

The Bishop William Ward Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115144
Local Authority	ESSEX LA
Inspection number	318046
Inspection dates	12–13 September 2007
Reporting inspector	Michael Milton

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	99
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Headteacher	Mrs Lesley Walder
Date of previous school inspection	11 July 2005
School address	Coach Road Great Horkesley Colchester Essex CO6 4AT
Telephone number	01206 271336
Fax number	01206 272099

Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Bishop William Ward is half the size of the average primary school. There are five classes, and three include pupils from two consecutive year groups. Most pupils are White British with a small number from minority ethnic groups. Most pupils' are from socially and economically advantaged backgrounds and the proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. The school has the Healthy Schools Intermediate and Eco-schools Bronze Awards. At its last inspection, the school was judged to be underachieving.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Bishop William Ward is a satisfactory school that is improving. It has some good features and some areas to improve upon. In the last year, it has made good progress in overcoming the causes of underachievement. This has been achieved through the increasing effectiveness of the headteacher, together with senior leaders and other teachers. The school's previous designation as underachieving no longer applies. Parents are very supportive of the school, which their children enjoy. One parent wrote: 'The school has made a great deal of progress this last year - always feels lively and exciting as the children come out of school looking stimulated and happy.'

The school has made many improvements in the last year but these have not yet had enough time to have their full impact on pupils' achievement and their personal development. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory and the proportion of good lessons has increased. The good curriculum helps to ensure that pupils make at least satisfactory progress each year in the mixed-age classes. There is good enrichment of the curriculum including special days and weeks, such as those for mathematics and geography. During these, pupils develop their learning in greater depth and share their findings with other classes. The school has identified its gifted and talented pupils but its provision for them is at an early stage of development. There is a good level of care, especially for vulnerable pupils. Effective systems for tracking the progress of individual pupils ensure that any at risk of underachievement are quickly identified and given additional support. In addition, teachers set pupils short-term, challenging targets and some provide pupils with high quality feedback on their progress towards these.

Standards have started to rise. Pupils in Reception make good progress because of good teaching and the effective use of assessment in the curriculum and lesson planning. Standards are broadly average at the ends of Years 2 and 6, and have risen significantly in science and mathematics in Key Stage 2. However, at the end of Year 2, the standards of more able pupils in writing are not high enough. Overall, pupils' achievement is satisfactory at both key stages with an increasing amount of good achievement in particular years and subjects. Progress is accelerating as a result of the improvements being made in teaching, target setting and the tracking of individual pupil's progress. The achievement of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is satisfactory overall although some of these pupils do well.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good and attendance is above average. They feel very secure at school and know how to keep safe in different situations. Pupils are keen to learn and almost always concentrate well on the tasks they are set. The school has started to help pupils to become less dependent on their teachers for learning and to think more for themselves, but it is early days for this initiative.

The work of the governing body is effective. The school provides satisfactory value for money. It has a good capacity for further improvement because its self-evaluation is accurate and the headteacher knows what the school needs to do to improve further. It has made good improvements in the past year and these are having a positive impact on the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement and standards.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Effective local authority support has helped the school to improve the quality of provision significantly. Pupils' attainment on entry to the Reception year broadly matches national expectations for this age group. They settle into their new class quickly and confidently. Staff use the well planned curriculum and the thorough assessment of pupils' progress to ensure that work is well matched to their needs in the Reception year. Pupils receive some high quality feedback on how to improve their learning. Teaching and learning are good. For example, teachers share with pupils what they are to learn and explain it carefully in a numeracy session, the teacher used a macaw puppet very effectively to captivate the pupils. They helped it count its marbles before they were asked to do special jobs which supported their mathematical development. Assessments at the start of the year are used carefully to give each pupil challenging end-of-year targets. In 2006–7, pupils achieved well, and almost all reached these and about half exceeded them. The classroom is a stimulating learning environment and a new outdoor learning area is under construction.

What the school should do to improve further

- Continue to improve the quality of teaching and learning so that pupils make consistently good progress.
- Develop the provision for the most able pupils, including the teaching of writing in Years 1 and 2.
- Develop pupils' skills of independent learning so that they make more decisions about how to do their work.

