

The Bardney Church of England and Methodist Primary School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 120589 |
| Local Authority | LINCOLNSHIRE |
| Inspection number | 291791 |
| Inspection dates | 23–24 May 2007 |
| Reporting inspector | John Brennan |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Voluntary controlled |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | 119 |
| School | |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Mrs Christine Jones |
| Headteacher | Mr Barry R Bensley |
| Date of previous school inspection | 1 October 2001 |
| School address | Henry Lane Bardney Lincoln Lincolnshire LN3 5XJ |
| Telephone number | 01526 398255 |
| Fax number | 01526 398255 |

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|--------------------------|----------------|
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Bardney Church of England and Methodist Primary School is a small school serving the village of Bardney and other surrounding villages. Few pupils are entitled to free school meals. Almost all pupils are of a White British background. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is broadly average. There has been considerable disruption in leadership over the last three years which has resulted in several, often temporary, headteachers. The permanent headteacher has just returned to the school following a period of prolonged absence.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

The inspection finds the school to be inadequate. In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. The school's own evaluation recognises the current inadequate quality of leadership and management but in other respects it is over generous in its evaluations.

Leadership skills and management systems have been tested by the prolonged absence of the headteacher and have been found wanting. A lack of depth and expertise in leadership and significant weakness in systems for checking how well the school is doing have contributed to a decline in standards. Good provision in the Foundation stage, where teaching is good and the curriculum vibrant, sees children get off to a good start. Despite this, standards at the end of Year 6 are broadly average. From Years 1 to 6 a significant number of pupils, especially higher attaining pupils, underachieve. There is a determination to put things right and there are some emerging strengths in governance and in the work of the deputy headteacher. Despite this, much remains to be done to strengthen both leadership and management so that they impact positively on standards. The retirement of the current headteacher necessitates a further change in senior leadership. This, and the need for the continuing support of the local authority, means that the school's capacity to improve is inadequate. The school gives unsatisfactory value for money.

There are strengths to be found in the teaching of the youngest children. However, teaching elsewhere lacks consistency so that overall it is inadequate. Inaccurate assessments by teachers of how well pupils are doing lead to work that is ill matched to pupils' differing needs. It is too hard for some and too easy for others. Whilst teaching assistants help pupils who have learning difficulties to complete work, too little is expected of higher attaining pupils. The curriculum is satisfactory. There is a good range of clubs for pupils to join and sufficient coverage is given to different subjects. However, too much of what pupils do is mundane and fails to ignite their interests. This leads to some pupils losing interest in lessons and producing work that is careless.

Pupils' personal development is satisfactory overall. They behave well in the playground and know how to live healthily and stay safe. The care, support and guidance offered to pupils are inadequate overall. The school recognises that attendance rates have declined over the last two years and are now below the national average. Although the school has drawn up plans to improve attendance, these have not yet been implemented. Systems for tracking pupils' progress are in place but are not used well enough to help pupils see what they need to do to improve their work further. The work given to pupils by teachers is not appropriate and does not help them make the progress they should.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve achievement and standards, especially for higher attaining pupils and involve all pupils thoroughly in target setting and in measuring progress.
- Ensure that teachers use accurate assessments of pupils' progress to devise lessons that interest and challenge all pupils.
- Ensure that all those in leadership and management positions monitor their work rigorously, take urgent actions to address shortcomings and evaluate the impact of their actions.

- Implement successfully the plans that have been drawn up to improve pupils' attendance.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Children begin school with skills and abilities that are above average. They make good progress in the Foundation Stage because of recent improvements to teaching and the curriculum. By the end of Reception almost all children reach the expected goals and many go beyond them. This level of achievement is not maintained because of inconsistencies in teaching which lead to considerable underachievement, especially by higher attaining pupils. Standards have declined in the past two years, as seen in a downward trend in national test results by the end of Years 2 and 6. Standards are above average in reading but broadly average overall. Pupils have the knowledge and skills needed for the next stage of education. However, standards could be higher given pupils' starting point and their capabilities. Work in books shows little evidence of improvement this year. In science, a further decline on the above average standards of the past is evident. Standards remain above average in reading because a good number of pupils exceed expected levels. Pupils who have learning difficulties make satisfactory progress because they are adequately supported. However, higher attaining pupils do not make the progress they are capable of especially in writing and in mathematics. In the 2006 national tests for Year 6 no pupils reached the higher Level 5 in writing and few reached it in mathematics.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay healthy. They run a popular healthy tuck shop. Spacious and well resourced play areas help make playtimes active and social occasions. Initiatives such as 'Bike wise' encourage pupils to ride bicycles responsibly. Pupils have a good understanding of dangers in and out of school. Most pupils behave well and have responded positively to an increase in the rewards on offer for good behaviour. Whilst many are keen on their lessons, pupils in some classes do not join in discussions nor are they prepared for working independently. Some produce too little or untidy work. Pupils are actively involved in the school council and feel they are listened to by teachers. They contribute to the wider community through, for example, fund raising. They show a growing awareness of the lives and customs of people from different cultures. This is indicative of their satisfactory spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Attendance rates have declined over the past few years and are now below average. The school has plans to address this but these are not yet put into motion.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 4

