

St Bartholomew's Church of England Primary School, Wootton Bassett

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	126373
Local Authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	315521
Inspection dates	11–12 June 2008
Reporting inspector	Michael Barron

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	289
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Louise Sheppard
Headteacher	Suzanne Lane
Date of previous school inspection	27 June 2005
School address	The Rosary Wootton Bassett Swindon SN4 8AZ
Telephone number	01793 853288
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average primary school. Pupils attending the school come from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds although nearly all are from White British heritage. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above the national average. The school buildings have been improved since the last inspection. Plans to completely remodel the school are in the advanced stages of development. The school was awarded 'Healthy School Status' for the second time in 2007.

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 provides a sound education for pupils and prepares them satisfactorily for the next stage of their education.

Children make good progress in the Foundation Stage as a result of good teaching. The quality of teaching is satisfactory throughout the rest of the school and ensures that pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, make consistently satisfactory progress. However, there are times when teaching is not closely matched to all pupils' needs and this is what prevents teaching from being good. Standards in Year 6 are broadly average overall. Standards in science are below average and the school is aware of the need to provide pupils with more opportunities to develop skills related to scientific enquiry. The school is also aware that standards in writing in Year 2 are presently lower than in mathematics and reading and that achievement in writing needs to be improved in Years 1 and 2.

Pupils enjoy school and this is reflected in their above average rates of attendance. They have a good community spirit and describe the school as a friendly place. Their personal development and well-being are good and this is shown in their good behaviour and positive approach to work. Pupils display responsible attitudes and respect for others. They make sensible and healthy choices and fully understand the need to keep safe. Pupils say there are very few instances of bullying and that they feel well looked after. Parents value the way in which their children are cared for and this was reflected in comments such as 'my son's teacher has been very sensitive to his needs' in parents' questionnaire returns.

The satisfactory curriculum is enriched by a range of additional activities that develop pupils' skills and their enjoyment of learning. The level of care, guidance and support for pupils is good overall and the quality of pastoral guidance and support for pupils is particularly strong. However, although the school has developed effective systems to monitor and assess how well individual pupils achieve, these are not used effectively in all year groups to identify areas of provision in need of development or to help pupils improve their work.

Leadership and management are satisfactory and the school displays a satisfactory capacity to improve. The headteacher, ably assisted by the school's good governing body, has led the school through a recent period of considerable changes to teaching staff. She has ensured the school has analysed its performance satisfactorily in order to develop a realistic understanding of what it needs to do to improve. This is seen in the relevance of school improvement planning and the way the school has tackled the issues raised by the last inspection.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

'Our girls have had a wonderful year in Reception, with a good balance between work and play.' This comment from a parent says a lot about why children make good progress in the Foundation Stage. Children quickly and happily settle into new routines and teachers and teaching assistants work well together to ensure children develop positive attitudes to school.

Children enter the school at the age of four with many of the skills expected for their age, although their language and social skills are often less well developed. Good leadership and management ensure the needs of all children, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, are met well. The Foundation Stage curriculum provides a range of stimulating and practical activities which cover all areas of learning. There are good opportunities for children

to regularly develop their early numeracy and literacy skills. Teaching is consistently good with lessons well planned and securely focused on children's needs. Lessons effectively blend opportunities for independent learning with adult-directed tasks. However, children have only limited opportunities to develop the skills associated with outdoor play because the school does not have a secure Foundation Stage outdoor area. Even so, children achieve well and usually reach or exceed the expected standards in nearly all areas of learning, with the exception of the development of their communication and language skills, by the end of their Foundation Stage year.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve achievement in science by providing pupils with regular structured opportunities to develop the skills associated with scientific enquiry.
- Develop and implement strategies to improve pupils' achievement in writing in Year 1 and Year 2.
- Ensure that teaching is always closely matched to all pupils' needs.
- Develop the use of assessment information in all year groups to identify areas for improvement in provision and to help individual pupils improve their work.

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

Although children make good progress in the Foundation Stage, they make satisfactory progress overall throughout the rest of the school. However, as the pupils presently in Year 2 entered Year 1 with limited language and communication skills, this satisfactory progress has not been sufficient to improve their attainment in writing to the level expected nationally by the end of Year 2. As a result, standards in writing are below the national average in Year 2.

Standards in Year 6 are similar to the national average overall and this represents satisfactory achievement for this group of pupils. The school has recently introduced strategies which have successfully raised achievement in mathematics and this has improved overall standards in Year 6. However, standards in science lag behind those in English and mathematics. This is because pupils lack many of the skills needed to plan and carry out scientific investigations successfully. The school is aware of the need to develop pupils' investigative skills throughout the school if standards in science are to improve.

Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make similar progress to other pupils because of the satisfactory level of support they receive.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are friendly and polite and behave well at all times. They display a great deal of care for each other's welfare, especially when they play together. As one older pupil put it, 'We try to look after the smaller children at lunchtimes.' Pupils say they feel safe in school. They know there is always someone to turn to if they have a problem and that adults deal quickly with instances of unkind behaviour.

Attitudes to learning are good and pupils make satisfactory progress in developing their literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills in preparation for the next stage of their education. They talk enthusiastically about their favourite subjects, especially their problem solving work in mathematics, although they are less keen on literacy and science. Pupils have a good understanding of the importance of keeping fit and making healthy choices, especially about what they eat. They enjoy taking part in the wide range of after-school activities and talk enthusiastically about how the school council gives them a say in school affairs.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall and pupils have a good understanding of right and wrong. They are aware of the importance of their work in raising money for people less well off than themselves. The school's links with a school in Zambia and regular visits to places of interest help bring learning alive and provide pupils with experiences of life in the wider world. However, pupils have not yet developed a realistic understanding of the multi-cultural nature of modern British society.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Lessons are well structured and teachers use a variety of approaches to try to make learning interesting. Teaching assistants and teachers work effectively together to ensure that pupils needing help with their learning are provided with the support they need to make similar progress to all other pupils. However, there are occasions when the pace of lessons slackens and pupils lose a little interest in what is going on for a short time. In addition, although teachers try to ensure that pupils are provided with appropriate activities, there are instances when the work set for them does not match their learning needs closely enough. Pupils say that sometimes the work is either too hard or too easy. When this happens, pupils are not sufficiently challenged and this slows their progress. This is the main factor that prevents teaching from being better than satisfactory.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school's curriculum is broad and balanced and focuses strongly on developing skills in English and mathematics. Nevertheless, the school recognises that pupils' writing skills need more focused attention in Years 1 and 2. While the learning opportunities in science develop pupils' scientific knowledge effectively, less attention is paid to the practical and investigative aspects of science. Provision for personal, social and health education is good and ensures that pupils become aware of the importance of fitness, well-being and leading a healthy lifestyle. Pupils talk enthusiastically about the many extra-curricular activities. Interesting visits and visitors increase enjoyment of learning and broaden pupils' experiences. Themed days and weeks, for example 'French Day', help develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of the wider world.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

There is a pleasant, friendly atmosphere about the school and this contributes well to pupils' enjoyment and sense of well-being. Good induction and transfer arrangements help pupils settle quickly into new routines and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive

the support they need in order to make the same progress as other pupils. Pupils' health and well-being are securely safeguarded and child protection procedures are extremely robust and followed closely by all staff.

Pupils comment that teachers' marking is always helpful. However, although the school has developed procedures to assess and monitor pupils' progress and set targets for improvement, especially in mathematics and English, they have still to be used effectively by all teachers. Whilst pupils in some classes have a good idea of their own personal targets and what they have to do to reach them, individual learning targets for pupils are not used consistently throughout the school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher has a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. She has worked well to ensure that the school has developed a clear idea of what it needs to do to improve. However, although the role of curriculum coordinators has developed since the last inspection, there is still a need for all subject leaders to monitor provision in their subjects equally rigorously. The governing body fulfils its statutory duties well and offers the school a good level of challenge and support. Individual governors are closely involved in school life and have a good idea of the school's strengths and the areas needing improvement.

The school works closely with parents and regularly seeks their views. Resources are satisfactory and good links with external agencies, for example educational psychologists, help to support pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities effectively.

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	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	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
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?	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	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

Annex B

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Bartholomew's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, Wootton Bassett SN4 8AZ

Thank you for making us feel very welcome during our visit to your school. We really enjoyed our two days and especially enjoyed talking with some of you about what you like the most about your school and seeing you work in lessons.

Here are some of the things we found out about your school:

- Yours is a satisfactory school which gives you a sound start to your education and makes sure you make satisfactory progress in learning.
- Your personal development is good and you enjoy being at school.
- Your behaviour is good and you are considerate to others.
- You know a lot about how to keep fit and healthy and how to stay safe.
- The adults look after you well.
- Your headteacher and the school governors are working hard to make sure that your school continues to improve in the future. We believe your headteacher and teachers can do some things to make your school better. We have asked them to:
 - Make sure you all have more opportunities to do practical work in science.
 - Help you to do better in writing in Years 1 and 2.
 - Make sure that teaching is always at the right level for each of you.
 - Use information on how well you are doing to identify what the school could do better and to tell you how you can improve your work.

You can help your school to improve by continuing to work hard.

We wish you the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Michael Barron

Lead inspector