

Bussage Church of England (A) Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115678
Local Authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	312025
Inspection date	18 September 2008
Reporting inspector	Alex Baxter

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	216
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	30
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ian Northcott
Headteacher	Andrew Ferguson
Date of previous school inspection	1 April 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Bussage The Ridgeway Stroud GL6 8AY
Telephone number	01453 883205

Age group	4–11
Inspection date	18 September 2008
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Fax number

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors, who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

the degree to which teachers and their assistants are informed by teachers' assessments of pupils' learning, meet pupils' differing academic and personal needs and accelerate their progress across the school

how effectively leaders and managers bring about improvement, particularly in writing through the school and by pupils with more ability.

Evidence was gathered from observations of lessons, whole-school assembly and pupils at lunch and play. Teachers' assessment records and pupils' work were scrutinised. Discussions were held with pupils, staff, governors and parents. Parents' responses to the inspection questionnaire were analysed. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspectors 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

This village school is of average size and mostly serves the needs of pupils in the local area. At present, there are 216 pupils on roll; this includes 30 children who receive Early Years Foundation Stage Provision (EYFS). The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average, but it varies from year to year. Attainment on entry also varies, but mostly it broadly matches the level expected for children's ages. The school has a number of awards reflecting its commitment to academic achievement and healthy living. A new headteacher took up his position at the beginning of this Autumn term.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Bussage is a good school. It has several significant strengths that include outstanding governance, pastoral care and extra-curricular activities and promotes pupils' exemplary attendance, excellent relationships and behaviour. In response to well-founded leadership and effective teaching the pupils make good progress and attain above average standards. This is a very inclusive school, where all pupils, including a few with very complex needs, feel secure and enjoy excellent relationships. Parents are right to appreciate the education their children are getting. One commented, 'The school ticks all the boxes I would look for in a primary school: good teaching, good leadership and good teamwork among staff,' and this matches inspection findings and the views expressed by all sections of the school community. Children make a good start in the EYFS because activities are carefully matched to their individual needs. Good teaching and learning and supportive encouragement promote good progress and pupils' productive relationships through the rest of the school. The way the teachers develop the pupils' vocabulary and speaking skills, especially their focus on phonics with younger age groups, and focused questioning of older pupils are impressive features. Class discussions are strengthened by clear learning objectives, but occasionally explanations continue for too long and limit the time available for pupils to develop their own ideas. Teachers are skilled in assessing the pupils' work and progress. They use the information gathered well and with increasing success to set suitably challenging targets for the pupils. As a result, by the end of Years 2 and 6, standards are above average in reading, mathematics, science and in speaking and listening. The school has been particularly successful in lifting pupils' mathematical and scientific achievements. Recent improvements in the achievement of higher attainers are a particular success story. Over the past year, the school's involvement in a 'Making Good Progress Pilot Project' has strengthened teachers' awareness of national curriculum levels. Subsequently this has raised expectations, which, combined with increased time for extended writing, are bringing improvement. However, standards in writing, although above average at the end of Year 6, across the school remain closer to average and are not yet high enough, showing that initiatives have not been in place long enough to have had the desired effect. This is particularly the case for some potentially higher attainers and in the way pupils structure and present their imaginative ideas. The care, guidance and support given to the pupils are good. This is because the pastoral care and the way pupils' efforts are valued are very strong features. The school develops good links with parents and outside agencies to ensure that all pupils, including those who find learning difficult, are well supported. The academic guidance given to the pupils through marking and oral advice is good and promotes pupils' progress effectively. Standards are improving as teachers and their capable, effective assistants implement their very well considered assessment procedures. The pupils notice this and say, 'Teachers are our friends, they let us know what we have to do to improve and give us reward stickers when we do well.' Pupils experience a good curriculum, which is enriched by an excellent range of clubs and events, often with other schools and involving the community. Activities include, for example, History and International Days and Art Exhibitions. The welcoming ethos of the school and its activities are underpinned by its sensitive commitment to Christian principles. These are successful in promoting the pupils' enjoyment of school and their good personal development and well-being. This includes the pupils' good adoption of healthy living, their enthusiastic contributions to the community and the pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The many trophies and certificates on display also show that the pupils' understanding of healthy, safe living and their ecological and creative awareness are also

