

Bishop Lonsdale CofE VC Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124296
Local Authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	314878
Inspection dates	20–21 February 2008
Reporting inspector	Rajinder Harrison

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	224
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Helen Cunningham
Headteacher	Sue Holland
Date of previous school inspection	7 July 2003
School address	Shaws Lane Eccleshall Stafford ST21 6AU
Telephone number	01785 850388
Fax number	01785 851275

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average-sized school. Almost all pupils are of White British origin but the school has a few pupils who are learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is lower than average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school with some good features. Pupils' personal development is good and they enjoy school. They feel safe and well looked after and trust the adults who work with them. They form good relationships, are kind to others and willingly take on many responsibilities around the school. Their understanding of the importance of staying fit and healthy is outstanding and many enjoy the numerous clubs and activities the school offers. Parents are generally positive about the school.

Pupils' overall achievement is satisfactory, in response to satisfactory teaching. Children enter the Nursery with knowledge and skills that are above the levels expected at this age. Through good teaching, they attain above-average standards by the end of the Foundation Stage. Progress continues to be good through Years 1 and 2 and pupils attain well-above-average standards. The rate of progress slows down to satisfactory in Years 3 to 6. Where teaching is good, teachers challenge pupils well through good discussions and learning is good. For example, expectations continue to be high in English, where achievement is good, and standards are well above average in Year 6. In mathematics and science, however, teachers make inadequate use of assessment information to match work to pupils' needs and do not provide them with enough opportunities to carry out investigations independently. Pupils, particularly the more able, are not challenged enough. Hence, progress is not as good as in English and standards in these two subjects are broadly average.

Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive the help they need to achieve satisfactorily. Those learning English as a new language receive good individual support and achieve well. The curriculum is good, with many enrichment activities that support pupils' good personal development. Pupils are generally looked after well but their progress is not checked well enough, particularly in Years 3 to 6, to make sure they are given the right support and guidance to achieve their targets.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The school has an accurate understanding of its strengths and weaknesses, but is over-generous in its self-assessment because it does not place enough importance on pupils' progress. Improvement has been satisfactory since the last inspection but procedures to check the school's work are not yet rigorous enough to secure good improvement. In particular, senior managers have not kept a tight enough check on the quality of teaching and pupils' progress in each class and in every subject. The school's 2007 test results showed an improvement on those of 2006, but not uniformly in all subjects; mathematics and science are still lagging behind. Appropriate plans are in place to raise standards, and the school has the capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Good teaching, a well-constructed curriculum, effective use of the spacious accommodation and good resources help children achieve well. Staff demonstrate good levels of care, and this results in children feeling secure and happy. Children settle and adjust to school life very quickly, enjoy learning and have fun. They experience a good balance of adult-guided activities and those chosen by themselves, and this helps them gain confidence and independence to explore and extend their skills. Children work and play together safely within a well-ordered environment. The role-play and outdoor areas are particularly effective in encouraging them to talk, and

frequent visits, for example, to the local shops, help children experience the wider world. There is effective teamwork between teachers and support staff. Staff check that children try all the activities that are planned for them but records of how well they achieve are not sufficiently detailed. Also, more- able children are not given enough opportunities to work with those in the older classes to ensure they are fully challenged.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in mathematics and science in Key Stage 2, ensuring that pupils have enough opportunities for investigative work.
- Raise the quality of teaching and learning, ensuring that lesson activities and targets consistently challenge all ability groups to do well.
- Check teaching and pupils' progress more closely in Years 3 to 6 to ensure that timely support and guidance can be provided where they are most needed.

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

From above expected levels at the start of the Foundation Stage, standards are above average when pupils leave in Year 6. This represents satisfactory progress. In the Foundation Stage, children achieve well in all the areas of learning. Progress continues to be good in Years 1 and 2. Standards in Year 2 are well above average, with pupils' literacy skills being a particular strength. Progress is good in English in Key Stage 2, because expectations are high and it is taught well. Pupils do not yet make good progress in mathematics and science because teachers do not challenge them enough, or check closely that they achieve all that they should in every class. In Year 6, overall standards are above average but this is mainly because English is such a strength. Additional support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities helps them achieve satisfactorily. Pupils learning English as a new language progress well, particularly when they receive bilingual support.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils have a good knowledge of their own and other cultures and show respect for those of different faiths and traditions. Pupils say they enjoy school and their good attendance reflects this. They behave well and are very friendly and polite. They know what is expected of them and respond well, but some say they could do harder work. They have an excellent understanding of how to keep fit and healthy. Many attend the school's numerous sporting activities. Lunchtimes are good social occasions and most pupils choose healthy options. They know how to stay safe and who to go to if they feel worried or upset. Older pupils help younger ones, although this is not always easy across the two sites. Pupils work well with others and are good at taking on responsibilities. School council representatives and playground buddies influence school improvement by, for example, deciding what play facilities pupils might like and how to raise funds. Through visits to local residential homes and involvement in community events, they understand well their role within the wider world.

