

St Bartholomew's CofE (C) School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124261
Local Authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	314864
Inspection date	30 April 2008
Reporting inspector	Paul Edwards

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	29
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Julia Cook
Headteacher	S E Evans
Date of previous school inspection	1 March 2004
School address	Buxton Road Longnor Buxton SK17 0NZ
Telephone number	01298 83233
Fax number	01298 83233

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

All pupils who attend this very small primary school are from White British ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below average. Children attend the Nursery in the morning when they are taught alongside those in the Reception class.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

St Bartholomew's provides a good education for its pupils. Without exception, parents responding to the questionnaire are keen to acknowledge the good teaching, care and range of activities provided for their children. The views of one parent were typical when commenting, 'I cannot praise enough the work that the staff do. The early years are so critical for a child's start in education and St Bartholomew's is a perfect start.'

Pupils achieve well throughout the school, making good progress, so that by the end of Year 4, they attain standards that are above expectations. Pupils' spelling and handwriting skills are particularly good. Good systems for tracking the pupils' progress have rightly identified that a small number of more able pupils occasionally do not achieve as well as they could in mathematics and writing. Children make a good start in the Foundation Stage. Careful planning ensures children in the Reception class are provided with work that is well matched to their ability, both when they work with children in the Nursery class in the morning and older pupils in the afternoon. Although formal assessments are used effectively to identify how well pupils are progressing, teachers do not make sufficient use of day-to-day assessments to identify the next steps in learning, especially for those who are more able.

Learning is good because teachers have established a climate where pupils thoroughly enjoy the activities and have good relationships with adults. Teachers expect a great deal from the pupils and this contributes to the pupils' good personal development. Behaviour is outstanding, as is the pupils' enjoyment of school. Their good attendance is testament to this. Pupils say they feel safe in school and free from bullying. Although there are effective examples of marking and setting of pupils' targets, the process is not consistent. The curriculum is lively and interesting and the particularly effective links with the Peak Park and Wildlife Trust have helped to create a very stimulating outdoor environment. There are many opportunities for the pupils to take part in physical activities, both in lessons and during break times. They thoroughly enjoy the 'swingo' with older pupils, taking responsibility to ensure all pupils have a go. The Healthy Schools and Activemark awards recognise the pupils' efforts to follow a healthy lifestyle. Under the good leadership of the headteacher and effective support of the governing body, the school continues to improve. However, it is not complacent and is keen to embrace new initiatives as it seeks to make the curriculum more exciting for the pupils. Very good links with neighbouring schools enable it to provide a greater range of activities. For example, shared physical education lessons provide pupils with the opportunity to take part in sessions with pupils from another school under the leadership of a skilled practitioner. Its self-evaluation is incisive and accurate. There is a clear picture of what it needs to do to become more effective and it is well placed to improve further. All staff take on responsibilities and they support one another very well. The pupils' enthusiasm for school is mirrored by the enthusiasm of the staff. This results in a very happy learning environment. There are excellent links with the on site play group, the parents and the community.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children in the Nursery and Reception classes are given a good start to their education. Careful planning and a sympathetic approach to meeting the needs of individuals ensure they are provided with a good range of activities that are mostly well matched to their level of ability. On entry to Year 1, standards are above average. Occasionally, more able children could be

moved on more quickly. Good planning, coupled with thorough assessment procedures, provides staff and parents with a clear picture of how well the children are doing. Resources are well utilised so that children choose activities that stimulate their learning and enthusiasm. However, staff know when to intervene to provide help. There is a good emphasis on the development of basic skills. For example, there are regular sessions that ensure the children's awareness of letter sounds and blends are secure. This is one of the reasons why pupils' spelling and reading skills progress well throughout the school. The personal, social and emotional development of the children is good and they rapidly gain in confidence. The leadership of the Foundation Stage is good. The 'complication' of morning only Nursery children and Reception children who work with Year 1 and 2 pupils in the afternoon is managed well.

