

Batheaston CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109184
Local Authority	Bath and North East Somerset
Inspection number	309917
Inspection dates	23–24 January 2008
Reporting inspector	Colin Lee

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	215
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Vacant Position
Headteacher	Chris Wathern
Date of previous school inspection	20 October 2003
School address	School Lane Northend Bath BA1 7EP
Telephone number	01225 858555
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Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This school is slightly smaller than an average size primary school. It draws its pupils from the village of Batheaston and a wide area outside its catchment area. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. Those from minority ethnic groups all speak English fluently. Children's attainment on entry is in line with national expectations. There is an above average proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the proportion with a statement of educational need is well above average. The deputy headteacher is currently serving as acting headteacher.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The school provides a good standard of education with some outstanding features. Inclusion is central to the school's ethos and all aspects of its work reflect total commitment to the principle that every child matters. In written comments to the inspection team, parents and carers repeatedly praised the school for its attention to each child as an individual. The school shows the highest levels of concern for the well-being of its pupils and staff.

There are outstanding features in provision, such as a rich curriculum offering many stimulating learning opportunities in lessons and an exciting, extensive programme of activities out of school hours. There is similar excellence in the quality of the care, guidance and support given to pupils. The outcomes of these strengths in the school's provision are pupils' good achievement and standards and their outstanding personal development.

Good achievement is consistent at all ages. This is an improvement for there has been a period when national assessments and tests were inconsistent. There was a declining trend in the assessments at the end of Year 2 but a rising trend at the end of Year 6. The response to concerns about achievement in Years 1 and 2 has been effective and achievement is now good. Standards attained in the 2007 Year 6 national tests were impressively high. The current Year 6 cohort have made good progress since they started in Year 3 and are on track to attain above average standards in English, mathematics and science by the end of the year. This year group, like many in the school, has an above average proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. All such pupils make outstanding progress due to the high quality of support that they receive. There is a similarly high quality of provision for the children in the Foundation Stage. Most attain the levels expected in all areas of learning by the end of the year and a significant proportion do so sooner.

The pupils' outstanding personal development is exemplified by the care and concern they show for each other. Their respect for one another, care for the environment in which they live and their multicultural awareness are particularly impressive. At work and play, they are co-operative and enthusiastic, and anxious to contribute to the smooth running of the school. Pupils' well-developed social skills and good academic achievement mean they are very well prepared for future stages in their education and eventual economic well-being. Their tremendous enjoyment of school pleases parents and carers as much as the good progress their children are making.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. There is strong emphasis on pupils' learning in literacy and numeracy and recent initiatives are having a good impact on standards of writing in particular, which is an area identified for whole school improvement. Pupils do not currently have sufficient opportunities in lessons to practise information and communication technology (ICT) skills. Good leadership and management have been instrumental in maintaining continuity during the school's transition between headteachers, with strong leadership being shown by the present acting headteacher. The impact of recent initiatives shows that the school has a good capacity for further improvement. School development planning is strongly focused on improving pupils' achievement, and progress in key priorities is monitored thoroughly. While all subject leaders prepare annual plans for developments within their subjects, many do not ensure that they are monitoring the impact of such developments on pupils' achievement. This is a weakness in the overall strategic planning. The school knows itself well and its self-evaluation judgements are accurate.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

The excellent provision for the Foundation Stage helps the children make good progress in all areas of learning. They enjoy their time at school and work and play well together. Teaching and learning are consistently good and outstanding in some areas, and assessment is used very effectively to plan all activities. The curriculum meets children's needs well. There are good arrangements to encourage their involvement in the community from the moment they start school. There are very good links with parents to keep them well informed of their children's progress. School leaders have a very good understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement. They have rightly identified a need for the development of outdoor facilities, this will enable the curriculum to be planned to include permanently sited outdoor learning opportunities that do not require full-time adult supervision.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide pupils with more opportunities to develop ICT skills.
- Leaders of subjects other than literacy and numeracy should ensure that the developments they plan in their subjects are more closely linked to improvements in pupils' achievement.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children make good gains in learning in the Foundation Stage. By the time they enter Year 1, most attain the expected levels for their age, and a significant majority exceed these. This is now being successfully built on in Years 1 and 2 although this has not been the case in the last two years when standards by the end of Year 2 declined. However, improved teaching is helping pupils to make good progress and many of them, in both year groups, are now working at or above expected levels for their ages in speaking and listening, reading, writing and mathematics.

In Years 3 to 6, pupils' achievement is consistently good. Those in Years 3 and 4 who underachieved in the past are quickly catching up and standards are back to where they should be. The school sets challenging targets for each year group. The targets for Year 6 are especially high for a group with such a high proportion having learning difficulties and/or disabilities, but the pupils are on track to achieve them. Their standards in English, mathematics and science are higher than those expected of pupils at this age.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The school is successful in promoting excellent attitudes and behaviour in all year groups. Attendance is average but improving, and punctuality is good. Pupils learn how to value themselves but their most impressive quality is how they care for others and the environment in which they live. They say that they feel very safe in the school and that there is no bullying or unkindness because they are taught to respect one another. They demonstrate a very good awareness of the school's ethos in their understanding of right and wrong and in their relationships with each other and with adults. Younger pupils benefit from having an older 'buddy' and work and play well together. Pupils have excellent understanding of the importance of healthy eating and regular exercise. They are keen to contribute to the school community, for example, by looking after the school gardens and grounds. Active school and Eco councils make excellent contributions to school life by helping to improve the school environment and

