

# Bishop Stamer CofE Aided Primary School

## Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Unique Reference Number</b> | 132200             |
| <b>Local Authority</b>         | Stoke-On-Trent     |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 315963             |
| <b>Inspection dates</b>        | 28–29 January 2008 |
| <b>Reporting inspector</b>     | David Driscoll     |

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

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|---|--|
| <b>Type of school</b>                     | Primary  |
| <b>School category</b>                    | Voluntary aided                                |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                | 3–11   |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                   | Mixed  |
| <b>Number on roll</b>                     |  |
| School                                    | 284  |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>              | The governing body                             |
| <b>Chair</b>                              | Barbara Sheldon                                |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                        | Lynn Willis                                    |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b> | 22 November 2004                               |
| <b>School address</b>                     | Boothens Old Road<br>Stoke-on-Trent<br>ST4 4EE |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                   | 01782 234800                                   |
| <b>Fax number</b>                         | 01782 236430                                   |

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This large primary school serves an inner city area. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is high. The proportion of pupils from a minority ethnic background and who speak English as an additional language is above average, although few are at a very early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is very high, although only a small number have a statement of special educational need. One in three pupils is on the school's register of pupils with special educational needs. Most of these pupils have been identified as requiring 'School Action' to meet their needs more fully.

The school is part of a special project called the Improving School Programme, known as ISP. This aims to increase the proportion of pupils reaching the nationally expected level for their age by targeting support at middle ability pupils who are just below this level.

A new headteacher started in January 2008 and the school has been without a deputy headteacher since October 2007. A new senior management team was formed in January 2008 by drawing from the team of middle managers.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement.

Despite good progress in the Foundation Stage and satisfactory progress in Years 1 and 2, achievement is inadequate because pupils do not make enough progress between Years 3 and 6, where standards fall from below average to exceptionally low by the time pupils leave the school. Achievement is inadequate in mathematics and science, and falling in English. The school has targeted its resources and support at pupils of middle ability, and progress for many of these pupils has improved. In contrast, the progress of the higher and lower ability pupils has worsened and is now inadequate, because teaching, the curriculum and academic support are all inadequate in Years 3 to 6. Lessons are often pitched at the level of the middle ability, so the work is too easy for the most able and too hard for the least able. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities at the stage of 'School Action' used to be supported by teaching assistants, but this support is now given to the target group of middle ability children. Pupils with a statement of special educational need still receive good support and so make good progress. In science, the issue lies with the curriculum. Extra time has been devoted to teaching English and mathematics, and too little time is now devoted to science. Consequently pupils do not make enough progress or meet the National Curriculum requirements in science.

Pupils' personal development, including their behaviour, is satisfactory. Good improvements have been made to rates of attendance, which are now close to the national average. Personal development is good in the Foundation Stage. The school's strong emphasis on teaching pupils how to lead a healthy lifestyle is clearly successful as pupils have a good understanding of the choices they should make in this area. However, pupils are not as independent as they should be by the time they leave school and they are not well enough equipped with the basic skills that they will need for the next stage of their education.

Leadership and management are inadequate. In 2004, the school was providing a very good education and pupils made good progress. Since then, standards in mathematics and science in Year 6 have fallen and achievement is much worse. Targets for its performance are not particularly challenging, and almost all were not met in 2007. The lack of effective systems for evaluating the school's work has led to senior managers, including governors, failing to gain a clear picture of its overall performance. They judge its overall effectiveness to be good. Senior managers have not identified the school's main weaknesses or targeted resources at those pupils most in need of help, despite warnings from middle managers who were aware of the extent of underperformance. Checks on teaching are not rigorous enough. Senior managers and governors have not ensured that health and safety requirements are met, so that the care provided is inadequate. The capacity of leaders to improve the school is inadequate.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Good teaching, together with a good, interesting curriculum, ensure that children do well in the Foundation Stage. Children join with skills that are far below those expected for their age, but by the start of Year 1, their standards have been improved to a below average level. Progress

