

Bishop Loveday Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123182
Local Authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	314526
Inspection dates	10–11 March 2008
Reporting inspector	Charalambos Loizou

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	401
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr H Blencowe
Headteacher	Mr M Lester (Acting Headteacher)
Date of previous school inspection	1 March 2004
School address	White Post Road Bodicote Banbury OX15 4BN
Telephone number	01295 263157
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Bishop Loveday is a large school serving an area of mainly private housing. The school admits four-year-olds into its Reception year and they are all full-time. The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage and others come from a variety of backgrounds. A very small number of pupils are learning English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities (LDD) is well below average; most have moderate learning difficulties and need additional support with basic reading, writing and mathematics. There are well established links with other schools and organisations, including links with the church and parish community. There has been a high turnover of staff and leadership in recent years. The acting headteacher was appointed in January to manage the school until the permanent headteacher joins in April.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory education. The high turnover of staff and leadership since 2004 has affected the school's development. Nevertheless, a dedicated and committed team of teachers and support staff have arrested the recent decline in standards by the end of Year 6. Standards are recovering well and pupils are on course to reach targets that are more challenging. Consequently, achievement is satisfactory and standards are above average.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The acting headteacher's strong leadership has focused on the most important priorities. This has helped governors and staff to accurately assess the school's effectiveness. Improved assessment systems have helped to pinpoint areas of underachievement, though there is still not enough in place to ensure that all pupils reach their expected targets. The staff are now better equipped to sustain improvements to standards and to the teaching so there is satisfactory capacity to improve. The vast majority of parents have paid tribute to the dedication of the staff, one summarising the views of many when commenting that this is a '...wonderful school, open and friendly and totally supportive.'

The pace of learning in the Reception year is satisfactory with good opportunities for children to learn basic reading skills and letter sounds. The children move steadily towards and exceed the learning goals expected of five-year-olds. However, there are inconsistencies in the challenges provided in activities which children choose for themselves.

National tests results last year show that pupils in Year 6 made satisfactory progress in English, but too few reached higher levels in mathematics. Assessments also show that Year 2 pupils consistently reach high standards in reading but fewer reach higher levels in writing and mathematics. These inconsistencies reflect past weaknesses in assessment and monitoring of pupils' performance. Although assessment has improved, teachers are not using assessments consistently enough to plan tasks in lessons that are pitched at a sufficiently demanding level for all pupils. This slows the pace of learning for some, particularly those of higher ability, so that pupils do not always produce as much as they should.

The teaching is satisfactory overall. All of the lessons seen by inspectors were satisfactory or better. There is enough good teaching to accelerate the progress of pupils who were previously falling behind. There are increasing opportunities for pupils to undertake interesting topics, such as the recent 'Forensic Science' project involving the whole school. Pupils applied skills from different subjects to solve the 'Mystery of the Missing Trophies'. They particularly enjoyed portraying the headteacher and staff as 'prime suspects' prompting them to investigate the evidence with greater urgency!

The skilled management of support for pupils who struggle with aspects of reading and writing enables them to improve satisfactorily. In all classes, there is a positive climate for learning and relationships are very good. As one pupil said, 'This school is really good because the staff are really kind and care for you.'

Pupils enjoy school, behave well and fully understand how to adopt safe and healthy lifestyles. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good as they have many opportunities to reflect and share ideas during well thought out assemblies and class discussions. Pupils care for others in the local and wider community through charitable fund-raising and when working with pupils who have disabilities from a local special school.

Many good features identified at the time of the last inspection, particularly those related to the pupils' personal development and well-being, remain strong. Combined with recent improvements to standards, this shows that the school has made satisfactory progress since its last inspection.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

The majority of children are ready for the early stages of the National Curriculum by the time they start Year 1. Children solve number problems, for example, when building with blocks and counting how many are needed to complete their towers. Stimulating reading activities, including handling magnetic letters to sound out initial letter sounds in words, develop their early reading skills well. Children have good opportunities to handle books and to share stories. There is a good balance of welfare and care so children settle into routines. Resources are set out for children to choose activities but some children do not settle to these for long enough, or are not being challenged sufficiently to optimise their learning. These shortcomings reflect inconsistencies in the way adults monitor children's choices and preferences. Children cooperate well with others. The staff take good account of parents' views.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve achievement in mathematics by ensuring that teachers help more pupils to reach the higher levels.
- Build on the good progress pupils make in reading to raise standards in writing by the end of Year 2.
- Ensure that the leadership team and staff check pupils' progress and performance more often so that they can help all pupils reach their expected targets.
- Improve the way teachers use assessment in lessons to plan tasks that offer the right level of challenge to all pupils, particularly those of higher ability.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils start school in the Reception year with skills and abilities that are above those expected of four-year-olds. They make satisfactory progress in most areas of learning, and good progress in their personal development and in reading.

