

Bickerton Holy Trinity CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111268
Local Authority	Cheshire
Inspection number	310549
Inspection date	1 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Judith Tolley

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	120
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Andy Butler
Headteacher	Mr Paul Sweetnam
Date of previous school inspection	6 May 2003
School address	Long Lane Bickerton Malpas Cheshire SY14 8AP
Telephone number	01829 720240
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: achievement and standards, personal development and well-being, teaching and learning, care, guidance and support, and leadership and management. Evidence was gathered from the school's self-evaluation (SEF), national published assessment data and the school's own records, policies and observation of the school at work, discussions with staff and pupils, and the parents' questionnaires. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but there is 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

Bickerton is a smaller than average primary school. Children are of predominantly White British heritage. The proportion of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is low as is the proportion eligible for free school meals. It has the Healthy Schools Award and Basic Skills Quality Mark.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school with some outstanding features. Pupils' personal development is outstanding. They take pride in their school, have excellent relationships with each other and their teachers and find learning is fun. They take great pride in their achievements and their behaviour is exemplary. Pupils are given the opportunity to take responsibility, treat this seriously and are confident in expressing their views. Much of this is because the quality of care, guidance and support is excellent. The school follows government guidelines to ensure the safety of its pupils and the safe recruitment of staff. Parents and carers appreciate the way the school involves them fully in planning and tracking their children's progress. Pupils become confident and eager learners who thoroughly enjoy their education and who are able to make the right choices about healthy living as acknowledged through a national award. Attendance is above average and further reflects pupils' enjoyment of school.

Teaching is of good quality and ensures that all pupils achieve well. Lessons are interesting and fun and conducted in an atmosphere of mutual respect. Teachers know the pupils very well indeed and lessons are very well planned so that pupils build effectively on previous learning; individual needs are well catered for. Teachers use questioning effectively to support and extend learning. In science lessons, pupils regularly work collaboratively to explore and investigate ideas for themselves. However, in other subjects, opportunities are missed to enable pupils to do this and to learn from each other. Because of outstanding teaching in the Reception class, and the way children learn very effectively through play, they begin Year 1 with a firm foundation for learning. Progress is slowed somewhat in Key Stage 1 because of the transition to more formal styles of learning. Overall, the curriculum meets the needs of all pupils well. An external award for the curriculum shows how basic skills are prioritised. By the end of Key Stage 1, standards in reading are significantly above average and standards in writing and mathematics are above average. By the age of 11, pupils achieve standards which are above average in English and mathematics and significantly above average in science. This represents good achievement in relation to their broadly typical starting points. Positive strategies to raise standards in writing have proved successful. Systems to monitor pupils' progress and set targets are very effective and pupils are now beginning to evaluate their own progress towards learning objectives.

The emphasis throughout the school on problem solving and on speaking and listening enables all pupils to achieve well. Pupils are thoughtful and articulate and have a good capacity to work independently. Information and communication technology (ICT) and drama are used very effectively to support and extend pupils learning. A wide range of extra-curricular activities including residential visits effectively enhance pupils' experience. The new adventure play area is greatly appreciated by the pupils and they use it enthusiastically for role play and exploration at break and lunchtimes.

Leadership and management are good. There has been excellent improvement since the last inspection, particularly in standards and provision in science and ICT. The headteacher provides very clear direction, is strongly supported by all staff, and has been very successful in creating an effective team and a high level of consistency across the school. All teachers are involved in planning and in decision making. However, key stage coordinators do not have sufficient opportunity to evaluate performance or to plan a smooth transition between key stages, particularly to build on the excellent practice in the Foundation Stage. Governors are very well

informed and provide good support and challenge. The school provides good value for money and has an excellent capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children get off to an excellent start in the Foundation Stage. When they enter the school, most children have abilities typical for their age. Very careful planning of creative and interesting activities, which take account of children's different needs, leads to rapid learning in a fun and exciting atmosphere. Because of outstanding teaching in the Reception class, children make excellent progress, particularly in their personal development, speaking and listening and in the excellent opportunities to learn through play. Continuous close checks on individual progress celebrate milestones reached by individuals. As a result, most achieve the expected learning goals for their age and many exceed them by the start of Year 1. The environment is stimulating, calm and orderly. Children have excellent relationships with each other and their teachers and are keen to learn and behave well. They treat each other kindly and enjoy taking responsibility and participating in group activities. Their welfare is promoted very well based on very good links with parents and very strong leadership and management.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase opportunities for pupils to work collaboratively and explore ideas for themselves.
- Ensure smooth transition between key stages, particularly building on the positive impact of play upon children's learning beyond the Foundation Stage.

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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?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

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	2

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	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
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	2

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?	2
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	2
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	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

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

Thank you for making me so welcome when I came to visit your school recently. I really enjoyed watching you work and play. I also enjoyed talking to you and hearing your views.

I am sure you will not be surprised to know that your school is a good one with some things that are excellent. I was particularly impressed by your behaviour and the excellent way you get on with each other and your teachers. You told me how much you enjoy your lessons and it was easy to see why. Teachers work very hard to make your lessons interesting and fun. I noticed how much you enjoyed carrying out investigations in science and how well you got on when you worked together to explore ideas for yourselves. I have asked the school to give you more opportunities to do this. Children in the Reception class have made excellent progress since they started school in September. I noticed how well those younger children learned through play and have asked the school to provide more opportunities for you all to do more of this throughout the school.

You are very well looked after and your teachers know very well how each of you is getting on. They give you good guidance about how to improve your work. I expect you know that your headteacher and the governors work very hard to think up new ideas and make things better. Recently, they have helped to create a lovely new play area for you all, for example. I really enjoyed walking through your new garden and seeing what fun you have building dens and following tracks. You are also very lucky to have so many clubs and activities after school as well as visits outside school.

I am confident that you will help your teachers to make sure your school continues to be successful and a happy place to be and to learn.

I wish you every success in the future.