



Bream Church of England Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 115659
Local Authority Gloucestershire
Inspection number 290294
Inspection dates 27–28 November 2006
Reporting inspector Jacqueline Ikin

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	High Street
School category	Voluntary controlled		Bream
Age range of pupils	4–11		Lydney GL15 6JW
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01594 562628
Number on roll (school)	212	Fax number	01594 563644
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Ian Hendy
		Headteacher	Nicholas Stafford
Date of previous school inspection	28 January 2002		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Bream Church of England Primary School is an average-sized primary school. Most pupils come from White British backgrounds. A small number of pupils are from minority ethnic groups. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is average and the proportion with learning difficulties and disabilities is above average. At the time of the inspection the headteacher had been in post for just over a year and the deputy headteacher for nearly a term.

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 satisfactory school which is improving as a result of the strong leadership of the headteacher. When he joined the school, standards were significantly below average and there was considerable underachievement. He has successfully improved provision for lower-attaining pupils and those who have learning difficulties and disabilities, and has raised the expectations that most teachers have of their pupils. Standards are improving as a result, most notably in mathematics, science and reading, and are average. The achievement of most pupils is satisfactory. However, some more able pupils, particularly the boys, do not achieve as much as they should in writing, where standards are below average. Standards are also below average in information and communication technology (ICT), mainly because the school had few good quality computers until recently and not all teachers have the confidence and skills they need to teach ICT.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory but there are wide variations which result in pupils making better progress in some year groups than others. The deputy headteacher sets an excellent example by the quality of her work and is becoming increasingly influential in improving science and mathematics. Where pupils do not make enough progress, it is mostly because planning for what pupils of different abilities are expected to know, understand and be able to do in lessons is not precise enough and teachers' questioning is superficial.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good, as is their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The relationships between staff and pupils are good and many parents said that their children enjoy school and grow in confidence because of this. Behaviour is good and pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe and healthy. They make a satisfactory contribution to the community and are satisfactorily prepared for their future lives. The school's provision for pupils' pastoral care and their health and safety is good. However, there are weaknesses in the academic guidance and support that pupils receive. Marking does not always help pupils improve and pupils are not involved enough in checking their own work. As a result, care, guidance and support are satisfactory rather than good. The curriculum is satisfactory but there are limited opportunities for pupils to use their ICT skills to support their work in other subjects. Provision for children in Reception is good and ensures that they get a good start to their schooling.

There is a clear sense of purpose in the school, with the senior management team and governors united in their determination to drive up standards. However, the leadership and management of the school and its capacity to improve further are satisfactory rather than good as subject leaders and governors are not yet as involved as they should be in monitoring and evaluating the school's work.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide more-able pupils, particularly the boys, with more challenging work to raise standards of writing.

