

Broad Town Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	126306
Local Authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	315485
Inspection date	25 June 2008
Reporting inspector	David Curtis

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	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	50
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Margaret Green
Headteacher	Bridget Long
Date of previous school inspection	24 November 2003
School address	Broad Town Swindon SN4 7RE
Telephone number	01793 731395
Fax number	01793 731395

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a very small primary school, with three mixed age classes. Since its last inspection, there have been significant and frequent changes of staff, including headteachers. The current headteacher has been in post for 18 months. Most pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above the national average. These pupils have a range of needs, including moderate learning difficulties and behavioural, social and emotional difficulties. Proportionately for a school of this size, the number of pupils who join or leave the school at other than the normal times is high. On the day of the inspection, the 11 pupils in Year 6 visited the secondary school to which they transfer in September.

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. It is rapidly improving and now has a number of good features. When the headteacher took up her post, she found a school receiving considerable support from the local authority. Pupils' attitudes to school and behaviour were a cause of significant concern. Standards were exceptionally low and achievement across the school, including the Foundation Stage was inadequate. Through her good leadership and management, together with determined support from staff and governors, she has transformed the school. The first and most important task was to address the poor behaviour and attitudes to school. Through the effective use of the SEAL (social and emotional aspects of learning) programme and the involvement of pupils through the school council, there has been a transformation. Pupils now enjoy school and their behaviour is good.

Once the positive climate for learning was restored, effective leadership and management tackled the task of raising achievement and standards, with impressive results in just over a year. Provision in the Foundation Stage is good and children make good progress. Standards at the end of Year 2 are now average in reading, writing and mathematics. Achievement in Years 3 to 6 is now satisfactory in English, mathematics and science. Standards are broadly average. In English, spelling and handwriting are weaker aspects of pupils' work. In science, more able pupils are not challenged consistently to achieve as well as they might. A significant factor in such improvement was the elimination of inadequate teaching. Teaching is now consistently satisfactory, with an increasing proportion that is good.

Teachers' subject knowledge is good and teachers make effective use of interactive whiteboards to teach new skills and capture pupils' interest. Teaching assistants play an important role, especially through their support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Teachers' planning does not meet consistently the needs of more able pupils in science. Whilst pupils have targets, teachers do not make it sufficiently clear to pupils when these are reached. The curriculum is much improved and is now satisfactory, with strengths. The provision of extra-curricular clubs and curriculum enrichment is good and valued by pupils and parents. Opportunities for pupils to use and apply their literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology (ICT) skills in other subjects are still being developed.

Good care, guidance and support underpin pupils' positive attitudes to school. Parents are fulsome in their praise for the way the school cares for their children. As one wrote, 'The individual care is excellent.' Pupils' enjoyment of school is evident in their good attendance. The school council makes an outstanding contribution to the day to day life of the school. It brims with ideas and events, such as 'ICT Week' and the provision of a school pet. Pupils' understanding of healthy living is extremely good. Relationships are excellent between pupils and summed up so well by a parent, 'Just seeing all the children join in a playground game when they arrive at school is a joy to see.'

The headteacher, staff and governors are not resting on their laurels. They recognise much still needs to be done to raise standards and achievement. Their commitment to this is total. The headteacher and governors recognise, and inspection evidence confirms, that subject leaders need more time to monitor the quality of teaching in their subjects in order to raise their awareness of strengths and areas for improvement in their subjects.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children make good progress from their starting points, which for most are below those expected for their age. By the time they leave Reception, all are working securely within the goals they are expected to achieve in all areas of learning. Good teaching, which meets children's needs effectively, within a mixed age class with Year 1 and Year 2 pupils, ensures their good progress. Teaching of letters and sounds is particularly good and contributes significantly to children's good progress in reading and writing. The teacher and teaching assistant work together as an effective team to deliver the good curriculum. Resources are good, with outdoor provision much improved. The secure area provides a stimulating learning environment, including an 'opticians' which was 'opened' by one of the children. Assessment is good and children's progress monitored carefully to identify any potential underachievement. Although children have targets, these are linked to those for Year 1 and 2 rather than to the 'stepping stones' of the Foundation Stage curriculum, and so they are not aware of what they need to learn as children in Reception.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the standards of pupils' spelling and the quality of their handwriting and presentation.
- Ensure that the needs of more able pupils are met fully, especially in science.
- Embed the procedures for setting pupil targets, especially in telling pupils when they have achieved them.

