

St Bartholomew's Church of England First School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 123750 |
| Local Authority | Somerset |
| Inspection number | 314705 |
| Inspection date | 28 November 2007 |
| Reporting inspector | Martin Kerly |

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

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| Type of school | First |
| School category | Voluntary controlled |
| Age range of pupils | 4-9 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School | 174 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Angela Blow |
| Headteacher | Michael Collins |
| Date of previous school inspection | 1 March 2003 |
| School address | Kithill Crewkerne TA18 8AS |
| Telephone number | 01460 72829 |
| Fax number | 01460 72829 |

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|--------------------------|------------------|
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following. • Pupils' achievement, with a particular focus on their attainment on entry and the progress made by those currently in the Foundation Stage and Years 2 and 4. • The proportion of good teaching and learning across all three key stages. • Systems for monitoring the performance of the school and how effectively information gained is used to help raise standards. Evidence was gathered from observations around the school, discussions with pupils, staff and governors, questionnaires received from parents and analyses of the school's working documents. Other aspects of the school 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 little smaller than average. Pupils are taught in seven, mainly single year group classes in the mornings. In the afternoons they are taught in six classes, with most having pupils from two year groups. The school serves a mixed residential area and almost all pupils are White British. Very few pupils are learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or physical disabilities is smaller than that found nationally. The attainment of children on entry to the Foundation Stage is broadly similar to that expected for their age.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This satisfactory school has some good features. It also has some areas in need of improvement. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and standards by the end of Year 4 are close to national expectations. The good personal development and well-being of pupils are strengths of the school. The pupils enjoy coming to school. Attendance is above average and the school vigorously follows up all unexplained absences. Pupils feel safe and well cared for. Parents like the school. One reflected the views of many others by commenting, 'My son loves going to school' and another wrote, 'I always feel welcome and someone is ready to listen if I have any concerns.' Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher provides a good lead and communicates well with parents and the community. At present, there is no formal leadership team. The governors, together with the headteacher, are reviewing this situation and considering options to create additional posts, recognising the need to strengthen leadership roles. The current systems to check and report on the school's performance are not systematic, so some aspects are missed and not followed up quickly enough. The impact of the contributions by subject leaders is inconsistent and there are some uncertainties about expectations of this role. However, the headteacher monitors the work of the school frequently, has an accurate view of the school's overall strengths and weaknesses and well structured plans to raise standards. His actions have enabled the school to make steady progress in addressing previous weaknesses and it is satisfactorily placed to improve further. The stable staff team is very experienced and well qualified and the school recently gained Investor in People status. Governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities and support the school well but do not always hold the school to account for its actions and performance. The school is aware that procedures for recording and tracking pupils' progress are not yet in place. It does not routinely set targets for pupils for the end of each year in order to help raise expectations and standards, and does not systematically review progress during the year other than in the 'once a month writing books' that are used well. Children in the Foundation Stage make satisfactory progress. This progress accelerates during Years 1 and 2 with many pupils making good progress so that by the end of Year 2 standards are frequently above the national average, especially in writing. Pupils respond well to the relatively small single age classes in the mornings in Years 1 and 2, the good proportion of effective teaching and the deployment of skilled learning assistants. Pupils currently in Year 2 are on track to maintain above average standards in writing. This good progress is not fully maintained in Years 3 and 4 where teaching is less consistent. A minority of these older pupils make less progress than expected, given their starting points when at the end of Year 2. By the end of Year 4, pupils have acquired a reasonable level of skills needed for the next stage of their education and adult life. The pupils are proud of their various achievements, such as the work of the 'eco action group', and the recent award for recycling. Many contribute to this and other projects, and the school councillors are good ambassadors for the school. Pupils have a clear understanding of the importance of a healthy diet and physical exercise. One commented, when talking about the use of games apparatus at lunchtimes, 'It helps to keep you fit. We share it well and we all play together.' This attitude reflects their good behaviour in lessons and around the school. One pupil, when talking about the designated outdoor quiet area sensitively reflected, 'If you feel hurt inside you go there and someone helps you sort it out.' The school rigorously implements all the statutory procedures designed to safeguard pupils. There are good features in teaching and learning but most pupils make satisfactory rather than good progress because the quality of teaching is inconsistent. In some lessons, teachers do not match the work closely enough to the different needs of pupils, who sometimes cross two