ensuring that all pupils put into practice what they are taught about environmental issues. Pupils are proud of their fund raising efforts for others. They make a positive contribution to their neighbourhood by involvement in local events and activities. They develop an excellent awareness of the world of work and are able to explain the choices they make about spending and saving money.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers match work well to pupils' abilities. In most lessons, there is skilful use of questioning by teachers to ensure that pupils develop their understanding. Pupils enjoy their work and make good progress when working individually or in groups. Teachers set class, group and individual targets for pupils' learning in literacy and they assess pupils' work regularly. They also encourage pupils to evaluate their work and identify successes as well as weaknesses. These strategies have a good impact on the quality of pupils' learning. There are variations in the quality of teaching and learning across the school, with lessons ranging from outstanding to satisfactory. Weaknesses are generally specific to individual teachers and effective monitoring and guidance by senior staff is gradually increasing their effectiveness. Although literacy and numeracy are taught well, not all teachers identify clearly enough where there are opportunities for pupils to practise and develop literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects. Teachers make good use of resources such as interactive whiteboards to explain ideas clearly and imaginatively. There are very few computers in classes and pupils do not have frequent enough opportunities for either basic ICT skill development or activities such as individual research.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is highly innovative and creative with a strong emphasis placed on real life experiential learning. Excellent use of the surrounding school grounds provides experiences that demonstrate to pupils the value of eco-friendly alternate sources of energy. Pupils also have the opportunities to grow their own produce and look after the school's animals. The normal teaching timetable is statutorily covered over four and a half days, and the remaining midweek half-day is dedicated to a very wide variety of workshops ranging from lacrosse and archery to cookery and drum fun. This enrichment is outstanding. All visitors and visits are linked closely with current learning. Pupils have the opportunity to learn French and specialist teachers provide high quality sports and arts activities. Well established links with other schools provide further opportunities for higher attaining pupils to visit and enhance their learning. The school acknowledges that its computer hardware and software is increasingly out of date and plans are in place to update this provision.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The level of care, guidance and support in this school is exceptional. High levels of commitment from all the school's community ensure that all pupils feel safe and well cared for. All safeguarding arrangements are secure and robust. This high quality of care is reflected in the pupil's exemplary behaviour and mature attitudes. There is excellent support for pupils and families where there is an erratic or poor attendance record. Talented and highly trained teaching

assistants also give outstanding support to pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. This is a major reason for the excellent progress made by these pupils.

All pupils receive excellent academic guidance. They understand their own individual learning targets and work hard to achieve them. Pupils' work is diligently marked and the constructive written comments made by their teachers provide pupils with clear information about the next steps in their learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The acting headteacher has the confidence of pupils, staff, parents and governors and he is providing a strong lead during the maternity leave of the permanent headteacher. He is well supported by the senior management team and the effective teamwork of all the staff is very evident. Senior staff analyse all information about pupils' progress and standards very thoroughly and work closely with class teachers to establish areas for development and how best to meet the needs of pupils who show any underachievement. There is a collective determination to achieve success in the main issues currently being addressed. Already improvements are evident in overall standards in Years 1 and 2 and the standard of writing across the school as a result of the measures taken by senior management. These include the introduction of intervention strategies and very focused target setting in order to improve pupils' achievement. Subject leaders are committed but, apart from in English, mathematics and science, they are not focusing enough on how any planned developments for their subjects are going to improve pupils' achievement.

Governors have a secure understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They are supportive and involved, contribute well to strategic planning and have a strong commitment to the ethos of the school. They fully endorse the extremely challenging targets that senior management has set to raise the standards of some year groups.

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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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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	1

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	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	1

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

25 January 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Batheaston CE Primary School, Batheaston, Bath postcode!

Thank you for making us welcome in your school and for talking with us so willingly. We thoroughly enjoyed joining you in lessons and seeing you at work. We think your school gives you a good education overall and some things are excellent. This is what we particularly appreciated.

- You are making good progress in your work.
- By the time you reach Year 6 many of you reach above average standards in English, mathematics and science.
- Your behaviour is excellent and this makes your school a friendly, pleasant place where everyone helps one another.
- You understand very well about the importance of looking after the environment, about healthy eating, the importance of exercise and about what are safe things to do at school and home.
- You are taught well and teachers work hard to plan interesting things for you to do in your lessons. This is helping you to learn well.
- The teachers and teaching assistants give excellent help to those of you who find some of the work quite hard.
- All the adults do an excellent job in looking after you and making sure that you are safe and get help whenever you need it.
- The school is led well by your acting headteacher and all the adults, including the governors, work very well together to improve it.
- We have two suggestions to help your school to get even better.
- You need more opportunities to work on computers in lessons.
- The teachers responsible for different subjects need to see if any changes they introduce are helping you to achieve higher standards and better progress in those subjects.

We hope you will carry on enjoying learning and helping your teachers to make Batheaston Primary School to be an even better school.

Yours sincerely

Colin Lee Lead inspector

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