A small proportion of schools whose effectiveness is judged as satisfactory, but 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' speaking and listening skills are good. Pupils are articulate and confident in asking and answering questions and are much more confident writers than a year ago. They produce imaginative stories and descriptions, for example Year 5 pupils' characters for their forthcoming novels. However, spelling standards are still not high enough and insufficient care is taken with handwriting and presentation. In mathematics and science, pupils show greater confidence in work on investigations and problem solving. There is growing evidence of pupils using ICT skills successfully, for example in Year 3 and 4 where they produce multi-media presentations of their own 'myth' stories. Work on display showed good skills in design and technology, including very dramatic masks. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make the same progress as their peers.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They feel safe in school and handle equipment safely and sensibly. Pupils' have an excellent understanding of the need to eat healthily, take exercise and adopt healthy lifestyles. They take great care of the school pet (a hamster). Through drawing up playground rules and organising a 'football rota', the school council has contributed to pupils' much improved behaviour. Pupils take their responsibilities seriously, such as organising the hall for assembly and running the healthy tuck shop at morning break. They enjoy taking part in community events, such as the village fete. Currently, the

school choir are practising hard for a music festival. Pupils' preparation for their future lives is satisfactory and rapidly improving.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Lessons begin with teachers sharing WALT (What are we learning today?) with pupils, so they understand the purpose of the lesson. Good use is made of interactive whiteboards to teach new skills, knowledge and understanding. Pupils work particularly well on their own in lessons and this allows teachers and teaching assistants to focus on group teaching where it is needed. Occasionally, lesson introductions are too long and/or teachers do not engage all pupils in question and answer sessions. The final part of lessons is used effectively to consolidate learning. For example in Year 5 the teacher made very good use of 'hot seating' to allow pupils to ask questions of their fictional characters. Pupils' work is marked regularly, but there is still slight inconsistency in teachers not always telling pupils how they can improve their work. In science, teachers' planning and use of targets does not fully meet the needs of more able pupils.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is going through a period of transition, with the school moving towards a topic based approach so that pupils can see more meaningful links between subjects. Whilst there is evidence that pupils now use their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills in other subjects, such use is still being developed across the school. Pupils enjoy many extra-curricular activities and the take up is high. The cookery club is over subscribed because it is so popular. Parents really value such clubs because they contribute so much to their children's enjoyment of school. Curriculum enrichment is good, with pupils enjoying residential visits and working with the police on measuring speed of vehicles through their village using a radar gun. The SEAL programme makes a significant contribution to pupils' good personal development and well-being.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school complies fully with all statutory responsibilities for safeguarding its pupils and child protection. There is good support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, with teaching assistants playing a significant role in this. A recurring message in written comments on the parent questionnaires was how well the school cares for their children. The setting of individual pupil targets in literacy, numeracy and science gives pupils a greater understanding of what they need to do in order to improve their work. Such targets contribute to improving achievement. Currently, there is some inconsistency in telling pupils when they achieve a target and it is not always clear when they were set. As a result, a number of pupils do not move up the target 'ladders' as quickly as they might.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The significant progress made in the last eighteen months shows that the school has the good capacity to improve. The school knows itself well and its identified priorities are focused totally on the further raising of standards. It has made very effective use of in-service training and its partnership with local schools to improve the quality of teaching. The headteacher has involved the pupils in the process of school improvement and seeking their views is a prominent feature of school life. Subject leaders have improved their roles in relation to updating policies and introducing much stronger assessment procedures. As a result, underachievement is identified quickly. The role of subject leaders in monitoring teaching and learning is underdeveloped. The very challenging targets set for standards of the current Year 6 look to have been exceeded if the school's predictions are correct. Governors have improved their role significantly and used governor training to support them. They now have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement.

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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?	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	2

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	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	1
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?	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	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	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

27 June 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Broad Town Primary School, Swindon SN4 7RE

Thank you very much for making me feel so welcome when I visited your school. It was a shame that I did not meet Year 6, but I hope that they had an enjoyable day at their new school. I had an excellent meeting with the school council who were very kind to talk to me during lunchtime. Yours is a satisfactory and rapidly improving school and I know that you and your parents are pleased with how well the school cares for you. You make steady progress in your lessons and the standards you reach are as good as those expected for children of your age. The following is a list of the things which I thought were good.

- Children in Reception make good progress in their learning.
- You behave well and enjoy school. The school council works very hard to help support you by sharing your views with staff.
- In lessons, you work well, particularly when working on tasks by yourselves.
- All of you enjoy the good range of after school clubs you attend.
- By giving you targets in literacy, numeracy and science, staff help you to understand how to improve your work.
- All those who lead and manage your school are determined to make it even better for you.

There are three things, which I have asked staff and governors to do in order to improve your school.

- Help you improve your spelling and the quality of your handwriting and presentation.
- Make sure that in science in particular you are always challenged to work as hard as you can.
- Make sure that you know when you have reached a target.

You can help, especially by working much harder with your spelling and handwriting. Thank you again for an enjoyable day. Make sure the hamster does not escape!

Yours sincerely

David Curtis Lead inspector

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