

Betley CofE VC Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124235
Local Authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	314853
Inspection date	20 February 2008
Reporting inspector	Clive Lewis

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	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	106
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Barry Wilson
Headteacher	Susan Williams
Date of previous school inspection	12 January 2004
School address	Church Lane Betley Crewe CW3 9AX
Telephone number	01270 820286
Fax number	01270 820286

Age group	3-11
Inspection date	20 February 2008
Inspection number	314853

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a smaller-than-average school in which pupils are taught in mixed-age classes. The great majority come from White British backgrounds and free school meal entitlement is low. The headteacher joined the school in September 2007 as acting head and was appointed substantive head a week before the inspection. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average, but there is wide variation in the numbers in each year group. A significant number of pupils join the school in Years 3 to 6.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Betley Church of England Primary is a satisfactory school, with some good aspects to its work. The school knows that it could improve further because it has an accurate view of its current strengths and weaknesses. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The very recently appointed headteacher, whilst she was still acting head, introduced a number of important, carefully targeted initiatives. These included strengthening the systems for the assessment and tracking of pupils' progress and improving pupils' awareness of their own progress. Achievement is satisfactory. Levels of attainment on entry vary from year to year because of the small numbers of children in each, but are typically average. Children make satisfactory progress in the Nursery/Reception class. Steady progress is maintained through Years 1 to 6 so that, by the end of Year 6, standards in English, mathematics and science are broadly average. While most pupils reach average levels in national tests, too few attain the higher levels. The school's partnerships with others promote pupils' progress and well-being satisfactorily. The great majority of parents are very supportive of the school, making comments such as, 'I believe the staff are doing a great job and I am more than pleased with the school'.

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Pupils learn how to be safe and healthy and take responsibility for themselves and others. They very much enjoy coming to school, as evidenced by the above average levels of attendance. Behaviour is satisfactory and pupils make a good contribution to the local community. All aspects of provision are satisfactory and new initiatives are beginning to strengthen some key elements. The curriculum is currently undergoing some changes, designed to ensure that more effective use is made of available time and to improve provision for the more able pupils. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers' planning and use of teaching assistants ensure pupils with learning needs are supported appropriately. However, planning does not always cater as well for the more able pupils. Staff care for the pupils well and there is a strong ethos of inclusion. New systems for assessing and tracking individual pupils' progress have only very recently been introduced. They are not yet being used to their full advantage to allow rapid intervention when a pupil is either falling behind or, with a few extra focused sessions, could achieve higher levels. Under the leadership of the new headteacher, effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection and the school is steadily moving forward.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children make satisfactory progress so that standards are in line with national averages by the time they enter Year 1. Teaching is satisfactory. Record keeping is good and detailed records are kept on each child's achievement on entry and on their progress in each area of learning. There is a sound balance of staff-led and child-initiated activities and staff create a good learning environment for the children. For example, children are motivated and interested in role play in the 'vet's surgery'. The secure outdoor area is used effectively to enhance children's independent learning skills.

However, opportunities are missed to further develop their sense of responsibility through daily routines, for example, by handing out milk at snack time. Better use could also be made of visual stimuli to interest and motivate children during teaching activities.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the use of data obtained from the new assessment and tracking systems to allow more rapid and effective intervention where pupils may need extra support or an extra degree of challenge.
- Ensure that teaching consistently challenges the more able pupils so that more reach the higher levels in national tests by the end of Year 6.

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

School baseline and tracking data confirm that pupils enter the school with broadly average levels of attainment, and they make satisfactory progress overall as they move through the school. In the latest 2007 national assessments, standards in Year 2 were broadly in line with national averages but too few pupils achieved the higher levels, particularly in writing. As a result of improved teaching and a whole-school focus on improving writing, more pupils in the current Year 2 are beginning to work at the higher levels. Standards by the end of Year 6 are affected by variations in the number of pupils joining the school during Years 3 to 6 and by the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Overall, pupils reach average standards in English, mathematics and science. In 2007, too few attained the higher levels in national tests. Improved teaching and better assessment is bringing about some improvement for the current Year 6. The school recognises that there is still a need to provide more consistent challenge for the more able pupils in all year groups. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The school's Christian affiliation ensures that pupils learn to respect each other's feelings and ideas. Their cultural awareness is enriched effectively through first-hand experience of visitors, celebration of festivals, and music. They have a good understanding of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle. They feel safe around the school because they know adults will help them if there are problems. Behaviour is usually good in lessons but the behaviour of a few children, when not closely supervised at playtimes, can be unruly. Pupils take up the good opportunities to contribute to the life of the school through making suggestions via the school council and undertaking various responsibilities. They develop sound skills that contribute to their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Classroom routines are made clear and regularly reinforced. This ensures learning takes place in a well-structured environment and that all pupils can contribute to lessons. Teachers and teaching assistants work well together to ensure that pupils who need extra help are given it. In most cases, classroom organisation is good and pupils are managed well. As a result, most