is particularly good in children's communication skills. Many arrive with limited language, but quickly learn to talk because they get constant encouragement from staff. The improvement in communication helps them to progress in other areas, such as their personal development, where they make good progress in learning how to work and play happily together. The reasons for such progress lie with teachers' good understanding of the children's needs. Teachers plan well tailored and lively activities that stimulate the children's curiosity. Activities are limited by the lack of free access to the outdoor area, so progress in physical development is not as rapid and assessments of this aspect are not recorded frequently enough. The Foundation Stage manager provides very clear direction for staff and has a good understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Improve rates of progress in Years 3 to 6 by ensuring that work is matched fully to the needs of pupils.
- Target support in Years 3 to 6 to those who are most in need, especially the higher and lower ability pupils identified as underachieving.
- Devote enough time to science in Years 3 to 6 to ensure that the curriculum covers all that it should and progress is improved.
- Carry out more rigorous monitoring of the school's work to identify the main priorities for improvement and ensure that all health and safety requirements are met.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 4**

Children join the Foundation Stage with skills and knowledge that are well below those expected levels in all areas of learning. However, they settle quickly and, because of good provision, most make good progress. Pupils make satisfactory progress in Years 1 and 2, and by the end of Year 2 standards are below average. However, from Year 3 onwards, pupils underachieve, so they leave with standards that are exceptionally low. There are no great differences in the progress of different ethnic groups, or between pupils who do, or do not, speak English as their first language. The biggest differences depend upon whether a pupil is a member of the middle ability target group or not. The progress of pupils in this target group has improved, and many now make good progress. However, most pupils in this group were already making satisfactory progress before Improving School Programme started, while pupils receiving additional support through School Action were not doing as well as they could. The data provided by the school during the inspection indicated significant levels of underachievement in mathematics and English amongst the most and least able pupils, who do not form part of the target group. No records are kept centrally of pupils' progress in science, but it is clear from the work in books that all pupils are underachieving, regardless of whether they form part of the target group or not.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 3**

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils are polite and respectful when talking to adults. They respond well to the consistent reinforcement of the school's Christian values, and their spiritual development is good. Pupils generally enjoy coming to school, although many in Years 3 to 6 do not find lessons interesting enough so their attention can wane, especially when the work is too easy. Behaviour is satisfactory. It is often good in

lessons, especially in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2. In the playground, however, the poor behaviour of a few sometimes makes life uncomfortable for others. The majority feel safe at school, but feel that incidents of poor behaviour are not always dealt with quickly enough. Listening to the pupils, and seeing what they choose to eat for lunch, makes clear that pupils do not just have a good understanding of how to live healthily, but also put it into practice. Pupils have a sound understanding of what it means to be part of a community, and the school council plays a good role in improving life for their fellow pupils, such as by improving the playground equipment. The main weakness in personal development is the pupils' slow progress in the basic skills of literacy and numeracy, which means they are poorly prepared for the next stage of their education.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 4**

Teaching is good in the Foundation Stage, and satisfactory in Years 1 and 2. It is inadequate in Years 3 to 6. In the Foundation Stage, accurate assessments are used to plan lessons that build on what children already know and can do. Each child is given an activity that ensures they will learn something new. In Years 3 to 6, however, lessons are planned to meet the needs of the middle ability target group, with very little planning for others. This means that pupils in the target group are given work that is challenging enough to make them think and work hard. For the most able, though, the work is often too easy so they become bored and the pace of learning is slow. For the least able, the work can be too difficult for them to do without support, which is not available because teaching assistants are spending their time with pupils in the target group. Information about pupils' special educational needs is rarely used in planning lessons. Throughout the school, teachers make good use of the resources available to them, especially the interactive whiteboards, which pupils also love to use.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 4**

The curriculum has some serious weaknesses. Too little time is spent on science in Years 3 to 6 for pupils to make adequate progress. Some classes have little or no recorded science work since November. The lack of practical work, together with insufficient investigations and data handling in mathematics, reduces pupils' independence and their confidence to try things for themselves. The curriculum has some strengths. In particular, the wide range of well attended sporting activities on offer is appreciated by pupils and helps them to lead a healthy lifestyle. They also enjoy the opportunity to learn Spanish, and use Spanish words in the work in other subjects. Overall though, the curriculum is not planned to provide pupils of differing abilities with sufficiently challenging work.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 4**