Pupils' good social skills and above-average basic skills ensure they are well prepared for the next stage of their education and later life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Where teaching is good, lessons are lively; teachers ask pupils probing questions and involve them in discussions so they can share ideas. Teachers' presentations are stimulating and interactive whiteboards used well to present information clearly. Expectations are high, work matches pupils' needs and learning is effective. Pupils enjoy learning and happily work in small groups and independently. Teaching assistants help pupils of all abilities to participate but occasionally, in whole-class presentations, they are not used to maximum effect. Other lessons, while generally satisfactory, are less demanding and do not require pupils to work hard. The more able pupils complete tasks quickly and have to ask for more work. Occasionally, teachers talk for too long and provide too few opportunities for pupils to discover for themselves through, for example, investigations in mathematics and science. Pupils of all abilities sometimes do the same work and some pupils, particularly the more able, are not challenged enough. This is because teachers do not use assessment information to guide their planning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is broad and balanced, and incorporates many visits and visitors who bring an added interest to subjects such as history, religious education and French. Pupils have very good opportunities to develop their literacy skills through other subjects and hence English standards are high. Pupils have regular access to computers and standards here have improved significantly since the last inspection. Good links with the secondary school provide pupils identified as gifted and talented with many opportunities to extend their learning, but other more-able pupils are not always challenged sufficiently. Pupils and parents appreciate the many after-school clubs, both academic and sporting, that the school offers. A good programme for personal, social and health education, including drugs awareness and citizenship, supports pupils' personal development well.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care arrangements are generally good. Procedures to ensure pupils' safety, welfare and protection are all secure. Good individual programmes of work help pupils who need specific support to achieve as well as their classmates. Children new to the school are made welcome and pupils are prepared well for secondary school. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive satisfactory individual support and external agencies are involved where appropriate. Those identified as gifted and talented receive individual guidance to nurture their attributes.

The systems to check pupils' achievement in English are good but this good practice does not extend to mathematics and science. Targets for the end of Year 6 in these subjects are challenging but pupils' progress is not checked often enough in Years 3 to 6 to identify early when pupils fall behind so they can receive the help they need to catch up quickly. In lessons, teachers make insufficient use of information on pupils' progress to ensure that all ability

groups are challenged fully. Teachers mark work regularly but the guidance is not detailed enough to show pupils what they need to do to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher understands what the school needs to do to improve further. The school improvement plan outlines the right action to secure higher standards and her leadership in English has led to standards being well above average. However, the rate of improvement in mathematics and science has been too slow. Senior managers are taking appropriate steps to improve pupils' progress in these subjects but it is too early to see any impact. Managers regularly review the school's work and pupils' progress but they are not rigorous enough, particularly in checking that the quality of teaching is always good and that all pupils have the work they need to achieve well in every year through Key Stage 2.

Governors visit the school regularly and receive regular reports from the headteacher about school developments. Good financial management ensures that priorities such as improving the premises and providing staff training are resourced adequately. Governors ask questions about the school's performance but recognise that they do not do enough to check all aspects of its work, particularly to ensure that all pupils achieve the best that they can.

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
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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	2
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	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	2

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?	2
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	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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

21 February 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Bishop Lonsdale C of E VC Primary School, Eccleshall, Staffordshire, ST21 6AU

We visited your school recently to look at your work and talk to your teachers. It was lovely meeting you. Thank you for making us welcome and for being so friendly and polite. We enjoyed talking to you about the many clubs you can join and all your interesting trips. We were particularly impressed with how much you know about healthy eating. I am sorry I did not see the fruit monitors as I promised, but be assured I did have my 'five a day'.

Your school is satisfactory, but has some good features. These are the main things we found:

- You make satisfactory overall progress but do really well in English. The school's results improved last year so things are getting better.
- Teaching is satisfactory; when lessons are good you learn well, but this does not always happen because you are not always challenged enough.
- The activities teachers plan and all the visitors, trips and clubs are good.
- Your behaviour is good, you are kind to others and you know how to stay safe.
- You make good friends and know who to go to if you are worried or unhappy.
- The headteacher and all the staff take good care of you and help you.

These are things we have asked the headteacher and school leaders to do to improve the school:

- Challenge you to do better in mathematics and science in Key Stage 2, especially those of you who sometimes find the work easy.
- Make sure teachers always give all of you the work you need to achieve higher standards and meet your targets.
- Make sure that the quality of teaching and your progress are checked really closely in Years 3 to 6 so that help can always be given where it is most needed.

There are things you could do to help too. For example, you could make sure you always do your best and ask for harder work if you need it. I hope that you will all do well in the future.

Best wishes

Rajinder Harrison (Lead inspector)

Annex B

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Rajinder Harrison
(Lead inspector)