



The Bishops' C of E and RC Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 115204
Local Authority ESSEX
Inspection number 290166
Inspection dates 27–28 February 2007
Reporting inspector Paul Missin

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Beardsley Drive
School category	Voluntary aided		Springfield, Chelmsford
Age range of pupils	5–11		Essex CM1 6ZQ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01245 460107
Number on roll (school)	346	Fax number	01245 464377
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Jo Wincott
		Headteacher	Mrs Angela Sumpton
Date of previous school inspection	20 May 2002		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
5–11	27–28 February 2007	290166

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This school is larger than most primary schools. Attainment on admission varies but it is generally towards the lower end of average. It was below average in 2006. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is average but a below-average proportion is eligible for free school meals. There are an increasing number of pupils from minority ethnic groups and several are at an early stage of learning English. The number of pupils joining or leaving the school in some year groups is high. There has also been high staff turnover in the last two years. During the time of the inspection a major building work was being undertaken.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a caring school where the promotion of the school's Christian ethos is at the heart of its work. While the school currently provides a satisfactory standard of education for its pupils it is now beginning to improve after a time when several staffing changes limited its capacity to move forward. This was also the school's view. Leadership and management are satisfactory but with some good features which should ensure that the school has a good capacity to get better. The headteacher has a clear vision for the school's improvement and several important priorities have been identified in the school development plan. An important success has been the way in which the initiatives to improve pupils' writing have led to a rise in standards at both key stages. But this successful pattern has not yet been extended to secure better progress in other tested subjects. Other senior staff do not yet have a sufficiently strong leadership role in helping to achieve the planned improvement priorities. Although several governors are new to their responsibilities, they are well led by a knowledgeable chair and support and challenge the school satisfactorily. The school has worked hard to develop the partnership with parents and the local community. Although a significant number of parents in questionnaires issued by the school and before the inspection highlighted some concerns about the school's work, the inspection findings are that the school has introduced several innovative initiatives to encourage further parental support.

The school promotes pupils' personal development well and successfully establishes an environment where pupils feel safe, are well cared for and are willing learners. Strengths include pupils' good spiritual and moral development and the sense of fun they show in most lessons. Pupils' behaviour, attitudes and their attendance are all good. Pupils' achieve satisfactorily and most reach average standards, but there are some important variations. Children make a good start to their time at school in the Foundation Stage and make good progress from their starting points to reach broadly average standards by the beginning of Year 1. Pupils make satisfactory overall progress in Years 1 to 6. Standards are average across the school except for reading and writing in Year 2, which were above average in 2006. Standards in writing in Year 6 have improved year on year and standards are likely to be above average in the 2007 tests. Standards and progress in mathematics and science are satisfactory but not as good as in English. Pupils with learning difficulties are supported well and make good progress in meeting their own learning targets. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Where teaching is most effective teachers are skilled at devising interesting and challenging activities which commit pupils to their lessons and make their learning fun. However, the effectiveness of teaching over time has been limited by staffing changes and by some inconsistency in the quality of teaching which the school has recognised and begun to deal with. The curriculum is satisfactory with some good features. A strength is the carefully planned enhancements and the opportunity for pupils to take part in a good range of extracurricular activities.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the overall quality of teaching in order to accelerate the progress that pupils make.
- Develop the strategic leadership responsibilities of senior teachers.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils make sound overall progress as they move through the school, but they make good progress in some areas as in the Foundation Stage. Standards by the end of the Reception Year are average but girls make especially good progress in language and mathematics. Achievement is satisfactory overall in Years 1 and 2 and in Years 3 to 6 but there are important variations between different subjects. Across the school, progress in reading and writing is good whereas it is only satisfactory in mathematics and science. In 2006, standards in Year 2 were above average in reading and writing and average in mathematics and science. In Year 6, overall standards have also been broadly average, but those in English are on a rising trend and are on track to be above average in 2007. Pupils with English as an additional language make similar progress to their peers. Pupils with learning difficulties make good progress towards their own learning targets.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Pupils attend regularly because they enjoy school. They behave well and have positive attitudes towards their work. They say that they feel safe as there is little bullying and that they could speak with an adult if they have a problem. School councillors take their role very seriously and are confident the school will act on pupils' views if possible. They have instigated a recycling scheme for wastepaper in school. Pupils have a clear understanding of healthy eating and are enthusiastic about physical education lessons, sports and playground activities. They gain confidence and a sense of belonging to the school community and they take part regularly in parish and local events. They are beginning to understand the wider world family through prayer, collections for charities and sponsored events. They are prepared satisfactorily for their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall but with some good features. Where teaching is most effective, teachers interest and challenge pupils very well and show