emphasised and developed well. The pupils' understanding relationships and willing and full participation in clubs, local events and wider charitable fund raising clearly reflect the school's good contribution to community cohesion. Pupils undertake responsibility for each other willingly and the current training of Year 6 pupils to support others at playtimes and their involvement in the appointment of the new headteacher are good features. Pupil members on the school council also show enthusiasm. However, in discussion they see the main function of the council to be fund raising. When appropriate they would like their views acted upon earlier. These comments show that the 'pupil voice' is not fully developed in enabling pupils to contribute fully to the daily work and development of the school. In addition, the way the curriculum is implemented does not always give pupils enough opportunity to take responsibility for their own learning. At times, too much teacher-led activity, for example, inhibits the pupils' ability to extend their skills through independent research and problem solving and to learn practically even more successfully across a range of subjects. The new headteacher has joined a school where leadership and management are underpinned by a strong, inclusive and team-orientated ethos. Senior staff give good support and experienced governors provide secure continuity and excellent counsel. The governors' expertise was illustrated, for example, during the changeover of headteacher, by taking the difficult decision to extend the summer break to ensure that the pupils' welfare was not compromised by late completion of building works. Already, the new headteacher is enriching this unity of purpose. There is good monitoring and evaluation of the school's effectiveness and together colleagues ensure that pupils' needs are met and that targets are realistic and enable pupils to achieve well. The increasingly effective use of improved assessment to accelerate pupils' progress, for example, also illustrates the school's good capacity to improve into the future.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

At the time of inspection, all children of Reception age were experiencing a part-time introduction to school. Children's skills on entry generally match those found nationally, but can vary at times. Nevertheless, because work is matched well to the children's needs, children of all abilities make good progress. Older EYFS children are taught in a combined Year R and Year 1 class, whereas the younger Reception children are catered for in an adjacent classroom. Provision is well led and managed and adults provide excellent pastoral support. This safeguards the children's welfare and ensures that they settle quickly to school routines and make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development. Children are happy. They enjoy school and, with well-planned interventions from staff, form positive relationships. Generally, both indoors and outdoors, there is a good balance of adult-led activity and those chosen by the children themselves, especially in the Year R class. However, because children in the Years R and 1 class do not have free access to the outdoor area and need close adult support to access these facilities, their ability to learn by making their own choices, especially in physical activity, is constrained at times. Teaching and learning are good overall and reflect accurate assessment of the children's progress and the secure implementation of a well-planned curriculum. The teachers are particularly skilled in extending the children's phonic understanding of letters and words and in developing the children's number skills. As a result, the majority of children make good gains and attain above average standards in these aspects by the time they transfer to Year 1.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of pupils' writing, particularly the way pupils develop their ideas logically and imaginatively.
- Increase the opportunities given to the pupils to learn independently and to contribute to the day-to-day life and development of the school.

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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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	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/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
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 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

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	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

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

18 September 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Bussage C of E Primary, Bussage GL6 8AY

Thank you for welcoming us when we inspected your school recently. Particular thanks to the members of the school council, who helped by sharing your views with my colleague. We were very impressed by your excellent relationships with each other and with the adults who care for you so supportively. We have no hesitation in agreeing with you and with many of your parents, who feel that yours is a good school.

These are some of the other main things we found:

- You make good progress because you are taught well and know what you have to do to improve. As a result, standards are mostly better than those found in other schools.
- You behave extremely well, feel safe and participate wholeheartedly in a good range of activities.
- Your attendance is excellent and reflects your enjoyment of school and the school's supportive relationships, especially with your parents.
- You adopt healthy lifestyles and as much as you are able, contribute to your school and community well.
- Your new headteacher, with good support from established staff and wise counsel from very experienced governors, runs the school well. They work well as a team to meet your personal needs.

To help the school to improve we have asked the headteacher and staff to help you to improve your writing, especially the way you express your imaginative ideas. This is because some of you could do this in a more meaningful way and make quicker progress than you do at the moment. We have also asked them to increase opportunities for you to learn independently by following your own lines of enquiry and to contribute more to the day-to-day running and improvement of the school.

Keep offering ideas and giving of your best; that way you will help yourselves and the school to become even better.

With thanks again and good wishes for the future.

Alex Baxter Lead Inspector