

Bishop Martin Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104621
Local Authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	286990
Inspection dates	11–12 July 2007
Reporting inspector	Sarah Drake

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	209
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Tim Warn
Headteacher	Mr David McBride
Date of previous school inspection	26 November 2002
School address	Church Road Woolton Liverpool Merseyside L25 5JF
Telephone number	0151 4286295
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Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school, which is slightly smaller than average, serves a suburban area to the south east of Liverpool. The proportions of pupils who belong to minority ethnic groups, are eligible to receive a free school meal, or have learning difficulties and/or disabilities are all below average. The headteacher took up his post in September 2005. The school has gained the Healthy School award on three occasions and the Investors in People award twice. The school also holds the Activemark and Fair Trade status.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Pupils thrive both academically and personally in this outstanding school where they develop into confident young people who are ready to make their mark in the world. Typical of parents' praise for its provision is the comment, 'This is an excellent school, where the teachers really do care about the children and their education.'

Children join the Reception class with the skills generally typical for their age or somewhat higher than this. They make excellent progress throughout the school and consistently reach high standards in English, mathematics and science at the end of both key stages. This is due to high quality teaching from all staff who, as parents comment, 'have repeatedly found ways to fire my child's imagination and enthusiasm for learning'. Pupils' personal development is also exceptionally strong. They thoroughly enjoy school and participate whole-heartedly in activities, seldom missing a day. Even the youngest children act very safely, for example, when threading their way through others in the classroom. Pupils are very aware of how to live healthily: they play energetically, work hard in physical education lessons and understand about healthy eating – as demonstrated by Year 5 pupils' 'Yum, yum, a healthy tum' posters. A palpable community spirit permeates the school helped by, for example, its strong links with the adjacent church and pupils' confident contributions to assemblies. Their genuine awareness of, and concern for, others' needs combined with their high academic standards create an excellent basis on which to build their future economic well-being. The high quality, wide-ranging curriculum ensures that they make excellent progress across a raft of subjects.

Parents and pupils greatly appreciate the outstanding care, guidance and support offered by staff. Parents comment that, 'Children's concerns are listened to with seriousness and genuine care, which helps them to feel valued and secure.' Children's well-being is at the forefront of all the school's actions. Leadership and management are excellent. Despite the school's obvious and sustained success, there is no hint of complacency. All actions are securely founded on careful analysis of the current situation and requirements. Rigorous systems ensure staff are clear about priorities and adopt a consistency of approach which helps pupils to make excellent progress. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about their children's happiness and achievement. However, a significant minority voice dissatisfaction about receiving 'last minute' notification of events, such as their child's class assembly. They find class teachers and teaching assistants very approachable and ready to take action about any concerns, but would welcome more opportunities to communicate with senior managers on an informal basis. The school uses its resources to very good effect, provides outstanding value for money and has excellent capacity to improve further. Parents understandably remark that, 'Standards set are high and well met by the fantastic encouragement and support of all the teaching and ancillary staff.' Pupils say, 'It's fab – we love it.'

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide parents with sufficient opportunities for informal communication with senior managers and timely information about school events and procedures.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Consistently high standards across all key stages testify to the outstanding achievement of all pupils. The exciting, well focused curriculum and teaching in the Reception year lead to children

acquiring well above the expected skills for their age in all areas of learning by the time they enter Year 1. Effective action over the past year, including enlisting parents' willing help, to tackle the relative weakness in linking sounds to letters means that the very great majority of children are now working at or above the expected level in this area too. The school sets itself challenging targets for the end of Years 2 and 6, particularly for those achieving the higher levels, which it almost always achieves. Standards in English are particularly high. Pupils use literacy with equal skill, accuracy and enjoyment across a range of subjects, whether to interview members of the public about local traffic congestion or to describe how to be a good friend. They also achieve exceptionally well in their use of information and communication technology (ICT). Examples include Year 2 pupils' competent presentation of assembly messages to the whole school using PowerPoint and Year 6 pupils' impressive fact sheets about magnetism, which honed their writing and science skills as well as their manipulation of ICT.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development helps to create a happy school in which they treat everyone with friendliness and respect. Their understanding that to do so is for their own as well as others' benefit means that both inside and outside classrooms their behaviour is excellent. The school council, democratically elected and run by pupils, has a strong presence. Its members have been trained to act as advocates for others and they are responsible for collecting pupils' monthly contributions towards the sponsorship of a child in Zambia. Pupils understand the meaning of, 'A fair day's pay for a fair day's work.' and know they can help reduce pollution by recycling waste and disposing of litter carefully. They contribute to the wider community. For example, some offered their opinions about health and safety to council members through the Merseyside schools parliament. A small group, 'Green Gym', has been making the grounds more environmentally friendly. Pupils willingly reflect on life beyond the mundane. Their ability to consider others' emotions is vividly demonstrated by Year 4 pupils' writing, inspired by their visit to Liverpool's Slavery Museum. This includes such phrases as, 'We were putting money before kindness and before people.' when writing in the character of a captain of a slave ship, seeking forgiveness. Pupils' maturity, politeness and zest for life prepare them extremely well for the next stage of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Consistently high quality teaching throughout the school ensures that pupils are keen to learn, make sustained progress and achieve well above average standards. As parents comment, 'Teaching is directed towards the ability and needs of each child.' Comprehensive planning of activities, based on rigorous assessment of prior work and lively presentation, often supported by skilful use of ICT, capture pupils' interest. Clear directions, explanations and use of subject specific language combined with excellent questioning require pupils to extend their speaking and listening skills and think hard. A powerful balance of excellent relationships and high expectations leads to classrooms that bustle with purposeful activity. Teachers and teaching assistants work together seamlessly. Early identification of individual need triggers excellent support for those who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities through work that is well matched to their abilities in whole class, small group or one to one lessons as appropriate. Consistently good quality marking both challenges pupils' thinking and guides them towards