Standards are above average by the end of Years 2 and 6 in English, mathematics and science and achievement is satisfactory. Pupils reach high standards in reading. Although assessments show that Year 2 pupils reach above average standards in writing and mathematics, too few reach the higher levels. Some pupils lack the confidence to write at length accurately and independently. In Years 3 to 6, English standards are consistently above average. Last year's national tests in Year 6 showed that the proportion of pupils reaching higher levels in English and science was much higher than in mathematics. This reflects weaknesses in assessment and target setting in mathematics. In some lessons, more able pupils are not being challenged sufficiently during problem solving tasks. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress overall and good progress in reading.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils behave well and enjoy school, as reflected in good punctuality and attendance. They represent the views of others well as school councillors and show initiative by undertaking their own surveys. These have included those related to healthy eating and choosing the winner of the 'design a label' competition for the cover of the school's compilation disc of music. They understand fully why it is important to adopt healthy and active lifestyles. Pupils are knowledgeable and aware of how to care for the environment. Pupils feel safe and fully understand how to use the Internet safely. They play an active part in their local community through charitable fund-raising and local visits. Well-planned assemblies help pupils to reflect on important moral and spiritual themes. They are thoughtful and considerate, and benefit from opportunities to work with those who help in the community, such as local fire officers. These are good role models when helping pupils to improve their reading. Pupils have a good understanding of other cultures and customs through drama, poetry and music, and through well-established international links with schools in Germany and Spain. Pupils develop a satisfactory understanding of information and communication technology (ICT) and other core skills that prepare them for the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Lessons have clear objectives that are made known to the pupils right from the start. There is a positive learning environment in all lessons. Teaching assistants are used well to help those who need additional support with reading, writing or mathematics. Role-play and 'talk partners' successfully encourage the pupils to share ideas. Nonetheless, there are relative weaknesses that lead to inconsistencies in the pace of learning. This is because teachers are not always taking full account of the progress pupils have made previously. This means that tasks, particularly in mathematics, are not as challenging as they should be, particularly for higher ability pupils. Teachers mark pupils' work diligently and are increasingly providing targets for improvement. However, assessments of pupils' performance are not regular enough to check that all pupils are on course to reach their targets.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school's good programme of personal, social and health education is having a positive effect on pupils' attitudes to school and personal development. Consequently, pupils adopt personal qualities that help them to grow and learn in a caring and harmonious community. The curriculum has good enrichment that includes a range of extra activities like visits and visitors, as well as sport, music, dance, drama and fine arts. The staff are increasingly planning special topics that create links between subjects, like the World War II project that helped pupils to apply their writing and study skills. Learning was made practical and engaging when pupils constructed model castles when studying medieval history. More creative planning by teachers through special projects stimulates pupils' interests in learning but do not always include specific curriculum targets that will help to measure their impact on pupils' progress in basic skills.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Many parents have expressed their complete satisfaction with what they rightly believe to be strong pastoral support and care. Procedures to safeguard pupils are well organised and effective. Pupils have good opportunities in lessons to assess their own learning and to reflect on what they have achieved. Assessment systems have improved recently to help track the progress of individuals and groups, but are not being used consistently to set challenging targets for all pupils. Teachers are improving their own knowledge of assessment and the stages of learning that pupils are working towards, although not enough is done to ensure that targets for more capable pupils are challenging enough.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The acting headteacher has restored confidence in the staff through well focused plans for improvement based on realistic and robust analyses of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Staff and governors share common aims towards reversing the recent decline in standards by the end of Year 6. Their actions have led to improvements to teaching and assessment and, through careful analyses of pupils' performance, the school is well on the way to eradicating underachievement. Despite these improvements there is still more to be done to refine and sharpen assessment further. Systematic monitoring enables the staff and governors to have an accurate understanding of which priorities to tackle most. This more robust level of monitoring and evaluation has guided the leadership team and subject coordinators in setting targets for pupils to aim towards. However, along with governors, they lack systems for making regular checks that ensure all pupils reach their expected targets. The school's strategic plans are realistic and achievable, and include the views of pupils and parents. The senior management team demonstrate the capacity to continue the current trend of improving standards.

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?	3
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	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

Personal development and well-being

How good is 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	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	2
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	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

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?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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**

26 March 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Bishop Loveday Church of England Primary School, Banbury, OX15 4BN

The inspectors were very pleased to visit your school. You all made us feel welcome and we really enjoyed talking to you and visiting your lessons during the two days.

Your school provides you with a satisfactory education. You all work hard with your teachers and I agree with the many parents who say that your school is improving. I was very impressed with the way you help each other and I wish I could have been there to see your 'Forensic Science' project, especially when you were preparing police reports and using your science skills to look for clues about the suspects you were investigating. There are some good things about your school and some areas that need to improve further.

- You are well behaved, polite and considerate.
- Your teachers help you to reach good standards in reading and standards are improving in other areas too.
- You enjoy school because there are many things to do during and after school, including sport, music and the arts.
- Your parents are very pleased with you and your teachers and the school works closely with them.

I have asked your teachers to

- help you reach even higher standards in mathematics
- help younger pupils do better in writing
- keep checking how well you are all doing to make sure you all reach your targets
- plan more lessons like some of those the inspectors saw that have tasks which challenge all of you throughout the lesson.

You can all help by continuing to work hard and trying to do that little bit more, especially in mathematics.

Well done and I wish you all the very best.

Yours sincerely

Charalambos Loizou

Lead Inspector