Child protection measures and procedures for vetting staff meet requirements, but in other areas there are significant weaknesses. Risk assessments are not monitored or updated frequently enough. First aid provision is inadequate and fire drills are not held as often as they should be. Pupils at the stage of School Action are not receiving sufficient support. The tracking of pupils' progress is not analysed rigorously enough for underachievement to be quickly identified and

tackled by ensuring pupils receive clear enough guidance on what they need to do to improve. The school makes good use of its links with other agencies to support vulnerable pupils, who receive a good standard of care and support. Central to this provision is the role of the home/school liaison worker, whose work with parents has also proved very successful in improving attendance.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 4**

The new headteacher has not been in post long enough to address the poor progress made by the school since the previous inspection, Senior managers and governors have not identified the increasing underachievement and have not ensured that the school has kept up to date with health and safety legislation. Checks on teaching have failed to identify any areas where lessons could be improved. Information about the progress made by pupils have not been analysed in sufficient depth to gain a clear picture of which groups are doing well, and which ones are not making sufficient progress. This means that managers have not been targeting resources to those areas where they will have the best impact. Plans drawn up for school improvement make no mention of some of the biggest weaknesses, such as pupils' performance in science. Middle managers have had a good idea of where problems were arising but the school has been slow to address these. Governors raised concerns about the school's performance, but did not follow them up sufficiently.





## 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? | 4  |
| Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection  | No |
| How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?   | 3  |
| The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage   | 2  |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements   | 4  |

### Achievement and standards

|  |   |
|--|---|
| How well do learners achieve?  | 4 |
| The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners   | 4 |
| How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners | 4 |
| How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress                              | 4 |

### Personal development and well-being

|   |   |
|---|---|
| How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?                                  | 3 |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development                                     | 3 |
| The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles   | 2 |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices   | 3 |
| How well learners enjoy their education   | 3 |
| The attendance of learners  | 3 |
| The behaviour of learners   | 3 |
| 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 | 4 |

### The quality of provision

|  |   |
|--|---|
| How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?          | 4 |
| How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners? | 4 |
| How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?   | 4 |

<sup>1</sup> 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**

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| <b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>                                       | 4   |
| How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education | 4   |
| How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards  | 4   |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation  | 4   |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can                     | 4   |
| How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money  | 4   |
| The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities  | 4   |
| Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?  | Yes |
| Does this school require special measures?   | Yes |
| Does this school require a notice to improve?  | No  |

**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

23 January 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Bishop Stamer CofE Primary School, Stoke-on-Trent, ST4 4EE

Thank you for talking to us and helping us when we visited your school. We enjoyed our visit because you were so polite. Unfortunately, we found that your school is not as good as it should be, and you are not learning as quickly as you could. The youngest ones get off to a good start, and do well. Many of you in the target group in Years 3 to 6 are also making good progress, because the work you are given makes you think hard and you get extra help when you need it. For those not in the target group, the work can be too easy or too hard and extra help is not always available. To help make things better, we have asked your teachers to make sure they give you work that is just hard enough for you to get it right if you work at it. We have also asked them to make sure that those who find the work too difficult are given extra help in lessons. You are not learning enough science, which we know you enjoy, so we have asked the people who run the school to give you more science lessons.

There are some really good things about your school. You are coming to school more often and we were very impressed by how you keep fit and healthy. Most of you told us that you feel safe in school, but that a few did not behave as well as they should. Your teachers are already doing things to make sure everyone behaves as they should. You can help by making sure you are always nice to each other and do not annoy other pupils. The people who run the school have not checked that they are following all the rules that make sure you are safe in school, so we have asked them to do this as soon as they can. They are not checking some other things properly either, so they are not spotting the most important things they need to work on. We have asked them to look more closely at the marks you are given, to spot anybody who is not keeping up so they can give you the help you need to catch up.

With all best wishes for your futures

David Driscoll Lead inspector

23 January 2007

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With all best wishes for your futures

David Driscoll  
Lead inspector