What the school should do to improve further

- Accelerate the progress of the more able pupils, particularly in mathematics and writing.
- Improve the teachers' use of day-to-day assessments and the quality of marking so that the next steps in learning are clearly identified.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children enter the Nursery class with skills that are broadly average. However, with such small year groups, there is a wide variation from year to year. The good progress seen in the Foundation Stage is built upon effectively, so that pupils attain good basic skills in both literacy and numeracy throughout the school. Whilst the school correctly identifies that, occasionally, some more able pupils are not doing as well as they should, strategies to address this issue are not secure. Pupils' science skills are above average, the result of a well-structured programme that makes very good use of the excellent wildlife area and skills of a specialist teacher. The small number of pupils who find reading and writing difficult are provided with good support and encouragement, enabling them to make the same rate of progress as their classmates.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' behaviour and their enjoyment of school are significant strengths of the school. Pupils' moral and social development is very good, pupils having a clear understanding of right and wrong. They have an inherent sense of fairness, for example, when overseeing playground games. Pupils of all ages show a good knowledge of why they should eat healthily and take plenty of exercise. Most enjoy the healthy snacks that are available throughout the day. Pupils' understanding of other cultures and the diverse society in which they live is satisfactory and the school is working hard to ensure this improves. Pupils contribute well to the community, raising funds for charities, participating in church services and, in particular, the development of the outdoor learning environment. Pupils' very positive attitudes and their ability to work well with others, combined with good basic skills, demonstrate that they are well prepared for the next stage in their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

In all classes, pupils are keen to learn because of the strong relationships that exist with staff. All pupils are very keen to learn, particularly when activities have a practical element. They make consistently good progress academically and socially. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and they use this effectively to extend pupils' thinking, particularly when they ask open-ended questions. Interactive whiteboards are used well to support both teaching and learning and to add interest to lessons. The planning of lessons is usually thorough. However, teachers do not consistently make good use of day-to-day assessments of what pupils already know and can do to ensure the next steps in learning are sufficiently challenging for the more able pupils. Whilst marking of work is undertaken regularly, there are missed opportunities to identify what the pupils should do next to improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Pupils reach standards that are above expectations in English and mathematics by the end of Year 4 because of the clear emphasis placed on these areas. Skills are extended in these areas through well-planned links to other subjects. For example, pupils wrote very good letters purporting to be from Anne Boleyn, asking her husband to reconsider the decision to behead her! Pupils' skills in information and communication technology have improved since the last inspection because of better provision. The curriculum makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development and especially their excellent understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle. An increasingly broad range of enrichment and extra-curricular activities, which enhances pupils' engagement and enjoyment, is being provided, partly through the school's links with other schools. The employment of specialist teachers for French, music and physical education enhances pupils' learning in these areas. Visits, visitors and the opportunity to participate in a residential journey add significantly to the pupils' personal development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils' well-being is supported well through rigorous child protection and health and safety procedures. Staff work hard to ensure the environment is caring and secure and this contributes significantly to pupils' considerable enthusiasm for school. Adults know the pupils very well, supporting those who find work more difficult. The school's assessment procedures have improved significantly since the previous inspection and enable staff to keep a careful track of pupils' progress. This results in early intervention for those who are at risk of falling behind. There are good examples of the use of individual targets, ensuring pupils know their goals. However, the process is inconsistent and not rigorously implemented throughout the school. Induction arrangements for children starting the school and for transfer to the middle school are good, ensuring pupils settle well.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school's monitoring and evaluation of its work is good. It is aware that, in such a small school, it needs to 'expand its horizons.' To this end, it has made good use of local authority expertise and that of external consultants to provide advice on aspects of its work. All teachers have undergone training to improve their leadership skills and this is helping to maintain standards. However, the school acknowledges the need to develop further the effectiveness of middle managers, particularly to enhance learning in the foundation subjects. Good tracking procedures are in place and used well to identify how well pupils are doing and where progress slows. The school is making very good use of links with other schools and organisations to enhance its provision. It has been successful in attracting grants that have enabled it to work closely with the Peak Park and Wild Life Trust to develop an enviable outside learning environment. The governors are supportive and work closely with the school to improve the provision. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of St Bartholomew's and readily identify its strengths.

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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 effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	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 disabilities make progress	2

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	1
The attendance of learners	2
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 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?	2

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?	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

1 May 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Bartholomew's C of E Primary School, Longnor, SK17 0NZ

Thank you for talking to me when I visited your school recently. Those of you that I talked to enjoyed telling me about the many things you enjoy. I can see why you enjoy coming because it is a good school.

These are some of the good things that I found:

- You make good progress in your work from when you start, all the way through to when you leave in Year 4.
- You enjoy the physical activities and eat healthily.
- You behave exceptionally well and really enjoy school.
- The adults look after you well.
- Your teachers give you many interesting things to do.
- You look after one another well and care about others who are not as fortunate as yourselves.
- The headteacher, staff and governors work hard to make the school even better.

These are some of the things that I have asked the school to do to help it improve:

- Help those of you who find work in mathematics and writing a little easier to do better.
- Improve how teachers mark your work and make better use of the information to help you reach your targets.

You can help by continuing to work hard and do your best.

Yours sincerely

Paul Edwards Lead inspector



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