

Bisley Blue Coat Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115612
Local Authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	312000
Inspection dates	30–31 January 2008
Reporting inspector	Mary Harlow HMI

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	82
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Judith Sales
Headteacher	Sam Porter
Date of previous school inspection	25 November 2003
School address	School Lane Bisley Stroud GL6 7BE
Telephone number	01452 770251
Fax number	01452 770251

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

Description of the school

Bisley Blue Coat Primary School is a smaller than average school situated in the heart of the Cotswold village of Bisley. Most children are of White British heritage and come from the local community and the surrounding villages to the east of Stroud. The percentage of children with learning difficulties is below average, although this number has increased markedly in recent years. Attainment on entry to the Reception class is broadly average but, in some year groups, a significant minority of children started school with some catching up to do in communication, language and literacy and personal, social and emotional development.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

'This school is more like a family.' 'The children are allowed to develop and blossom as individuals.' 'We feel it both nurtures and challenges our child. The sense of community is very strong and it is a great environment to begin one's journey into learning.'

These are the views of parents and they are right! Bisley Blue Coat is indeed a good school with several outstanding features, where pupils flourish and the adults want to be. All at the school are working exceptionally hard to do the best for the pupils in their care. As a result, their personal development and well-being are outstanding.

Achievement across the school is good. The children get off to a fine start in Reception, where all make good progress due to quality teaching and care. This good progress continues across Key Stages 1 and 2 and pupils attain above average standards in all subjects by the time they leave. Pupils with learning difficulties achieve well because of the high level of commitment and understanding they receive. Pupils' reading skills are highly developed at every stage; this is reflected in their enjoyment of books.

'The staff and teaching assistants are fantastic both in their enthusiasm and their commitment', wrote a parent. This comment is also apt and a fitting tribute to the consistently good quality of teaching and learning across the school. Lessons are stimulating, often imaginative and planned meticulously. Consequently, the pupils rise to the strong work ethic expected and respond enthusiastically. The school has itself identified that there are inconsistencies in marking and assessment procedures that mean that not all pupils know what they need to do to improve.

The curriculum is good. Every effort is made to provide the children with practical, motivating experiences which whet their appetite for learning. Good links are developing between some subject areas where relevant. The school works well with the local community, particularly the parish, and there is an excellent range of visits and clubs on offer, which the pupils, parents and carers appreciate.

Leadership and management are outstanding at all levels. The school knows itself very well and sets the right targets to make it even better. There is no room for complacency, and improvements, including the issues identified in the last inspection, have been tackled diligently and at a swift pace. Partnership with parents is good and governance is outstanding. The school has excellent capacity for continued improvement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children have a good start to school life and they progress well. This is because teaching is good and they experience a curriculum that fully meets the needs of young children. Teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of these youngsters as they monitor them carefully. However, the school is aware that teachers do not use data in sufficient depth to set individual targets. Staff interact well with the children during role-play activities and this promotes high quality learning in language and social skills. A good balance of whole-class, group and individual activities ensures that all the children are appropriately involved in their learning. Activities are interesting and fun, for example, splashing through puddles and watching the patterns the water makes when it is pouring with rain. The environment in Reception is secure and children settle in quickly because induction is not rushed. Good use is made of the outdoor area to promote children's personal and social development and physical skills.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that all marking and assessment give pupils clear guidance on what they need to do to improve.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils make good progress in the Foundation Stage and most pupils enter Year 1 with the expected levels of attainment in all areas of learning. This good progress continues and, by the end of Years 2 and 6, pupils attain consistently above average standards in all subjects. Reading skills are well above average because of effective teaching of phonics and spelling, particularly in Class 2, coupled with strong parental involvement. The use of data to check the pupils' progress is developing well and the targets set for pupils are now challenging, particularly across Key Stage 2. Pupils with learning difficulties progress well because of the excellent support they receive from the skilled and talented teaching assistants.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils flourish in this very special community and, by the time they leave, they develop a strong belief that they can achieve. This is because the school places a high importance on developing their spiritual, social and moral development, and it does so splendidly! Pupils benefit from a wealth of opportunities designed to cultivate these aspects, for example, the exceptional assembly observed on 'humility', the sterling work of the school council to improve play resources and the lovely lunchtimes in the hall where pupils chat amiably and tell visitors jokes. Cultural development is good; the pupils are benefiting from interesting initiatives to explore life in other countries, for example links made through the Commenius project and the Born Free Foundation. In conversation, most pupils are confident to express their views and the respect they show to adults and to each other is impressive. This is because, as one parent aptly expressed, 'There is a strong ethos of praising the children's achievements and of always looking to recognise a child's strength.' Attendance is consistently good, as is punctuality.