different years. This slows the learning, particularly by more able pupils who often start with work that is not fully challenging. Teachers make good use of the well qualified learning support assistants, particularly to work with those pupils with learning difficulties and/or physical disabilities. These pupils' needs are identified early, and the effective additional support they receive leads to them achieving well and gaining high self-esteem, for example when included in special awards in assembly. Parents appreciate the sense of partnership and good care and support their children receive. One commented, 'He wouldn't be at the stage he is now if it wasn't for all the help and support from all who work with him.' Pupils respond well to the range of stimulating experiences teachers plan during lessons, such as when role playing imaginary conversations in pairs during a literacy session. They also enjoy the many additional activities, visitors and visits, such as the 'Welly Walks' in the Foundation Stage, participating in the local dance festival or spending the night at Kilve Court. These contribute effectively to their cultural and social development and enrich the curriculum well. The curriculum is adapted effectively to meet the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and/or physical disabilities but there are fewer additional opportunities for the more able. Pupils have satisfactory access to computers, and teachers make good use of the interactive whiteboards during many lessons. Teachers ensure pupils in parallel classes have the same opportunities. The school is developing a wide range of ways to assess pupils' progress but academic guidance is not as strong as the pastoral care and support provided. Teachers do not always give pupils enough feedback when marking their work to help them improve and they do not make sufficient use of assessment information when planning work or reflecting on their pupils' progress. They are more systematically identifying short-term targets for pupils to work towards or practise in literacy and numeracy and pupils find these helpful.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Provision in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory and improving. By the end of the year, most children, particularly the girls, are reaching standards expected for their age. Good systems for introducing children to school support their personal, social and emotional development well, and children are secure and comfortable in a range of contexts. This is appreciated by parents, one of whom commented, 'I am very happy with the way he has settled into school.' The school has eliminated some previous inaccuracies in recording assessments on entry to school that made it difficult to be clear about the rate of children's progress. The two teachers work closely together to plan an appropriate curriculum and are making increased use of the good outdoor facilities to extend the range of experiences and ensure a better balance between teacher directed activities and those initiated by the children themselves.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure all teachers consistently plan work that is carefully matched to the different abilities of their pupils.
- Improve the ways of collecting, presenting and using assessment information to track the progress of pupils and set challenging targets for the end of the year.
- Within the context of establishing a clearly defined leadership team, ensure there is a systematic programme for monitoring the performance of the school and for using the information gained to bring about further improvements. A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged to be satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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| 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

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| 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

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|--|---|
| How well do learners achieve? | 3 |
| The standards ¹ reached by learners | 3 |
| 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 | 2 |

Personal development and well-being

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|---|---|
| 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 | 2 |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices | 2 |
| 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

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|--|---|
| 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

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| 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 | 4 |
| 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**

- 5 December 2007 Dear Children Inspection of St Bartholomew's Church of England First School, Crewkerne, Somerset TA18 8AS Thank you for welcoming me to your school recently. I enjoyed talking to some of you, visiting your classrooms and seeing some of your work. I was pleased to learn that you like your school and I could see how carefully you help to look after it. Overall, your school is a satisfactory school with several things that are good. Here are some of the highlights.
- You behave well in class and around the school and are thoughtful to one another.
- You concentrate in lessons and work hard. Some of you make good progress, especially when in Years 1 and 2 and those of you who need extra help from time to time.
- The teachers plan many interesting things for you to do in lessons and during special visits and events.
- All members of the staff take good care of you and help if you become worried or have a problem.
- Your headteacher keeps a careful check on the school and has good ideas about ways to improve it.
- Your parents are pleased that you go to this school and feel welcome when they visit it. I have asked the headteacher, staff and governors to work together on three things to improve the school. They are:
 - Help teachers to make sure the work set is not too hard or too easy.
 - Use information from assessing your work to check how much progress you are all making and what sort of targets you should be working towards by the end of the year.
 - Having decided about the leaders' main jobs around the school, make sure that they are able to carry out careful checks, share what they find out and use the information to make things better. I feel sure you will all want to help in making St Bartholomew's an even better place to be. Yours sincerely Martin Kerly Lead inspector

Annex B

5 December 2007

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I feel sure you will all want to help in making St Bartholomew's an even better place to be.

Yours sincerely

Martin Kerly
Lead inspector