

Bishop Parker Catholic School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110481
Local Authority	Milton Keynes
Inspection number	325155
Inspection dates	31 March –1 April 2009
Reporting inspector	Nigel Grimshaw

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 aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	222
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	Miss Lisa Sumpter
Headteacher	Mrs Colette Donohue
Date of previous school inspection	6 December 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Barton Road Bletchley MK2 3BT
Telephone number	01908 372129
Fax number	01908 645031

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	31 March –1 April 2009
Inspection number	325155

© Crown copyright 2009

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Bishop Parker is an average-sized primary school. It serves an area of considerable cultural diversity. More than one third of the pupils have a first language other than English and nearly half of these pupils are at an early stage of English language development. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average, and many of these have speech, language and communication difficulties. The school has gained a wide range of awards, including the Basic Skills Quality Mark and Investors in People status.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Bishop Parker Catholic Combined School is a good school. Pupils make good progress and standards have risen for the last two years across the school. Consistently good or better teaching that focuses on making lessons interesting and fun is driving this improvement. Teachers and pupils are well supported by an increasingly effective leadership team and a strong governing body. Pupils say they feel safe and well cared for and this was also the overwhelming view of parents. Pupils enjoy school and consequently attendance is above the national average. Responses from parents were almost unanimously positive. As one parent wrote, 'My daughter enjoys school and her learning is progressing at an incredible speed.'

The school leaders have created a strong sense of teamwork that involves the staff, governors, pupils and parents. Relationships are excellent between the pupils and the staff alike. The senior leaders and governors have a very clear understanding of the strengths of the school and the areas for improvement because their monitoring procedures are robust and provide accurate information. This has ensured that appropriate plans are in place to maintain the good progress being made by the school. The budget is used effectively to deploy resources and the school has achieved the Financial Management Standards in Schools. The school has established good links with the local community.

The quality of teaching has improved because expectations have been raised. Teaching is now consistently good or better with some outstanding practice. Pupils say that teachers always try to make learning fun and therefore they are enthusiastically involved in lessons. The next priority is for all pupils to be consistently more aware of their own next steps for improvement so that their enthusiasm can be channelled to develop them as independent learners. At present, not all teachers are consistently providing guidance to pupils through the marking of work or in giving pupils clear targets on how to improve their work.

The school works hard to enrich the curriculum with many activity clubs, visits and visitors. Good links are being established between subjects to make learning more relevant for the pupils. The curriculum is well designed to meet the needs of all pupils and, in the case of pupils for whom English is not their first language, this is outstanding. Consequently, these pupils master English quickly and then make the same progress as their classmates over time. However, the match of work for the more-able pupils is not always sufficiently challenging and they do not make the progress they should in a few lessons.

Consistently good teaching and an enriched curriculum have led to pupils making good progress from when they start in the Early Years Foundation Stage right through to when they leave at the end of Year 6. Skills are below expectations for their age when pupils enter the school and are now above average when they leave, reflecting good achievement.

Pupils value the safe and caring environment provided by the school. They are well aware of healthy lifestyles and the school promotes this aspect well through providing a good range of physical activities for the pupils and through working hard with pupils and parents to ensure an excellent knowledge of healthy diets. Pupils very clearly enjoy school very much and consequently work together exceptionally well. When this is coupled with rising standards and good progress, the pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

There is effective provision in helping children to make a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Children enter with skills and abilities that are below those expected for their age. They make good progress in both the Nursery and Reception classes to achieve the learning goals expected of five-year-olds. In particular, they are helped to learn and develop communication, language and literacy skills well, which are at a particularly low level on entry. The leaders of the Early Years Foundation Stage have created well-resourced, welcoming and attractive learning areas. The skilled staff team provide well-planned indoor and outdoor activities that stimulate learning and interest the children so they enjoy school and learning. The welfare of children is promoted well and adults use assessment effectively to record children's all-round development. There is a strong and appropriate emphasis on their social and emotional development. As a result, children work together cooperatively, as evidenced by taking turns in activities and helping each other to use building blocks to construct 'houses'. Parents say that they appreciate the fact that the staff work closely with them. One parent wrote, 'My child has made a fantastic start. She has matured in so many ways and learnt so much in a short time.'

