

St Bartholomew's CofE Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108005
Local Authority	Leeds
Inspection number	324685
Inspection date	8 January 2009
Reporting inspector	Robert Robinson

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	430
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Fr Ian Wright
Headteacher	Pauline Gavin
Date of previous school inspection	28 June 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Strawberry Lane Tong Road Armley Leeds West Yorkshire

Age group	3–11
Inspection date	8 January 2009
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors. The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and the overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). The following issues were inspected: the standards and achievement of pupils; the quality of teaching and learning; and the features of the leadership and management that contribute to the success of the school. The inspectors gathered information from lesson observations, examination of pupils' work, responses to parental questionnaires, interviews with staff, pupils and governors and scrutiny of documents. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessment, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in the report.

Description of the school

This is a large primary school which has increased in size substantially since the last inspection. There is high social and economic hardship within the area it serves. Eligibility for free school meals is well above average. Pupils come from a very broad range of ethnic backgrounds, including from White British, Asian, Eastern European, Romany and Irish Travellers' backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who are learning English as an additional language is high. A much greater than average number of pupils leave and join the school each year. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well above average. The school has gained many awards, including Activemark, Basic Skills and Healthy Schools awards. It has accreditation as an Investor in Diversity and an Investor in Pupils. The school has reached the Financial Management Standard in Schools.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

St Bartholomew's remains an outstanding school and has continued to improve since its last inspection. The strengths in all aspects of its work provide it with exceptionally good capacity to continue to improve. Pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve highly. From a very low starting point they reach broadly average standards and some gain above average standards by the end of Year 6. Not only do all groups of pupils make exceptionally good academic progress, their personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is fostered superbly. The key strength of the school is the outstanding leadership and management of the headteacher who is assisted most capably by the governors, the deputy headteacher and all other staff.

Children get off to a flying start in the EYFS and pupils make good progress in Key Stage 1 from their individual starting points, even though standards are still below average at the end of Year 2. Progress accelerates in Key Stage 2 and is outstanding. Standards by the end of Year 6 have been broadly average in English, mathematics and science. The 2008 tests standards, confirmed by inspection findings, improved substantially. In each subject almost all pupils reached the level expected nationally, Level 4, and a high proportion reached the higher Level 5 in reading and science. Overall, present standards are broadly average though the standard of pupils' handwriting is not good enough. This adversely affects the presentation of their work. All pupils from the wide range of ethnic groups and those learning English as an additional language settle very well and make rapid progress. This reflects the school's outstanding commitment to equality and the way it values and celebrates diversity.

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding as is the curriculum. The consistency of approach to teaching and learning combined with the strengths in the curriculum result in pupils' learning being good or better throughout the school. There is great enjoyment in learning. Relationships between pupils and between staff and pupils are harmonious. The school cares for all its pupils exceptionally well. Members of staff check pupils' progress most carefully in order to plan future learning to meet all pupils' needs precisely. A strong feature of the teaching is the most efficient use of highly skilled and capable teaching assistants to teach specific groups of pupils to push their learning on at a faster pace. Teachers manage pupils very well resulting in pupils' exemplary behaviour and interest in learning. Lessons move at a fast pace. Learning activities often involve practical and investigative work as well as opportunities to work with partners. Teachers question pupils extremely well to check their understanding. Resources, such as interactive whiteboards and computers, help pupils to understand new learning and to consolidate their understanding. Visits and visitors are planned very carefully to extend pupils' experiences as well as to add a purpose to learning. Very effective marking clearly assists pupils to understand how well they have done and what they must do to improve.

Team work is a major strength of the school. All members of staff are actively involved in planning the future direction of the school under the astute direction of a very effective and well organised senior management team. Staff are encouraged to develop their expertise and to increase their responsibilities for the management of the school. Innovative professional development has resulted in remarkable consistency of good and better practice throughout all aspects the school's work. The excellent way senior leaders and middle managers work in partnership to check teachers' work helps teachers to develop their practice and is expanding the management experience of middle leaders.

Governance is now a particular strength of the school and has improved since the last inspection. Governors are representative of the school community and most pupils' religious backgrounds. They fulfil their responsibilities in respect of community cohesion admirably through very effective links with the local community, the local church and mosque. They have an accurate view of the school's strengths and assist the senior management team in leading school improvement. The leadership has close links with external agencies and other schools. This benefits both the pupils at this school and staff development in other schools. It is used to pilot new initiatives, together with the local authority, such as supporting pupils who have been excluded or at risk of being excluded from other schools. This project has been highly successful as the school has a 'no exclusion' policy. These vulnerable pupils quickly settle into the school. They become valued members of the school community and their interest in learning and progress improves immensely. Arrangements for safeguarding meet government requirements.

Parents are very appreciative of the excellent academic and pastoral care provided for their children. 'It is a wonderful school with a very nurturing environment' and 'St Bartholomew's is a shining example to other schools, especially in areas where there is so much diversity and cultural difference' are typical parental comments. The school has ensured that pupils are provided with a very good understanding of major world faiths and arranges visits to local churches, mosques and temples. Additionally, pupils have very good opportunities to extend their international awareness. All this demonstrates the school's outstanding commitment to community cohesion.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children have an outstanding start to schooling because the teaching and learning and the leadership and management are highly effective. As a result children's achievement from a very low starting point on entry to the Nursery to the end of Reception is first rate. Although standards by the end of Reception are lower than those typically seen the children make fast and often stunning progress during the time they are in the EYFS. The very calm working atmosphere is assisted by very strong relationships between staff, children and parents. Individual children's diverse needs are met through close attention to what they already know to assist accurate planning of future learning. Children's learning experiences are exciting with a strong and successful emphasis on developing personal, social and emotional development and communication, language and literacy skills. The large proportion of children who are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language make rapid progress in speaking and understanding English because of excellent support from staff, including bilingual support staff. All children, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, quickly gain in confidence. Their personal, social and emotional development is first class and prepares them very well for future learning. The welfare of all children is of paramount importance. Excellent support is provided for all. Parent praise highly this aspect of the EYFS.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of pupils' handwriting and the presentation of their work.

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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?	1
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?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	1

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
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	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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**

The inspection team really enjoyed the day we spent with you. Your school provides you with an outstanding education. This is because it is run superbly by the headteacher who is helped extremely well by the other staff and governors. Your school knows what it needs to do to maintain its great strengths and to improve even further.

You make fast progress in your learning because the teaching and the curriculum are first rate. Lessons are planned most carefully to interest you and to move your learning on at a fast pace. I was very impressed by your excellent behaviour. At all times you were polite and courteous. You enjoy learning and appreciate all the school provides. You get on exceptionally well with each other and the staff.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage the youngest children have an excellent start to schooling. In Years 1 to 6 you progress extremely well and the standards reached by the time you leave the school are similar to those of most other pupils of this age. I was impressed that in 2008 nearly all pupils in Year 6 reached Level 4 in English, mathematics and science. A high proportion also reached Level 5 in reading and science. However, I did notice that your handwriting and the presentation of your work were not good enough. I have asked the school to help you to improve this aspect of your learning.

Parents are pleased with the education experiences you have at the school and the care provided for you. I trust that you will continue to work with the staff and your headteacher to help them to continue to improve the school. I wish you well for the future.