

Bentley Heath Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104088
Local Authority	Solihull
Inspection number	295330
Inspection dates	20–21 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Paul Edwards

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	415
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Derrington
Headteacher	Malcolm Evans
Date of previous school inspection	23 March 2006
School address	Widney Close Bentley Heath Solihull B93 9AS
Telephone number	01564 772132
Fax number	01564 775708

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Bentley Heath is much larger than the average primary school, serving a relatively advantaged area of Solihull. Few pupils are identified as being eligible for free school meals. The overwhelming majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds and only one pupil is at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is below average. Children enter the school with skills that are above those expected for their age.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school has made good improvement since the last inspection, effectively addressing the decline in standards and inadequate achievement in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. Its overall effectiveness is now satisfactory and there are some considerable strengths. Whilst standards are above average overall and significantly so by the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' achievement is only satisfactory because progress is uneven between classes and between year groups. Children make satisfactory progress throughout the Foundation Stage and the overwhelming majority attain the goals expected for their age, with a significant proportion exceeding them. Pupils with learning difficulties make similar progress to their classmates.

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The headteacher, with good support from the governors' scrutiny group and the local authority, has focused effectively on addressing the key issues arising from the last inspection. There has been a good focus on leaders at all levels identifying areas for further development and monitoring pupils' progress throughout the school. However, they have not yet made sufficient impact on ensuring that emerging issues have been addressed and that pupils' progress is consistently good. Teaching has improved and is now satisfactory overall. Teachers have good relationships with the pupils and manage them well. However, in some classes, teachers' marking of pupils' work and the use of pupils' individual targets are not sufficiently effective to ensure pupils make consistently good progress.

Children in the Foundation Stage are provided with a wide range of interesting activities. The school's good curriculum builds on the work in the Foundation Stage. Good links have been established with the secondary school and local authority, enabling pupils to develop musical and artistic skills and to learn a foreign language. A good range of enrichment activities enhances the pupils' learning. Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Because teachers make lessons interesting, pupils enjoy school and behave well. They are particularly enthusiastic about practical activities, such as in science where they are given good opportunities to carry out their own investigations. This helps to develop their independence, which is promoted well throughout the school. Parents are rightly pleased with the way their children are looked after in school. The views of one parent are typical of others when commenting, 'The school is a place where I feel comfortable to leave my children, knowing they will be safe and content.' The school's good care, guidance and support help to promote pupils' personal development. Pupils are well looked after, although the school rightly recognises that the academic guidance pupils receive is inconsistent.

The school has accurately evaluated its work and has a clear understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. It has identified that teaching is not yet sufficiently consistent throughout the school to ensure all pupils achieve as well as they should. Not all subject leaders and middle leaders are doing enough to resolve the areas for improvement already identified and require additional guidance from senior staff.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase the rate of pupils' progress by ensuring teachers provide activities that match pupils' needs more accurately.
- Ensure greater consistency in marking pupils' work and in setting individual targets.
- Set clear guidance for teachers and monitor systematically the impact of the procedures for marking and setting targets.

A small proportion of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards are well above average by the end of Year 6 and achievement is satisfactory. Considering their starting points, children make satisfactory progress throughout the Foundation Stage. Their literacy and numeracy skills are particularly strong and their ability to work independently is very good by the time they enter Year 1. The decline in standards in Year 2 in the national tests in 2005 has been arrested and standards are now significantly above average. Standards in English, mathematics and science have been consistently well above average over the last five years by the end of Year 6. However, these standards have masked the uneven progress made throughout the school in English and mathematics. Pupils do well in science because they are provided with good opportunities to carry out investigative activities. Pupils with learning difficulties make good progress when they receive specialist guidance and support. Their overall progress is satisfactory, however, in line with their classmates.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Relationships throughout the school are strong, creating an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect in which each individual is valued. Pupils say that they enjoy school and this is reflected in their good attendance. They particularly enjoy the visits that support learning. Older pupils speak enthusiastically about residential visits, which they recognise as providing good opportunities for them to socialise and develop skills in teamwork.

Pupils adopt healthy and safe lifestyles. They eat healthy food and participate in the good provision made for physical exercise. They enjoy school dinners and are full of admiration for the school cook. The school council is very vocal and appreciates being able to express its opinions and offer suggestions to make improvements. However, members are frustrated by the irregular meetings because of staff absence.