the next steps in learning. Pupils regularly refer to their individual targets whilst completing their work. They also assess their own and other pupils' work highly effectively, as demonstrated by Year 2 pupils' post-it messages to themselves.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is extremely well planned to spark pupils' interest and develop their all-round skills in a highly effective manner. The strong links made between subjects and their relation to everyday life help pupils to make sense of their learning. For example, Reception children used their large-scale printing of a regular pattern to create the 'brick' walls of their Victorian street. ICT is used skilfully by both staff and pupils across many subjects. Alongside their impressive literacy and numeracy skills, the curriculum successfully promotes pupils' creativity through, for instance, gymnastics or developing life drawings of ivy leaves into abstract prints. An inviting, well-stocked library encourages enjoyment and learning through reading. French for all pupils and a wide range of visits, including residential stays for Year 2 upwards, further enrich the quality of their learning. The recent project, linked to the Capital of Culture celebrations and recognising that the school fair was the venue where The Beatles first performed 50 years ago, has had the whole school and wider community buzzing.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Pupils and parents alike are full of praise for the high quality care, guidance and support provided by staff. Parents are delighted that, 'staff treat our children with dignity and respect'. Many pupils cite the fact that they feel safe in school as one of the main reasons that they are happy there. Sensitive support from staff and pupils helps newcomers to settle in swiftly and those returning from illness or bereavement to feel comforted. The required, rigorous procedures are in place for safeguarding pupils and for protecting their health and safety. Careful, termly monitoring of pupils' progress leads to swift identification of those who need extra help. Parents greatly appreciate the support that helps those who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities to grow in confidence and make equally good progress from their starting points as their peers. Pupils are very clear about what is required to reach the next level of work and have the confidence to judge whether or not they need extra support to help them do so.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Authoritative, clear-sighted leadership and management underpin the high quality provision that allows pupils throughout the school to enjoy their learning and achieve exceptionally well. The headteacher has ably managed the difficult task of introducing to a highly regarded school the changes and new systems necessary to secure its continuing success. Parents are very appreciative of all the school offers their children, but some feel they do not have sufficient opportunity to meet with the leadership on an informal basis. Leaders and managers at all levels are fully committed to improvement in order to provide pupils with the highest quality care and education. The culture of professional development, closely linked to the school's and pupils' needs, ensures that staff regularly revitalise their knowledge and skills and are well equipped to take on responsibilities. Comments such as, 'the school is a magical place to work', confirm their enthusiasm. The direct link made between improvement planning, staff

responsibilities and the desired outcomes for pupils in all areas of learning, is innovative and works extremely well to create a seamless management team. Rigorous self-evaluation, conducted by all staff and firmly based on close monitoring of pupils' progress, leads to effective action. It also means that the school is highly self-critical when judging its success and in some areas less positive than the inspection team. The governing body is supportive, carries out its duties effectively and, on occasion, challenges the school effectively. A highly efficient administrative team ensures that the school runs very smoothly on a day to day basis, making excellent use of resources and a significant contribution to pupils' education and well-being.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Inspection of Bishop Martin Church of England Primary School, Liverpool, L25 5JF

Mrs Coleman and I thoroughly enjoyed our recent visit to your school and would like to thank you very much for your warm welcome. Whenever I went through a door, it seemed to be held open for me by a smiling child! Your eagerness to talk with us really helped us to understand why you enjoy your school so much. Particular thanks should go to members of the school council who gave me lots of examples of how you all contribute to making Bishop Martin such a happy school. In fact there are so many positive things about it that we have judged that it is outstanding!

Your teachers know you all very well as individuals and organise interesting things for you to do that encourage you to think hard about your work. They also make good links between different subjects so that, for instance, you use information and communication technology for lots of different purposes and older pupils might end up using their mathematics to help create a well balanced fruit salad. This means that, whatever your age or ability, you all make really good progress and achieve high standards. The staff's knowledge of your different needs also means that they take really good care of you - many of you told me that one of the best things about the school is that you feel safe there. It is good that you also have other pupils you can go to if you are feeling lonely or upset . but I don't think that happens very often because you are all so good at taking care of each other! Another thing you are really good at is looking at your work and deciding how you could improve it.

Your headteacher and other senior staff understand very well how to make sure that the school continues to be successful. This is because they carefully monitor whether the way they do things is helping you to make as much progress as possible. Your parents are as happy as you are with your school. However, some of them feel that they don't have enough notice about events or opportunities to chat with school leaders, so the inspection team has asked the leadership to try to improve this. Your job will be to continue to enjoy learning and attend school as regularly as you do now.