

The Epiphany Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113849
Local Authority	Bournemouth
Inspection number	311403
Inspection date	13 September 2007
Reporting inspector	Eileen Chadwick

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	425
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Andy Saunders
Headteacher	Dave Simpson
Date of previous school inspection	19 May 2003
School address	Shillingstone Drive Muscliff Bournemouth BH9 3PE
Telephone number	01202 530960
Fax number	01202 547377

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: the progress the pupils make in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1; pupils' progress in writing in Key Stage 2; and the impact of leadership and management on improving standards. Evidence was gathered from lesson observations, discussions with pupils and staff, reviewing the assessment data the school uses to track the progress the pupils make and analysis of pupils' work. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated 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 is a large primary school that serves the local parish as well as other areas in Bournemouth. The number of pupils on roll is rising. Nearly all pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average whilst the proportion entitled to free school meals is below average. Pupils' attainment on entry is broadly at the level expected but there is a wide range. The headteacher took up post in September 2005. The school holds the Healthy Schools and Investor in People awards.

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 outstanding features. Pupils receive exceptional levels of care and their excellent personal development and behaviour are a springboard for all the school does. Pupils thrive both academically and personally. The school is still improving under the outstanding leadership of the headteacher. The great majority of parents justifiably hold the school in high regard. As one parent says, 'My children are very happy at The Epiphany School where they are encouraged to achieve their potential in a very positive and caring environment'.

Pupils achieve well and standards are rising. The good start made in Reception is thoroughly built upon in Key Stage 1. Standards in Year 2 have risen considerably in the last few years and pupils now enter Year 3 well above average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. This now gives them a strong start to their junior education. Improvements have been achieved and pupils' progress accelerated because previous performance has been reviewed rigorously and difficult decisions have been taken. The school has recognised that a further rise in expectations is necessary as these pupils move through the school.

By the end of Year 6, standards are well above average in reading, mathematics and science. Standards in writing are above average but progress is not as fast as in reading. Recent improvements to reading provision are already having an effect and achievement is rising. The school is also beginning to strengthen the teaching of writing but initiatives are at an early stage. It has rightly identified the need to give the pupils a more exciting writing curriculum by bringing subjects together and by teaching spelling more systematically. Links between subjects are developing and are already greatly enhancing pupils' learning in science and mathematics. The broad curriculum is enriched by very strong provision in music and an excellent range of extra-curricular activities.

The excellent leadership of the headteacher, in partnership with a strong senior leadership team, is central to the improvements being made. The arrangements for self-evaluation are very effective and have rapidly developed in the past two years. The headteacher has successfully sought to give staff opportunity to monitor and manage their areas of responsibility although not all subject leaders yet have a secure overview of the whole school. Training is ensuring that governors are increasingly engaged in holding the school to account.

Teachers' skills in planning work and promoting good learning for all pupils are rigorously evaluated. Teachers' strengths are built upon and areas for improvement lead to performance targets and professional development. This is increasing the proportions of good and better teaching across the school. However, the school is fully aware that work still needs to be done in some classes to make sure pupils have enough opportunities to learn through doing, for example through discussion, by sharing ideas in small teams and problem solving. Teachers have welcomed the changes being made and the opportunities for them to improve their teaching. Strong teamwork by all the staff is a major reason why the school is improving so well and for its good capacity to continue to do so.

Support from the local church and strong links with the community help to promote the school's family atmosphere and pupils' excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils' contributions to the school and wider community are excellent. They develop a very good sense of responsibility for caring for their local environment. Their ecological awareness is exceptional. The curriculum and extra-curricular activities, such as the gardening club, give the pupils first rate practical experiences of caring for their planet. The thriving school council is a very good

vehicle for enabling pupils to contribute to school decision making. Pupils' great enthusiasm for school life is reflected in their very good attendance.

The strong focus on improving teaching and learning and assessment has led to the rising standards throughout the school. Pupils' progress is rigorously checked and steps are quickly taken to make improvements where necessary. Pupils understand what is expected of them very well and their learning targets are shared with parents. Parents expressed high levels of satisfaction with the school. However, a minority of those who have children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities expressed concern that their children's progress could be faster. Inspection finds that pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities now make good progress in reading and mathematics although in Key Stage 2 progress in writing is only satisfactory. The previous underperformance of some of these pupils, when younger, is being successfully addressed. However, the school recognises the need to improve their writing.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

At the time of the inspection, children had not yet entered Reception classes because of the early stage in the academic year. Secure and moderated assessments from last year's Reception classes show children make good progress in literacy and numeracy and across other areas of learning. By the time they begin Year 1, nearly all children reach the standards expected and some exceed them. Children are nurtured and their safety and well-being are given the highest priority. There are excellent induction procedures for helping children settle into school and parents really appreciate the close links that are encouraged between home and school. The Foundation Stage is well managed; the curriculum is well planned and interesting, providing a good balance between focused teaching and learning through play. The checking of children's progress is rigorous; however, this is predominantly by paper and not computer. The school has identified this as an area for development so staff and leaders can evaluate children's progress even more efficiently. There have recently been substantial improvements to outdoor play facilities.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise achievement in writing by providing a more exciting writing curriculum and by teaching spelling more systematically.
- Improve the consistency of good teaching by increasing opportunities for pupils to learn through discussion, teamwork and problem solving.

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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	2
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	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	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	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	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
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

13 September 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Epiphany Church of England Primary School, Bournemouth, BH9 3PE

I am writing to say thank you for making me so welcome and for talking to me when I came to visit your school recently. I also want to tell you what I found out about your school.

Firstly, you need to know you go to a good school where you make good progress. Here are some good things about your school:

- Your headteacher leads you all extremely well and your teachers and the school governors are working hard to make the school even better.
- You make good progress in English, mathematics and science.
- You clearly enjoy school and take a great pride in your work. Your singing is very good.
- Teaching is good and is getting even better because of the way the school is improving your learning opportunities.
- You are a credit to your school and behave extremely well.
- You use the beautiful school grounds very well and your home grown vegetables, such as beetroot, are delicious!
- Teachers take superb care of you, make sure you are kept safe and check up on how well you are doing really well.

This is what I am asking the school to change:

- Make sure you are given more interesting writing tasks and your spelling improves.
- Make sure you have more chances to share ideas and solve problems.

I hope you will continue to work hard and enjoy school. Thank you once again for letting me see your lovely school.

Best wishes

Eileen Chadwick Lead inspector



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