- Ensure that all teachers have the skills they need to make effective use of ICT in lessons and provide pupils with wider opportunities to apply their ICT skills in other subjects.
- Improve the consistency of teachers' marking, styles of questioning and the precision of learning objectives in planning to take greater account of pupils' different needs.
- Involve pupils more effectively in checking their own work and reviewing their progress.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Attainment on entry to the Reception class is lower than usually found. The children make good progress during the Reception Year and most reach the goals for learning expected for children of this age. Pupils' progress varies between subjects and year groups in the rest of the school but standards are beginning to improve after a period of decline. Most pupils achieve satisfactorily and standards are average by Year 2 and Year 6, particularly in reading, mathematics and science. Improvements in pupils' skills in solving mathematical problems and carrying out scientific investigations are contributing to raising standards. Improvements in book provision and well-planned opportunities for pupils to read together in small groups are contributing to better standards in reading. Writing has not improved to the same extent and more-able pupils, particularly boys, do not achieve as well as they should. The achievement of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is satisfactory because of a clear focus on their particular needs in small-group sessions.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and throughout the school pupils behave well. They grow in confidence and are eager to learn because of the good relationships that they have with their teachers and each other. Pupils have a satisfactory understanding of their own culture and the cultural traditions of other countries. They are less familiar with the cultural diversity to be found in modern British society. They make a satisfactory contribution to the school and wider community through their work on the school council and are increasingly involved in making decisions to help the school improve. For example, they have been recently involved in designing a new 'quiet area' in the school's grounds. They have a good understanding of how to keep safe and healthy and enjoy exercise and activity. Pupils are satisfactorily prepared for their future economic well-being, although there are some shortfalls in their ICT skills. They enjoy coming to school and attendance is satisfactory.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory but there are wide variations in the quality of planning, questioning and marking between classes. Outstanding teaching was seen in a Year 5 science lesson, where highly skilled questioning encouraged pupils of all capabilities to think for themselves. Good teaching in the Reception class successfully helps children to learn in practical and creative ways. When weaknesses occur the objectives for lessons are not precise enough and planning does not take enough account of the different needs of pupils in the class. As a result, lower attainers struggle to keep up and more-able pupils do not receive the challenge they need. This is most noticeable in writing. There is also an overuse of worksheets in some lessons, which limits opportunities for pupils to use their writing skills. Not enough use is made of marking in some classes to help pupils know what they have to do to improve. In spite of recent improvements in ICT provision, limited use is made of computers to support learning in some lessons because some teachers lack confidence and sufficient subject knowledge.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory curriculum which meets the needs of most pupils. It is good in the Reception class, with a good balance of well-planned opportunities for children to learn through teacher-directed tasks and play. Planning in Years 1 to 6 ensures that the curriculum is covered adequately. The school recognises the need for better progression in the development of skills and is addressing this through a research project. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is satisfactory. Teaching assistants provide good support for these pupils in group work but their skills are not always used effectively during whole-class sessions. Recent purchases of ICT equipment are improving pupils' ICT skills and enabling the school to meet the statutory requirements in the subject. However, there are still not enough opportunities or resources to enable pupils to make regular use of ICT in other subjects. The school has a strong reputation for success in team sports. However, there is limited provision of other clubs and activities for pupils who are not skilled in sport.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Pupils receive good quality pastoral care. Child protection procedures are well understood, although the teachers and other adults have not recently been formally updated. The school has secure procedures to ensure pupils' health and safety and maintains good links with outside agencies to support those who are vulnerable. Assessment procedures are satisfactory and recent training has helped most teachers to set suitably challenging targets for pupils in their classes. However, the detailed

academic guidance that pupils receive on how to reach their targets varies because of inconsistencies in teachers' understanding of the levels at which pupils should be working and limited involvement of the pupils in assessing their own work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher provides strong leadership and a clear sense of direction, aimed at improving pupils' achievement. The recent appointment of a highly skilled teacher as deputy head has increased the pace of improvement because of the way that she is able to influence others by the quality of her own teaching. The decline in standards since the last inspection has been halted and there are signs of an improving trend, particularly in reading, mathematics and science. The headteacher has made good use of all the resources available to him to support the school's efforts to improve. This includes the reorganisation of classes to make the best use of the strengths within the school, the development of a strong senior management team and good use of outside expertise from the local authority. The systems that the school uses to evaluate how well it is doing are satisfactory. Although assessment data is used well, the role of subject leaders in monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning is insufficiently developed. The governance of the school is satisfactory. However, governors are over-reliant on the headteacher for monitoring and evaluating the school's work.

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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	3
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	3

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	3
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	3
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?	3

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

Thank you for making us feel so welcome when we visited your school. We really enjoyed talking to you and watching you learn and play. We can see why you like your school and agree that it gives you a satisfactory standard of education.

What we found out about your school

- Your headteacher and deputy headteacher are doing a good job in helping the school to get better.
- Teachers are helping you to do better in reading, mathematics and science.
- You behave well and look after the school and each other well.
- The school takes good care of you and helps you to understand how to keep yourselves safe and healthy.

What we think needs to be improved

- Teachers need to help you to reach higher standards in writing.
- You need to improve your ICT skills and use them regularly in other subjects.
- Teachers need to make sure that all of you make good progress in every class.
- The marking of your work needs to help you improve and you need to be more involved in checking your own work and how you are getting on.