

Bathford CofE VC Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109185
Local Authority	Bath and North East Somerset
Inspection number	309918
Inspection date	25 June 2008
Reporting inspector	Paul Sadler

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	160
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Janet Bilton
Headteacher	Diane Grebby
Date of previous school inspection	9 February 2004
School address	Dovers Park Bathford Bath BA1 7UB
Telephone number	01225 858776
Fax number	01225 858776

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector. He evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

The impact of the school's work to raise standards of writing

The quality of pupils' personal development and well-being, especially their understanding of how to stay healthy and safe, and their contribution to the community

The quality of the curriculum, in particular the ways in which it develops pupils' autonomy and their skills across a range of subjects.

Evidence was gathered by observing lessons, scrutinising documents and pupils' work, and from discussions with staff and pupils. Other aspects of the school's work were not evaluated in detail but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

The school serves a village of mainly private housing and the surrounding area. Most pupils are of White British ethnicity and almost all speak English as a first language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average.

Over the last few years the number of pupils at this popular school has doubled. Two classrooms have recently been added. Money raised by the school partly contributed to the successful completion of this project. The school has the Healthy Schools and Activemark awards.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an excellent school in which pupils' achievement is outstanding. A parent's view that 'my child has enjoyed seven years of excellent teaching and a rich curriculum' is typical of many. Children start school with levels of skill and knowledge that are higher than those typically expected. They make excellent progress in the Reception class, especially in their communication, mathematical, social and emotional development. In most classes they continue to make excellent progress and by the time they leave at the end of Year 6 have attained results in national tests and assessments that are very high. In 2007, the majority attained the higher levels in English, mathematics and science and there is good evidence from the work of current pupils that standards remain at this level. For example, Year 6 pupils can easily explain relatively complex mathematical calculations. Pupils make excellent progress because of excellent teaching, which is characterised by the high expectations that teachers have of their pupils, the fast pace of lessons and good knowledge of subjects, that is apparent in almost all lessons. Pupils also attain very high standards in other subjects, including art, ICT, and physical education, where several pupils have achieved representative honours at regional and national level. Pupils especially enjoy the opportunities to learn a wide range of sports, ranging from judo to lacrosse, many of which are part of the excellent range of additional activities on offer.

The school has a very accurate view of its strengths and weaknesses and is very successful at rectifying the latter. Recent examples include the introduction of new approaches to the teaching of writing, as it was noted that progress in reading was better than that in writing, and the use of strategies to improve girls' confidence in mathematics. There is good evidence that both these initiatives have been successful. Leaders and managers are analytical and reflective, so that new initiatives are introduced after careful evaluation and adequate training and preparation of staff.

Pupils' personal development is outstanding. They have an excellent understanding of how to keep healthy and safe; for instance, they have influenced the content of school meals and have been involved in the development of a new Internet safety policy. Their behaviour is excellent and they love school. Several parents commented that 'my child cannot wait to get to school'. Attendance is above average, but is somewhat reduced by family holidays taken in term time. There are many exciting opportunities within the curriculum. These include visits to France and Holland, and imaginative activities such as the recent International Week, where pupils 'flew' to classrooms set up to represent various countries, with a suitably dressed headteacher as their airline pilot! This activity was a good example of the excellent provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, in part because the pupils were taught in groups of all ages. This encouraged the excellent ethos within which older pupils care for those younger than themselves. The school council has influence and gives pupils further opportunities to develop their sense of responsibility.

The school has identified a need to ensure that pupils' skills are developed through all aspects of the curriculum and to broaden pupils' opportunities to develop their problem solving skills. This will correctly be the next priority of leaders and managers. Pupils with exceptional abilities are given additional opportunities, for instance to attend activities with pupils from other schools with similar abilities organised by the local authority. Pupils greatly enjoy these activities, but a few, supported by their parents, would like even more challenging classroom work. The school endeavours to provide this, mindful of the fact that such work needs to be at a standard far beyond that commonly found in primary schools.

Pupils are cared for well. They and their parents recognise that staff put their needs first. While there are good arrangements to protect children, minor adjustments to documentation are required in order to reflect this. Pupils receive good academic guidance. Targets are used well, especially in Years 4 to 6, to show pupils what they need to learn next. These pupils have a good understanding of how the standard of their work relates to national standards. Marking is used effectively to show pupils how to improve their work. Pupils' progress is assessed regularly and is used to plan work that meets their needs. This is especially true of the relatively small number of pupils with learning difficulties, who are supported very well in the classroom by teaching assistants and hence make excellent progress.

Under the leadership of the experienced headteacher and chair of governors, staff and governors have worked successfully over a long period to place the school at the heart of the local community and to gain the confidence of parents. They have set themselves challenging targets and long term goals that have been achieved. There is strength in depth within the leadership, with very high quality leadership of subject development and of the Foundation Stage. There has been a great deal of improvement since the last inspection and the school is in an excellent position for this improvement to continue.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

The school has excellent relationships with the pre-school adjacent to the site, which most children attend before they start school. They have opportunities to learn and play together. As a result, children are well prepared for school and quickly settle to routines. They make excellent progress, both in their emotional and social development and in more formal activities. By the end of the Reception Year, many have exceeded the expectations for children of their age. They can read and write simple sentences and can count and order numbers. The curriculum has a good mix of child initiated and more formal activities, which reflect the high expectations present throughout the school.

The experienced Foundation Stage leader has an excellent understanding of how young children learn, and an exceptional knowledge of how to develop the skills of the many able children whom she teaches. She is given excellent support by teaching assistants who help the slower learners. Assessment is accurate and thorough and is used well to inform parents about their children's progress. As a result, parents are almost universally delighted with their children's start to school. 'I am amazed and delighted at how well she has settled; she has blossomed academically, socially and personally', is a view typical of many.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that documentation relating to the safeguarding of children reflects the high quality of care

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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?	1
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	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
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	2
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?	1
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?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
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	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Bathford CE Primary School, Bath BA1 7UB

I very much enjoyed talking to you and seeing your work when I visited your school recently. I especially enjoyed talking to you as I found you confident, friendly and able to express your views very clearly.

Yours is an excellent school. These are some of the best things about it:

- You make excellent progress and pupils in Year 6 get well above average results in tests and assessments in English, mathematics and science. You also do well in subjects such as art, PE and ICT.
- Teaching is excellent. You are usually given challenging work that you find really interesting.
- You have an excellent understanding of how to keep healthy and safe, and your behaviour is also outstanding. I was especially impressed with the amount you know about keeping healthy.
- You greatly enjoy school, especially all the different activities on offer. There are lots of clubs for you to take part in and you get plenty of opportunities to help people. You especially enjoy all the different sports you can try.
- Children get an excellent start to school in the Reception class.
- The care and guidance the school provides are good. Those of you in Years 4, 5 and 6 know how to use your targets and you get lots of help to show you how to improve, for example from teachers' marking and from the teaching assistants.
- The headteacher and other staff are excellent at leading the school. All the staff are really keen to help all of you to learn more, whether you find school work quite easy or hard.

I have asked the school to carry out the ideas it has to make your lessons even more interesting, and to make sure it has all the necessary paperwork to show how you are kept safe.

Yours sincerely

Paul Sadler Lead Inspector