

Beedon Church of England (Controlled) Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109950
Local Authority	West Berkshire
Inspection number	325063
Inspection date	12 February 2009
Reporting inspector	John Earish

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	51
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	Mrs Susan George
Headteacher	Mrs Mary Sitch
Date of previous school inspection	12 June 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Stanmore Road Beedon Newbury RG20 8SL
Telephone number	01635 248284

Age group	4–11
Inspection date	12 February 2009
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school. The inspectors looked particularly at the quality of teaching, learning and the curriculum and their impact on pupils' progress and achievement. The effectiveness of pupils' personal development and care, and the support and guidance they receive, were also investigated. Parts of some lessons were observed. Parents' questionnaires and a sample of pupils' work were examined and the school's information, including self-evaluation, was scrutinised. 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 assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in the report.

Description of the school

This very small primary school is situated in an attractive rural village near Newbury. Most pupils are of White British heritage, with a very small number from different minority ethnic groups. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, mostly to do with reading and writing, is much higher than that found nationally. Two children have a statement of special educational need. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is broadly average. The school has achieved the Sport England Activemark, Healthy Schools Award, Artsmark and the Financial Management of Systems in Schools Accreditation. Following the retirement of the current headteacher at Easter, a new headteacher will be taking up post at the beginning of the summer term.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school where all groups of children achieve well. On entering the building, the purposeful and caring learning environment, where all children are equally valued, is immediately evident. Parents agree and are overwhelmingly positive in their views of the school. One parent asked her daughter why she was so happy at school. She explained this was because 'The school lets me be who I am.' A strong Christian ethos underpins all that the school does.

There is considerable year-on-year fluctuation in the attainment of year groups. These variations mean that the results of the National Curriculum tests for a single year do not always give a complete picture. The scrutiny of results over a number of years provides a more reliable measure of the school's success. It shows that, given their starting point, all groups of pupils achieve well and make good progress between Reception and Year 6. By the age of 11, standards are well above average overall and have been for a number of years. Attainment by the age of seven has improved year on year and is now above average overall. Teaching assistants provide very good support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, with the result that they make good progress in relation to their individual targets.

Pupils' achievement is good throughout the school because important areas of the school's provision, such as the quality of teaching and the curriculum, are good. Pupils make consistently good progress during lessons because teachers have high expectations of how much pupils can achieve, and they plan work that is well matched to individual needs. These important features underpin the good progress made in the mixed-aged classes. A weakness in otherwise good teaching is that teachers do not always capitalise on opportunities for pupils to work independently at their own level in order to sustain rapid progress.

Another reason behind the school's success is the outstanding level of pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are exceptionally well cared for and, as a result, behave extremely well, treat each other with great respect and very willingly respond to the many opportunities to accept responsibility. They make an excellent contribution to their community and to decision making through the influential school council. This is excellent preparation for their future economic well-being and their understanding of citizenship.

As well as supporting pupils' basic academic needs well, the curriculum is highly successful at supporting their social and personal development through initiatives to encourage healthy living and staying safe. Teachers are increasing the links between subjects to ensure that work remains challenging and enjoyable for the wide range of abilities within the mixed-age classes. Residential visits and numerous clubs and activities, of which this very small school is proud, add much to the children's enjoyment of learning.

Care, guidance and support are good overall, with exceptional strengths in all aspects of pastoral care. Teachers are good at tracking pupils' progress and using the information well to plan tasks and activities. This is another reason for the school's continuing academic success. To complement this, teachers are reviewing the school's systems for recording data so that it can be easily accessed and updated on a day-to-day basis. Older pupils have personal targets which they say are useful and help them improve their work. These are, rightly, being extended to the younger children. Although marking of work usually provides a good guide on how to improve, it is not yet consistent across all subjects and age groups. This means that some pupils do not always have sufficient written guidance on how to improve their work.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides clear direction for the work of the school and has high expectations of what is achievable. Detailed self-evaluation has resulted in good-quality plans to support these aspirations. Many of the teachers are newly appointed. They are receiving good-quality support to increase their confidence and their ability to monitor new initiatives in order to sustain the pupils' rapid progress. Community cohesion is promoted well. The school is good at engaging with the surrounding rural communities through, for example, contributing to the Parish Plan, developing links with local faith groups and providing community lunches. Governance is outstanding. The governing body is fully involved in the running of all aspects of the school. Several parents commented on the excellent way in which governors kept them involved and informed about the large number of staff changes. Governors also act as 'target guides' and meet with the older pupils to help them assess how well they are achieving their learning targets. There is a good capacity for the school to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

When children start school, their skills and abilities are just below those expected of four-year-olds. Children do well because they are extremely well looked after and benefit from good teaching and support. By the end of the Reception Year, the vast majority of pupils reach the goals expected for their age. The curriculum is well planned and there is a good balance between activities chosen by the children and those planned for them by the teacher. The provision for outdoor learning has been successfully improved since the last inspection. Adults are complementing this by devising new ways for children to 'flow freely' between the activities organised inside the room and those outside. This should encourage children to make even more decisions about what they are learning. Leadership is good and teamwork remains a strong feature of this provision. Observations and assessments of the children as they work are detailed and helpful. These are used well to adapt the activities to meet children's individual learning targets and guide their learning. One parent, representing the views of others, wrote: 'My child is thriving in Reception. He settled well and enjoys each day.'

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that teachers capitalise on opportunities during lessons for pupils to work independently and explore their own ideas in order to sustain their rapid progress.
- Ensure that marking provides pupils with clear guidance on how to improve 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?	2
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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
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?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2

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	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	2
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

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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
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

26 February 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Beedon Church of England (Controlled) Primary School, Newbury, RG20 8SL

Thank you very much for making us so welcome when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed talking to you and your views and opinions have given us a lot of helpful information. We thought you might like to know more about what we found out.

Your school is giving you a good education. We also found that some areas of your school are outstanding. This means that it does some things very well indeed.

We were extremely impressed with your friendliness, your excellent behaviour and your extremely sensible and helpful attitudes towards each other. You listen very carefully to what your teachers have to say and learn a lot in lessons. Your teachers and all the adults care for you extremely well and this means that you feel very safe in school and always have someone you can talk to about any problems or concerns you might have.

However, to make your school even better, we are asking your teachers to give you even more opportunities to use your own initiative and to work independently. You said that you found your targets useful and they gave you something to aim for. We have asked the teachers to check to make certain they explain exactly what you have to do to improve your own work when they are marking your books. You must promise to help as well by reading the comments they write and by listening carefully to their advice.

We hope that you have great success in the future.

Yours faithfully

John Earish

Lead Inspector