

Bierton Church of England Combined School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110417
Local Authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	288666
Inspection dates	14–15 March 2007
Reporting inspector	Marianne Harris

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	252
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Ian Gibson
Headteacher	Mrs Irene Corns
Date of previous school inspection	12 November 2001
School address	Parsons Lane Bierton Aylesbury HP22 5DF
Telephone number	01296 483110
Fax number	01296 427048

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average sized school where the majority of pupils come from a White British background. The school has a Language Department for 10 pupils who come from outside the immediate area and are fully integrated into classes except for specialist language support. The number of pupils who have learning difficulties and disabilities is above average, with a higher number of pupils who have a statement of need than is usually seen. When they join the school children's attainment fluctuates but is generally average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school with some outstanding features. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and pupils really enjoy all the opportunities they have. Parents are confident that their children make good progress and that their personal development is outstanding. This is certainly the case as pupils have a very good understanding of how to keep healthy and stay safe. They are very proud of their charity work and know that their views are heard and acted upon. Pupils are enthusiastic about learning. One said that 'Learning is interesting and fun.' They assess for themselves how well they are doing and have a mature attitude to evaluating each other's work. They are very well prepared for the next stage of their education. One parent wrote, 'We wish that all children could go to a school like Bierton.'

Pupils make good progress and reach standards that are above average. Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well because provision is good. They reach standards that are above those expected for their age and progress well. This good progress continues, and, by the end of Years 2 standards remain above average. By the end of Year 6 there are many more pupils reaching the higher levels in English mathematics and science than is normally seen and pupils are making more than the expected progress based on their Year 2 results. Pupils with particular needs make good progress and achieve well. Pupils who attend the school because of the provision in the Language Department achieve well because they are fully integrated into the school and make the same good progress as other pupils.

Leadership and management are good. Robust self-evaluation, together with the excellent leadership of the headteacher, have brought about an exciting learning culture which is evident throughout the school. Although some of the senior leaders are new to the school the team works well together and has a good understanding of what needs to be done to improve further. Teaching and learning are good. Lessons are well planned and usually move at a good pace. However, there are occasions when pupils sit for too long on the carpet and do not spend enough time on activities. Pupils' performance is monitored rigorously and strategies are used to make sure that all pupils make good progress. The curriculum is outstanding and pupils benefit from a very wide range of extra activities. Care, guidance and support are excellent. Pupils report that they know their targets and talk confidently about what they can do to improve their work because the quality of marking is so high. Governors are very supportive of the school. They carry out their responsibilities very well. All staff are fully committed to including all pupils and in raising standards. The issues identified at the time of the last inspection have been fully addressed and there is good capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make sure that pupils do not sit on the carpet for too long and lose concentration.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children get off to a good start in the Foundation Stage. They make good progress and achieve well, so that, by the time they join Year 1, they reach standards that are above those expected for their age. This good progress continues and by the end of Year 2 standards are above average in reading, writing and mathematics. By the end of Year 6 significantly more pupils reach the higher level in English, mathematics and science than normally seen and pupils achieve well to maintain these above average standards. School records show that pupils make more

progress than expected in these subjects and that standards in other subjects are equally high. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, including those in the Language Department, make good progress because they are well supported and have work that is well matched to their needs. Standards overall have remained above average over the last few years.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding. They have a clear understanding of right and wrong, and respond very well to other pupils and adults. They settle quickly to their work and maintain high levels of concentration. Their behaviour in both lessons and the playground is outstanding. Attendance is above average.

Pupils love coming to school and show a genuine desire to learn. They adopt good safe practices and healthy lifestyles because these are promoted very well through the schools programme for 'Healthy School Initiative'. For example, many pupils take advantage of the organised cross-country running and join the Fit Friday programme to walk to school. Many pupils choose healthy eating options for their lunch. They develop a deep sense of responsibility for others, especially in supporting the integration of pupils from the Language Department within the school. Pupils demonstrate responsibility through an effective school council that is well regarded by other pupils and represents their views. Pupils develop an excellent sense of community through the fundraising activities and visits from members of the local community. The acquisition of good basic skills by the end of Year 6 prepares them well for later life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' progress and teaching assistants support pupils with learning difficulties well. Teachers share the purpose of each lesson and pupils know what it is they are going to learn. Marking is of a high standard with pupils given clear guidance on how to improve their work. Teachers encourage pupils to assess for themselves how well they have done and remind pupils of the targets. Planning is good, with work and activities that are well matched to pupils' abilities. Lessons usually move at a good pace, but there are times when pupils sit on the carpet for too long. When this happens the pace of the lesson slows.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The school provides a very rich curriculum that is particularly well enhanced by extra activities. Pupils talk about all the sport that they experience and are excited by all of the opportunities offered to them. They talk about the special theme weeks that help them learn about other cultures and about various artists. Specialist teaching in science, music, art and physical education, for example, has led to high standards in these subjects. Visitors into school are very welcome and pupils benefit from the experiences they bring. The programme to support pupils' personal development is outstanding, and, as a result, pupils have an excellent understanding of how to be a good citizen and keep healthy and safe.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The quality of care, guidance and support for pupils is outstanding. The overwhelming majority of parents are quick to praise the school in this respect and pupils also believe they are very well cared for. The school is very welcoming and has a harmonious atmosphere. It works actively to ensure that pupils enjoy school and are well prepared as future citizens. Excellent relationships across the school, coupled with the high priority placed on treating each child as an individual, ensure that all pupils feel safe and secure. All health and safety issues are addressed, risk assessments are in place and child protection procedures are well established. Effective record keeping underpins all pastoral work and the needs of vulnerable pupils are met and monitored effectively. When a child is identified as not making enough progress then specialist programmes are put in place to make sure they catch up.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The quality of leadership and management is good. The headteacher provides very strong leadership in moving the school forward. She knows the school extremely well and this is reflected in the high quality of the school's self-evaluation. Newly appointed staff receive comprehensive induction to the school. The new senior leadership team has made a good start, working in a creative and innovative way, with a strong sense of purpose and a clear view of what the school needs to do in order to improve. Staff at all levels make a strong contribution to the personal development and well being of all pupils. Comprehensive analysis of the pupils' performance by subject leaders, and the robust evaluation of teaching have combined very well to ensure that standards have remained above average. Governors have a good understanding of the strengths of the school and the areas for further improvement. They provide effective support to the senior managers, challenging them in a very positive manner. The governors, headteacher and staff are committed to improving all aspects of the school's performance.

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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
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	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
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?	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 performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	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

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

Thank you so much for welcoming us into your school a few days ago. You were all so helpful in telling us about your work and about how much you enjoy school. We are now writing to let you know what we found out.

Your parents told us, and we agree, that this is a good school. We think that you all behave very well and are extremely friendly and polite. You told us all about your fund raising and that you are looking forward to wearing your pyjamas to school for Red Nose Day. I hope it all went well.

You told us that you enjoyed learning and we certainly enjoyed being in your lessons. We think that you all make good progress because your teachers make learning interesting. We have asked them to make it even more interesting by making sure that you don't sit on the carpet for too long and lose concentration. We were very impressed by all the extra activities you have in school. You told us about cross-country running and how much you enjoyed that. Some of you told us about all the things you learn in special weeks.

Once again, many thanks for all the help you gave us and we wish you all the best in the future.

Marianne Harris

Lead inspector