The main weakness in teaching is that expectations are too low. The assessment of pupils' work is not always accurate so that work is not matched well enough to pupils' differing abilities. Pupils who have learning difficulties are given suitable support by teaching assistants. However, higher attaining pupils are not given challenging enough work that captures their interest. Explanations at times go on for too long without engaging pupils, and mundane tasks set that do not motivate pupils. As a result, in some classes pupils become disinterested and do not complete enough good quality work. They are not helped by marking which does not challenge poorly presented work. It is only in the Foundation Stage that children are routinely given work

that makes them think. Here, skilful teaching subtly weaves work across subjects, providing meaningful, enjoyable and thoughtful tasks. Engaging explanations and well considered questions are tailored to children's differing abilities. The teacher skilfully draws out from the children ways in which they will need to work and what they will need to produce to demonstrate success. As the children themselves feel that they have been involved in devising these, they set about tasks with a zest and purpose not always evident elsewhere in the school. Teachers manage behaviour well and are quick to reward pupils in line with the school's policy.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

An imaginative curriculum in the Foundation Stage strikes a good balance between adult led activity and child chosen learning, both indoors and out. Elsewhere the curriculum meets statutory requirements but is not always stimulating enough. Throughout the school there is too little investigative work in mathematics and science to promote searching attitudes to learning, or to help pupils work effectively together in solving problems. Links between subjects to make learning interesting are piecemeal and do not always promote the thoughtful application of key skills, especially writing. Good emphasis is given to physical education and, together with programmes for areas such as drug education, this helps pupils stay healthy and act safely. Pupils go on a reasonable range of trips and enjoy a good variety of clubs which add interest to school life.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 4

Although staff have pupils' best interests at heart, the ways and means of serving these are not strong enough. The coordinator for pupils with learning difficulties has worked successfully to address past weaknesses in provision. Pupils in need of help are promptly identified; plans to address individual needs are in place and are regularly reviewed. Teaching assistants make a positive contribution to how well these pupils achieve. Apart from pupils with learning difficulties, underachievement is not identified and acted upon quickly enough. Pupils do not receive good enough academic guidance. Pupils are only just beginning to take responsibility for improving their work and they are not yet clear how to do this. Staff have suitable knowledge of procedures underpinning pupils' safety, such as those for child protection. However, arrangements for safeguarding pupils do not meet current government requirements.

Leadership and management

Grade: 4

Weak management systems and a lack of leadership skills in the school have been emphasised by the lengthy absence of the permanent headteacher. The deputy headteacher has provided some consistency in senior leadership. She has introduced an adequate system for tracking pupils' achievement, but teachers do not have sufficient expertise in assessment to make the most of this. With the help of the local authority, subject leaders are beginning to acquire essential skills but several do not have a firm enough grasp of their subject. A newly devised school development plan, underpinned by plans for individual subjects, targets the right areas. However, the plan lacks clear expectations and measurable outcomes of success. Some aspects of it are currently not being pursued with a sense of urgency. There is not a sufficiently strong focus on identifying strengths and areas for improvement in teaching so that the best practice

in the school can be built on and weaknesses tackled. Governors are energetic and determined in their efforts. They fully recognise the school's inadequacies and provide increasingly effective leadership including checking for themselves on the work of the school. They are open and consultative in their dialogue with parents. They have not shirked from addressing parents' concerns. However, much remains to be done to recover the confidence that many parents have lost in the school.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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| <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

| | |
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| How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners? | 4 |
| 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 | 4 |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements | 4 |
| Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection | No |

Achievement and standards

| | |
|--|---|
| How well do learners achieve? | 4 |
| The standards ¹ reached by learners | 3 |
| How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners | 4 |
| How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress | 3 |

Personal development and well-being

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|---|---|
| How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners? | 3 |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 3 |
| The behaviour of learners | 3 |
| The attendance of learners | 4 |
| How well learners enjoy their education | 3 |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices | 3 |
| 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? | 4 |
| 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? | 4 |

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

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| How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners? | 4 |
| How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education | 4 |
| How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets | 4 |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can | 4 |
| How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money | 4 |
| The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities | 3 |
| Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements? | No |
| Does this school require special measures? | Yes |
| Does this school require a notice to improve? | No |

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

26 May 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of The Bardney Church of England and Methodist Primary School, Lincoln, LN3 5XJ.

Thank you for making me so welcome when I visited your school recently. I would like to share with you what I found.

I enjoyed being outside with you at lunch time and could see that many of you were playing well together and making good use of the play equipment on offer. The healthy tuck shop seems popular and is helping you eat well. You seem very active and it was good to hear that many of you join the clubs on offer. I thought the school council was working well and that this helps you have a say in what your school does. I really like what was going on in the classroom for the youngest children. I thought the work looked fun and it was good to see many smiling faces there and children who were keen to do their best.

However, your school does have some problems and needs special help so that you can do better in your work. Some of the work you are asked to do is too easy and not always interesting enough. I thought that this was especially true for those of you who already know a lot about how to write and count. I spoke to a lot of you about your targets and some of you were having difficulty remembering them. I have asked the school to make sure that it gives all of you work that makes you think and to help you more with your targets. You can play your part by listening and joining in with lessons as much as you can. You can also help by trying hard to make every piece of work your best and by remembering and working on your targets. The number of children who come to school every day has dropped recently. I have asked the school to make sure that it does all that it can to encourage all of you to attend school. You and your parents can do your bit by trying to come as often as you can. The last thing I have asked the school to do is to make sure that the headteacher and other staff keep a closer eye on how things are going and visit each other's classrooms more often to check what is going on. Other inspectors will be coming regularly to check on your progress.

Thank you once again for all your help. Good luck in the future

John Brennan

Lead inspector