Behaviour is exemplary. The pupils move calmly and sensibly in class and cooperate well in paired discussions and group tasks when stimulated and given the chance to do so. Around the school, they invariably stand back for visitors and greet them with a friendly smile. Pupils demonstrate a good understanding of the importance of eating healthily and participating in exercise. They feel very safe in school and know there is an adult to turn to if they feel unhappy. Pupils are developing good basic skills that prepare them for the next school and later life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Relationships are excellent throughout the school and, consequently, pupils feel confident in their learning. They respond well in lessons because they are fully involved in the interesting topics planned thoroughly by the teachers. In the best lessons, pupils are given practical experiences to make learning fun, for instance through imaginative drama and exciting science investigations. Questioning is a particular strength in all lessons and ensures that the pupils concentrate well, often for sustained periods. Teaching assistants, who help individuals and

small groups to fully understand what they are learning, support pupils very well. Although books are marked regularly, pupils do not always receive sufficient guidance on how to improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Appealing topics and meaningful links planned between subjects ensure that the curriculum provides good levels of motivation for the pupils, for example, writing sensible instructions for recipes and creating newspaper reports on historical events. The striking woven panels and stars in the hall are an excellent illustration of how staff expertise inspires pupils to produce work of a very high quality. However, these creative links do not extend across all subjects. A good range of visitors and trips out of school provide pupils with first-hand experiences to bring learning alive. Pupils benefit greatly from residential trips where they develop their personal and social skills. There is an excellent range of clubs for such a small school, which the pupils participate in enthusiastically, for example French club and sporting activities. These all make a very positive contribution to the development of pupils' self-esteem and confidence.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils are exceptionally well cared for and this contributes well to their enjoyment and achievement at school. Procedures to ensure the pupils are kept safe and secure, including those relating to child protection, are very well established and the site is monitored diligently. Playgroup visits and introductory sessions before starting school ensure that reception children settle in happily. There are good links with outside agencies for pupils who have learning difficulties. The careful tracking and checking of pupils' progress ensure that staff know exactly the stage the pupils have reached. However, pupils are not clear enough about their targets for improvement.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Outstanding, visionary leadership by the headteacher is ensuring that the school continues to move forward at a swift pace. Working in dynamic partnership with other leaders, the school is focused relentlessly on improving standards further. Despite the school's many successes, school leaders are certainly not complacent. The needs of the children are at the heart of all decision making, and consultation with the whole school community is strong. Members are valued equally; as a result, there is an impressive team spirit. All staff, including non teaching staff, make a significant contribution to the pupils' achievements.

The school's systems for checking on its improvements are rigorous and leaders at all levels, including governors, work tirelessly to bring about improvements. They are acutely aware of the school's strengths and, most importantly, they tackle weaknesses assiduously. Evaluation is honest and accurate and the school's improvement plan is a thoughtful tool to make the school even better. The leadership of the governing body is outstanding and all members are extremely dedicated. They possess an infectious enthusiasm for the school and are well placed to continue to hold it to account in a challenging but supportive manner.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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	2
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	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?	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	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	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

31 January 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Bisley Blue Coat C of E Primary School, Stroud GL6 7BE

I am writing to say thank you very much for giving the inspectors such a warm welcome. We were impressed with the way you greeted us so confidently and courteously with friendly smiles. We enjoyed talking with you about your work, hearing about the exciting things you do and watching you play netball. What superb children you are!

Your school is good and often outstanding in many ways. Here are some of the special things that it does very well indeed.

- ?
- Your school looks after you very well and the adults want to do their best for you. ?
- Your behaviour is exemplary and everyone in the school cares for each other; it was a joy to observe you chatting amiably and telling jokes at lunchtimes. ?
- In Reception you get off to a good start in all aspects of your learning; you make good progress in all other year groups and achieve good standards by the time you leave, especially in reading. ?
- Your teachers plan interesting activities for you, which help you to enjoy school. ?
- The school council take their responsibilities seriously and help to organise fabulous occasions such as the 'Bisley Ball'. ?
- There are lots of clubs and visits, which you enjoy; your contributions to the local community, for example Ascension Day and the dressing of wells are valued by all. ?
- Your headteacher and other adults are always looking for ways to make your school an even better place to be! They value your views and those of your parents and carers in helping them to do this.

You are lucky to have such a wonderful headteacher, fantastic adults and great governors at the school. We have asked them to make the marking of your work even better and to check you always know what to do to improve further.

It was a real privilege to visit Bisley Blue Coat Primary School. Keep up the excellent work and, most importantly, continue to enjoy your learning. Best wishes for the future; we hope that you achieve great things!

Thank you again and for the 'Bisley Bear' memento you give to all visitors. What a thoughtful gesture!

Mrs Harlow HMI Lead inspector

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