A small proportion of the schools whose 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

At the end of Year 2, there has been a recent significant improvement in mathematics. At the end of Year 6 there was a significant improvement in science standards during 2007 because of important improvements in the subject's leadership and curriculum. The school set challenging targets for pupils' results at the end of Year 6 in 2007, and a large majority of these were met or exceeded. Overall, pupils' achievement is satisfactory at both key stages and the Year 6 pupils' achievement was good in 2006–7 because of consistently good teaching.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Relationships are good and pupils listen carefully to each other. For example, two Year 2 pupils took the roles of Victorian children and answered questions from the rest of the class. Pupils' cultural development is strengthened by the use of visiting artists and the display of their work in a local gallery. Pupils learn about the richness and diversity of different cultures in Britain in a variety of subjects. They are developing their understanding about the lives of others. For an example, in a Year 6 lesson, pupils made and explained moral judgements about different aspects of life in Victorian Britain. Their behaviour is good and they are keen to learn, taking pride in their work. Pupils feel very secure and know how to stay safe in a variety of situations.

Isolated instances of bullying are quickly resolved. They live healthy lifestyles. Pupils' satisfactory levels of basic skills and their good personal development prepare them soundly for their next stage of education. They make a good contribution to the school, for example, through the buddy system and school council. Their contribution to the wider community is demonstrated by their involvement in the village's Macmillan Coffee Morning.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are always at least satisfactory, with an increasing amount of good teaching that is improving pupils' learning. There are some strengths in teaching: teachers clearly share with pupils what they are to learn and help them realise what they have to do to be successful. Teaching assistants are used effectively to help pupils learn during all parts of lessons. Work is planned carefully to match pupils' differing learning needs. The good marking usually gives pupils helpful advice about how to improve, although some do not always respond to teachers' comments and questions. Occasionally, shared activities at the end of lessons that did not hold the attention of all pupils or give them an opportunity to think about their learning. There were instances when the transition from one activity to the next was slow and pupils were not clear about their tasks when working in groups.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The broad and balanced curriculum is carefully planned around key themes and skills to ensure that it meets the needs of pupils in mixed-age classes. Work is planned at two or three different levels of difficulty so that it is matched to pupils' differing needs. For pupils who are underachieving or who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, there is a good range of intervention and catch-up teaching. There is a good range of visits and visitors including a Year 6 residential visit to an outdoor pursuits centre. For the last three years, an artist has worked in the school and involvement in a Schools' Sports Partnership is providing a wide range of sporting opportunities for pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils receive good levels of care which foster their self-confidence and capacity to learn. All health and safety requirements are met. Procedures for safeguarding pupils meet requirements. Close links with a good range of professionals and external agencies ensure very good support for vulnerable pupils. Academic guidance improved last year. Pupils now have detailed, individual targets for English and mathematics, and these are frequently checked and updated regularly. The tracking of pupils' term-by-term progress is regularly analysed to identify any pupils at risk of underachievement.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The leadership team is new, and its effectiveness is developing. All staff are committed to improving the school. Developments include a good system for tracking pupils' progress each term, which is being used to help raise standards and improve teaching. Parents, pupils and governors are involved in the self-evaluation of the school's work. The school has an accurate view of its strengths and weaknesses. It has responded well to feedback from both pupils and parents by, for example, providing parents with information about their children's short-term targets. Governance is good. The governing body has a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. It functions well as a critical friend, and governors carry out visits to check on the quality of education. The school has a relatively large budget surplus as a result of careful planning to maintain staffing levels at a time when the number of pupils has fallen because of the negative impact of the previous inspection report and particular local circumstances.

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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	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	2
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?	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?	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	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

15 September 2007

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Bishop William Ward Church of England Primary School, Great Horkesley CO6 4AT

I really enjoyed visiting your school last week and meeting you, Mrs Walder, the staff and some of the governors. I am very grateful to your parents for returning the questionnaires. It was interesting to hear that you like school, feel very safe and enjoy the lessons and seeing your friends.

You behave well and are usually keen to do your best work. The school has started to help you become more confident in working on your own and learning for yourself, without the teacher telling you what to do all the time. You make steady progress with your learning in some years and good progress in other years. Mrs Walder and the staff are working hard to make the teaching even better and to help you all to make good progress all of the time. Your teachers mark your work well and make it clear how you can improve although some of you do not act on their comments or answer their questions. It would help you if you did. Your teachers set you targets in the fronts of your books and usually give you good feedback on your progress towards these. The school provides some really interesting things for you to learn, and the teaching often makes things interesting too. The school knows which of you reach high standards but there is more that it can do to make sure that you do your best work. All the adults at school look after you really well.

There are three main things Mrs Walder and the staff need to do to make the school even better.

- Carry on improving your lessons so that you make good progress in all subject and classes
- Make sure that those of you who reach high standards with your work are stretched to really do your best
- Help you develop skills so that you can make more decisions about how to do your work and not have to rely so much on your teachers and teaching assistants.

With best wishes for the rest of the school year.

Mike Milton

Lead Inspector