behave well in lessons and listen carefully to teachers. Skilled teaching successfully extends pupils' language and thinking skills. However, on occasions, the pace of lessons is not always brisk enough and time is wasted as a result. Furthermore, although there have been recent improvements, teachers' expectations of pupils, particularly of the more able, are not high enough. Marking is up to date and thorough but does not focus sufficiently on explaining what pupils can do to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is broad and balanced and national strategies and guidelines are used appropriately. There is an appropriate focus on the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, and adaptations are being put in place to improve standards in these areas. There is a wide range of curriculum enrichment activities. Strong links to the church, including weekly visits to the church by the whole school, support pupils' spiritual and moral development well. Pupils take part enthusiastically in the good range of after-school clubs and activities. However, the curriculum, organised into two-year rolling programmes to cater for the mixed-age classes, is not always well adapted to the needs of the more able pupils, particularly in English, mathematics and science. The school is, rightly, currently reviewing timetabling to ensure more effective use of time across the school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Adults show a genuine concern for pupils' safety and child protection procedures are thorough. All members of staff now have a better understanding of pupils' individual academic needs and progress following the systems for assessment and tracking introduced by the new headteacher. These data are readily accessible to all staff, who are now much more aware of how much progress their pupils are making on a termly basis. The use of this information to set specific targets in English and mathematics is still at a very early stage of development but is already having a positive impact. Group targets for English and mathematics are helping pupils to develop an understanding of their own learning and what they need to do to improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

On taking up post, the headteacher, with the effective support of the local authority, began immediately improving the accuracy and quality of the school's self evaluation. She rapidly introduced a series of initiatives designed to improve the progress of pupils across the school. However, most changes have been made so recently that it is, as yet, too early to confirm their success. The system of termly checks on pupils' progress is playing an important role in helping the school to move forward. So far the school has only one term's data to analyse, but it is already providing the school with secure, accurate data on individual pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Although subject leaders are beginning to understand how to use assessment information to check on the school's performance, there is still too much reliance on the headteacher to provide this analysis. Governors are now better informed about pupils' achievements and are beginning to develop their role in holding the school to account. The new headteacher has undeniably had a positive impact on the school in a very short time. Recent

improvements, though still in the early stages, demonstrate that it has satisfactory capacity to improve further.

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
---	----------------

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?	3
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	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	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	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	3
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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

21 February 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Betley C of E VC Primary School, Betley, Crewe, CW3 9AX

I would like to thank you for your help during the recent inspection of your school. My colleague and I very much enjoyed our visit.

Betley is a satisfactory school. Your headteacher and staff are leading the school satisfactorily. They care for you well and give you good support to enable you to learn and enjoy your lessons. They make sure that you understand how to look after yourselves and keep safe, and you do this well. You told us that you like school and there are lots of things to do and enjoy. Your behaviour is frequently good in the class but we feel it could be better when you are playing outside. You work hard and try to succeed in all that you do.

I have asked your school to do a few things to make it even better.

- Make better use of the information about how well you are all doing in English, maths and science to make sure that you are all making the progress that you should.
- Make sure that you are all given work that challenges you to do as well as you possibly can, particularly if you are quick to learn.

Thank you again for making us feel so welcome in your school.

Yours sincerely

Clive Lewis Lead inspector

21 February 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Betley C of E VC Primary School, Betley, Crewe, CW3 9AX

I would like to thank you for your help during the recent inspection of your school. My colleague and I very much enjoyed our visit.

Betley is a satisfactory school. Your headteacher and staff are leading the school satisfactorily. They care for you well and give you good support to enable you to learn and enjoy your lessons. They make sure that you understand how to look after yourselves and keep safe, and you do this well. You told us that you like school and there are lots of things to do and enjoy. Your behaviour is frequently good in the class but we feel it could be better when you are playing outside. You work hard and try to succeed in all that you do.

I have asked your school to do a few things to make it even better.

- Make better use of the information about how well you are all doing in English, maths and science to make sure that you are all making the progress that you should.
- Make sure that you are all given work that challenges you to do as well as you possibly can, particularly if you are quick to learn.

Thank you again for making us feel so welcome in your school.

Yours sincerely

Clive Lewis
Lead inspector