them clearly how to improve their work. Their lessons include work planned for pupils of different abilities and the focus of pupils' learning is made clear. Relationships are good. Pupils' commitment to their learning is secured and they are determined to do their best. However, there is some inconsistency in approach and in organisation which limits the effectiveness of some lessons. In these lessons, the pace of parts of lessons is too slow and pupils lose concentration. The impact of teaching over time has been lessened by a high number of staff changes and alterations in routine caused by the building project. Teaching in the Foundation Stage and for pupils with learning difficulties is good.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school offers a broad and balanced curriculum which meets statutory requirements. Enhancements to the curriculum are good. Pupils have many opportunities to learn from the visitors to the school and to go on outings such as a recent visit to the Globe Theatre. There is a good range of extra activities for pupils to take part in such as music, dance, drama and sports such as hockey, netball, cricket and football. These activities help pupils to gain self-confidence and enjoy learning. The curriculum for pupils who have learning difficulties is good. They have detailed individual learning plans and receive good support. The school's initiative in developing the curriculum to make clearer links between subjects is not yet fully effective.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. There are robust systems in place for safeguarding pupils including child protection procedures and risk assessments for school trips. The school employs a family support worker to help parents, individuals and groups of pupils so that personal concerns are not a barrier to effective learning. Procedures to promote good behaviour and reward good work are effective. The school has sound links with a range of professionals to support pupils' progress. Those pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are supported well, so that they make good progress towards their own targets. Pupils whose home language is not English are supported well. A good range of assessment data is collected and used satisfactorily to track and monitor the progress pupils make. Individual targets are set for pupils' writing and mathematics and pupils say how helpful they find these in showing them how to get better.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher has a clear vision for the school based upon a strong Christian ethos and an inclusive approach to education. This vision has been promoted clearly despite several changes to the context of the school which have, until recently, limited the school's capacity to improve. Self-evaluation is now sound and procedures to check

on and evaluate the performance of the school as a whole and the work in individual classrooms are beginning to be established. The recent whole-school focus on improving writing is leading to a rise in literacy standards but this has not yet been extended to other tested subjects. Management roles are clearly defined but the school has correctly identified the need to strengthen the strategic leadership responsibilities of senior staff so that they are fully involved in raising standards and ensuring that goals are focused and achievable. Governors support the school satisfactorily. Many are relatively new and there are good procedures, led by an effective chair of governors, to introduce them to school routines and expectations. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

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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?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
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?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
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 behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	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	3

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?	3
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.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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

28 February 2007

Dear Pupils,

The Bishops' Church of England and Roman Catholic Primary School, Beardsley Drive, Springfield, Chelmsford, Essex, CM1 6ZQ

Thank you for making my colleagues and I so welcome when we came to the school recently to see how well you were doing.

Here are the things that we think are best about your school.

- You are working hard to do well with your reading and writing.
- You behave well in school and show how much you enjoy most of your lessons.
- Those of you with learning difficulties are supported and encouraged well.
- Those of you in the Reception class make a good start to your time at school.
- Your headteacher has a good view of how the school needs to get better.

There are a few things that we thought could be better.

- The progress that you are making in some subjects is not as good as that in reading and writing.
- Some of your teachers could be better at devising interesting lessons that help you to do well.
- The school should help all senior staff to be more involved in helping the school to get even better.

We wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Paul Missin, Lead inspector