

# Bitterne Church of England Voluntary Controlled Junior School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	116339
<b>Local Authority</b>	Southampton
<b>Inspection number</b>	312267
<b>Inspection date</b>	29 April 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Janet Sinclair

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7-11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	239
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Cheryl Hubbard
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Andy Peterson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	14 March 2005
<b>School address</b>	Brownlow Avenue Bitterne Southampton SO19 7BX
<b>Telephone number</b>	02380 499494
<b>Fax number</b>	02380 499495

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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: overall achievement, boys' achievement, particularly in writing, curricular provision and the effectiveness of new leadership and management. Evidence was gathered from the school's self-evaluation form (SEF), national published assessment data and the school's own assessment records, curriculum and planning documents, observation of the school at work, interviews with staff, pupils and an analysis of parents' questionnaires. 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 the SEF were not justified and these have been included where appropriate in the report.

## Description of the school

Pupils join this average sized junior school from a wide range of social and economic backgrounds. Very few pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is similar to that of most schools. The new headteacher took up his post in March 2008 after a period as acting headteacher. There is an acting deputy headteacher in post until July.

The school has attained Investors in People accreditation, the Healthy Schools award, the Basic Skills quality mark and the BECTA ICT mark.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Bitterne Junior School is a good school. Staff and pupils work together extremely well to create a strong, supportive community where pupils thrive because they know they are valued and their contribution to school life is encouraged and respected. The new headteacher, well supported by all staff and governors, is providing a clear sense of direction in order to further improve this already successful school. Staff work hard to involve parents and take their views fully into account. For example, they involve them in regular evaluations of the work of the school and set up a parent forum to explore their views of homework. Parents acknowledge this strong involvement and are very pleased with the school and what it offers. One parent who said, 'I am impressed with the continuing improvements and feel proud and privileged to be part of this school', sums up the many positive comments they have expressed. The school has a deservedly good reputation in the community.

Pupils start school with average attainment and, by the end of Year 6, they leave the school with standards that are mainly above average, with science occasionally well above average. Pupils' achievement is good overall. In the national tests in 2007, the results show that, although achievement overall was good, boys did not achieve as well as girls, particularly in writing. The school has introduced a range of strategies to improve boys' performance, including a phonics programme, small group work and topics involving the use of digital cameras. The school has acted decisively and has set clear targets for boys' writing and teachers regularly assess their performance. Consequently, their confidence as writers is improving and current work shows that this is accelerating their rates of progress in writing across the school.

Teaching is good and occasionally outstanding. Teachers ensure lessons engage pupils very well by providing a variety of teaching methods, such as drama, involving pupils fully in their learning, and ensuring many opportunities for collaboration, speaking and listening. Pupils say that lessons are fun and they like finding out how well they are doing. As a result, behaviour is excellent and attitudes to work are very good. This is also reflected in their good attendance. Teachers regularly refer to pupils' targets and make effective use of working walls to consolidate learning and involve pupils interactively. They mark pupils' work diligently and provide very clear English targets for pupils to aim for which is successful in accelerating their progress and raising standards. However, in mathematics, there are some inconsistencies in teachers' marking, particularly in Years 3 and 4. Additionally, the presentation of work in pupils' mathematics books varies as there are inconsistent expectations set so that for some pupils, this slows their progress. Pupils with speech and language difficulties receive good support from teaching assistants both in small groups and within the class.

Good curricular provision supports personal development well through the very good range of enrichment activities. These include French teaching in most year groups, individual music tuition in Year 3 and after school clubs such as dance, multisport and karate, which pupils thoroughly enjoy. Health and safety are given full consideration through, for example, the Healthy Schools award and work with Sainsbury's as part of a healthy eating project. Additionally, the school council has been fully involved in ensuring all parents and pupils are clear about what makes a healthy lunch box. Pupils are very involved in the community and particularly enjoy planning important exhibitions for parents where they showcase their work. They undertake a wide range of responsibilities and have huge enthusiasm for school which contributes significantly to their outstanding personal development. In response to the school's very caring ethos and excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, pupils become

responsible, thoughtful and mature. They enjoy being school councillors and express their views confidently. They felt particularly important when involved in interviewing the prospective headteacher candidates. Excellent care is shown in the very robust systems in place to safeguard pupils, the very good links with parents, the use of outside agencies and the effective support given to pupils in need of help. Of particular note is the growing confidence and enthusiasm for learning displayed by those who have been given additional support for reading and writing. Pupils' progress is tracked carefully and is used well to identify and support those in need. A recent and very effective initiative is target setting and assessment for learning, which ensures pupils are fully involved in their own learning and self-improvement.

In spite of many recent changes in senior leadership, the school is improving well. The new headteacher has made a very good start to his leadership of the school. He is clear about what needs to be done to secure further improvement and new initiatives involving all senior leaders are already having a positive impact. He has introduced very rigorous and detailed monitoring of teaching, which is leading to further improvement in the quality of lessons. The school improvement plan is a result of the involvement of all stakeholders, ensuring a good level of commitment to key initiatives. This is particularly noticeable in the consistent use of target setting and assessment for learning evident in every class. The main weakness in the plan is that success criteria are often too general to be measurable, thus limiting their usefulness. Governors effectively support the work of the school and are well led by their chair.

The school is forging strong links with its feeder infant school through joint staff meetings and themed curriculum weeks. It is continuing to strengthen its links with parents through a variety of initiatives such as workshops, a parent and pupil homework club and through its very positive response to parents' views.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Improve marking and presentation of work in mathematics in Years 3 and 4 in order to increase progress and raise standards.
- Ensure that the success criteria in the school improvement plan are more specific and clearly measurable so that the school is clear about the extent of improvement.

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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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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 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 May 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Bitterne Church of England Voluntary Controlled Junior School, Southampton, SO19 7BX

I am writing to tell you how much I enjoyed my visit to your school. Thank you for being so friendly and helping me with the inspection. I really enjoyed talking to the school council and was pleased to learn how much you enjoy school and the opportunities it offers.

Your parents think that Bitterne is a good school with some outstanding features and I agree. One of the things I really liked was your confidence and enthusiasm for learning.

Here is a list of some other things I also liked.

- You make good progress because your teachers make lessons interesting and exciting and give you clear targets for your learning.
- You thoroughly enjoy school, work hard and are keen to learn.
- You are extremely well cared for and in turn are caring, kind and thoughtful to each other.
- You enjoy all the responsibilities you are given, and the many after school clubs and activities.

Every school has something it could do better, so this is what I have asked your school to do to help you learn even more.

- Ensure staff help younger pupils to present their work in mathematics more accurately and mark it more carefully so the pupils can improve even more.
- Ensure that the priorities in the school improvement plan are specific enough to show how good the improvement has been - the school council could do the same with theirs!

Keep up the good work in your writing!

Best wishes for the future

Janet Sinclair

Lead Inspector