The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils support a range of charitable activities and are actively involved in their community. Although there is still room for further development, pupils' overall multicultural awareness has improved and is now satisfactory. Mature interpersonal skills, above average academic standards, and good attitudes to learning equip pupils well for the next stage in their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory, with some good practice. Good relationships and effective management of pupils are particular strengths. The small number of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are supported well by classroom assistants. Teaching in the Foundation Stage ensures children receive a wide range of interesting and stimulating activities.

At the start of most lessons, teachers make sure pupils understand what lessons are about and what they will be learning, helping pupils to focus on what they should be achieving. Open questions are used well to challenge pupils' thinking and check their understanding. There are many opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills which are good. Pupils work well together in shared tasks and cooperate amicably and constructively with their classmates. When the teaching is at its best, lessons progress at a good pace and contain interesting and stimulating activities that motivate pupils. As yet, this is not consistent in all lessons and, on occasions, pupils are given tasks that are not meaningful to them. The marking of pupils' work is inconsistent and does not help pupils to improve. Although children know that they have to do to meet their individual learning targets, the quality of the targets is variable and targets have too little impact on pupils' achievement.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. Issues from the last inspection have been addressed. Reception children have access to a good outdoor area and the planning of the curriculum in Years 1 and 2 is better matched to pupils' needs. There are particular strengths in the development of opportunities for pupils to learn a foreign language and a musical instrument, partly through very effective partnerships with the local authority and with other schools. The personal, social and health education programme and the wider curriculum have effectively enhanced pupils' awareness of safety, and of the importance of a healthy lifestyle. Physical activities are a strong feature of the wide range of additional clubs and activities, with improvements made to those available for younger pupils.

Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities meets their widely diverse needs. The very strong links with the church, including the joint use of the school site, brings the community closer and thereby strengthens pupils' understanding of it. Planning has been successfully linked to boys' interests, which was identified as an area needing improvement. Engaging the interest of some boys needs further development which is recognised by the school. Although visitors from other faiths have enhanced pupils' cultural awareness, the range of opportunities for pupils to develop a full understanding of life in modern Britain is not wide enough.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care and support pupils receive are particularly strong. Very positive relationships enable pupils to develop confidence and self-esteem and respect for one another. The extra difficulties for pupils entering the school after the usual joining date are recognised and these pupils are given additional support to help their transition. Attendance is closely monitored and early contact is made with families when there is concern. Good procedures ensure the safety of children. Effective links with outside agencies ensure that pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities receive good support. Pupils with complex difficulties receive a good level of support. Academic guidance is satisfactory and improving. However, pupils' knowledge of their targets and of what they need to do to improve are inconsistent.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher and governors reacted quickly and positively to address the issues identified in the last report. The formation of a scrutiny group enabled governors to keep a close eye on the progress being made towards the school's targets. This, together with an accurate assessment of its strengths and weaknesses, and good support from the local authority, has helped the school to improve. Senior staff have rightly and effectively focused on addressing the inadequate progress made in the Reception classes and Key Stage 1. Middle managers and subject leaders have been given more responsibility to track and improve pupils' progress throughout the school. They have correctly identified some weaknesses. In literacy, strategies have been put in place, although the impact of these have yet to be seen. Strategies have yet to be put in place in other subjects such as mathematics to address the uneven progress made by pupils in different classes and year groups. Governors are very supportive and keen to improve the rate of pupils' achievement. They are monitoring progress robustly and fully meet their statutory requirements.

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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?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
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	2
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	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	2

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?	2
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.

Annex A

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	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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

22 June 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Bentley Heath C of E Primary School, Solihull B93 9AS

Thank you very much for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school recently. The school is providing you with a satisfactory education.

Here are some of our findings.

- You attain well above average standards in English, mathematics and science.
- You behave well, work hard and enjoy your lessons and other activities.
- You have interesting work to do and there are a good range of clubs and other activities for you to enjoy.
- You have good relationships with one another and with the staff.
- Teaching is satisfactory.
- Adults look after you well and keep you safe.
- You have a good understanding of how to keep yourselves healthy and safe.
- The headteacher and staff have a clear idea of what needs to be done to improve the school further.

These are the things we have asked the school to do now.

- Give you activities that help you to improve your learning and to make better progress.
- Make sure that teachers' marking and your individual targets help you to improve your work.
- Make sure those in charge of the school help teachers to improve their marking and set targets that help you to improve your work.

I hope you continue to work hard and enjoy your time at school.

Yours sincerely

Paul Edwards Lead Inspector