachers. One said, 'Teachers help us and boost our confidence.' Pupils work confidently in small groups or alone. They particularly enjoy sharing ideas with partners. Teachers encourage good speaking and listening skills and most lessons have good pace and a variety of tasks to help pupils remain involved in their work. In Years 3 to 6, the teachers have high expectations of their pupils and have established a mature and productive ethos in lessons which spurs pupils on to work hard and make good progress. Learning support assistants work in a strong partnership with teachers to support pupils who need additional help with their learning. Assessment information is well used to monitor the progress pupils make. However, it is not used consistently by all staff to structure activities in lessons to meet the needs of groups of different ability. This is particularly so in Years 1 and 2, where pupils are not fully challenged to do as well as they can. The quality of marking is inconsistent and does not always identify succinctly where and how pupils can improve their work to enable them to do better.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is broad and balanced and meets the needs of pupils well. Support programmes for pupils who do not find learning easy enable them to achieve well. The school has notably improved the use of information and communication technology (ICT) by improvements to resources in the ICT suite. Laptops support research and word-processing skills in lessons and are available for home use. Carefully planned links between different subjects help to make lessons more interesting. In Years 3 and 4, for example, work on World War II effectively linked English, history, design and technology and ICT to make learning interesting and practical for the pupils. Less well developed, and identified by the school as a priority to improve, is the creative curriculum, particularly art. The curriculum provides well for pupils personal development with effective intervention groups for vulnerable pupils such as anger management, social skills groups and the circle of friends. A good range of visits out of school enriches pupils' learning and provides memorable support to classroom studies.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Staff know pupils well and assign a very high priority to their care. Pupils feel confident that they can seek help when they need it and one said, 'Teachers always listen and want to help

us.' Procedures for child protection and pupils' safety are robust. Good levels of attendance are maintained by careful monitoring. Strong pastoral care ensures pupils feel settled and ready to work. Targets, based on assessment data in English, help guide pupils in the next steps in their learning. This practice is developing in mathematics. Some teachers provide pupils with individual targets to identify clearly the next steps in their learning but this is not consistent practice across the school. Links with outside agencies are good and extend the good care provided in school. The school keeps parents well informed about the progress of their children and the curriculum they follow. Some parts of the building have fallen into a state of disrepair - temporary buildings have windows that will not open and play areas are sometimes unusable due to puddles of water and soil debris.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher leads the school well, and ensures pupils achieve well and have high quality care. Monitoring is used effectively to identify areas of the schools work that require improvement. Planning is carefully reviewed and progress tracked to identify areas of underachievement. Carefully structured support is put into place to help pupils. Training and development, particularly for new teachers, have a high priority and are helping to raise standards in Years 1 and 2. There has been careful reflection on the need to cater for mixed-age classes which arise from the entry requirements of the school. Year teams for older pupils plan effectively together and the school is now focusing on improving planning for younger pupils to achieve higher standards. Subject leadership responsibilities have been re-organised and roles redefined. Experienced subject leaders are good role models and support less experienced staff well. Consequently, the staff are increasingly gaining skills and confidence in monitoring and developing their subjects. Governors are committed and knowledgeable. Through their visits, links with subject leaders, and the good information they receive, they have a clear understanding of the strengths of the school as well as areas for development. They provide an effective mix of loyal support and challenge.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

03 April 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Bartholomews's Church of England Primary School, London, SE26 4LJ

Thank you very much for making us so welcome when we visited your school recently. We know you like your school very much and enjoyed letting us see your work. You did such a lot to make the two days run smoothly.

We think that you go to a good school. Your school is a happy place. You get on well with each other and like your teachers. You enjoy your lessons and especially like working in pairs to discuss ideas. You told us that adults are always there to help you when you need advice and we thought that your school was a caring place to be. You know how to stay safe and healthy. We also learnt that you like to help your school and some of you take responsibilities like being a play leader and helping younger children or serving as a school councillor.

Your teachers keep a good check on your progress, make your lessons interesting and help you to enjoy your learning. We have suggested the following things that should help your learning:

- to make sure that all of the teaching is as good as the best
- that your work is marked carefully to show how you could improve it and you are set clear targets to help you make better progress
- in the Foundation Stage, we have asked that children have activities planned for them to help them learn through play, even when they are sharing a class with Year 1 pupils.

Thank you for welcoming us to your school and being so friendly. We send you our best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Norma Ball

Lead Inspector