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the consistency of academic guidance to pupils through marking and individual target-setting.
- Accelerate the progress of more-able pupils by providing tasks in all lessons that are better matched to their needs and abilities.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils start school in the Early Years Foundation Stage with abilities that are below the levels expected for their age, and well below the level of language skills. In the Nursery and Reception classes children make good progress and standards overall are broadly average when they enter Year 1. Standards by the end of Year 2 had been inconsistent from 2004 to 2007 but improved considerably in 2008. From lesson observations and analysis of work, the school is on track to attain even better results in 2009. Standards in end-of-Year 6 national tests improved in 2007 and then still further in 2008. Ongoing checks on pupils' attainment by the school show that the pupils are on track to make good progress again this year. Pupils make this good progress and achieve well because all the staff have high expectations. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those for whom English is not their first language make good and outstanding progress respectively because they receive effective adult support and the match of work to their needs is good. Those pupils with social and behavioural difficulties are well supported by the school's pastoral care programme and through good behaviour management systems that are consistently applied. The upturn in pupils' performance is the result of consistently good teaching that makes learning interesting and fun.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils respond well to the strong ethos of care within the school. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage settle quickly and develop positive attitudes to school life. Excellent relationships in classrooms result in happy, productive and purposeful learning environments

in which pupils behave well and are keen to learn, although some pupils can be distracted and off-task in the less-engaging lessons. Pupils are proud of their school and thoroughly enjoy all it has to offer. This enjoyment of school permeates all the year groups and underpins the pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are caring and show respect for the feelings of others. They show concern for the welfare of the less fortunate by raising money for charities at home and abroad. Members of the school council are pleased to see their ideas, such as outdoor play equipment and bicycles racks, taken up by the school. Pupils have a clear understanding of how to stay safe and show their strong commitment to healthy living by eating healthily and participating enthusiastically in physical activities such as basketball, football and 'Multiskills'. Pupils' good progress in basic skills, good attendance and responsible attitudes equip them well for the next stage of education as well as for later life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is now consistently good or better because teachers have high expectations of work and behaviour. Planning and resources are used well to provide a structure to the lessons. Teachers explain to pupils what they are going to learn and the steps they will take to achieve the objective. Pace is good in almost all lessons and this keeps the pupils motivated and enthusiastic. Staff usually ensure that pupils' differing needs are met although, in some lessons, more-able pupils are not sufficiently challenged. Support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is strong, and the good work of the teaching assistants plays an important part in this. Support for pupils for whom English is not their first language is outstanding because staff act on advice from specialist support, focus on the needs of each individual pupil and develop good links to support parents. Although there are examples of outstanding practice, the quality of marking is inconsistent and is not always followed up. Consequently, marking does not always provide pupils with enough guidance on their next steps for improvement.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Teachers make creative links between subjects to make learning more relevant for pupils, particularly in their use of information and communication technology to support pupils' work in other subjects. However, opportunities for pupils to extend their writing within other subjects are sometimes missed. Activities in art and music, Italian lessons and links with a school abroad contribute well to pupils' good cultural awareness. Pupils develop a good understanding of how to keep safe and healthy through an effective personal, social and health education programme. The school has a Healthy School award and the Activemark in recognition of its good work in this area. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good. Their needs are assessed at an early stage and effective programmes enable pupils to meet the challenging targets within their individual education plans. An extensive range of well-attended clubs, sporting activities, themed days, visitors and visits add significantly to pupils' academic and personal development and to their enjoyment of school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school is a calm, harmonious community in which individuals feel valued and included. Pupils feel safe because there are robust procedures for ensuring their health and safety and for safeguarding their welfare. Occasional incidents of unkind behaviour are dealt with promptly and effectively. Pupils and their families appreciate the excellent work of the Rainbow programme in helping pupils to come to terms with loss. The school liaises well with outside agencies to meet the needs of all of its vulnerable pupils. There are good systems for keeping track of pupils' progress. Most teachers use this information well to set challenging targets for pupils and to help them understand what they need to do to improve. This is particularly successful for the 'Raising of Level Fours' group. However, in a few classes teachers' marking does not refer to the learning intentions of the lesson or to pupils' targets. As a result, pupils do not always have a clear understanding of how to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school has a strong senior leadership team that has been restructured over the last year and is well supported by the subject leaders for English, mathematics and science. There is a clear focus on raising standards through the identification of clear, manageable priorities and detailed plans to support them. As a result pupils throughout the school have made good and improved progress in all three key stages over the last two years. Assessments are more accurate than previously and consequently the tracking of pupils' progress is more rigorous and informative. This has enabled staff to set appropriate targets for pupils to improve their work, but these are not yet applied consistently in all classes. With the wide range of cultures within the school and the evidence of genuine harmony, community cohesion within the school is good. The school is inclusive with an appropriate involvement within the local community. The school's links with some African schools, and regular charitable collections and visitors to the school, ensure pupils to show good awareness of issues that face other cultures. There are good links with other local providers and support services that impact positively on pupils' progress. Governance is good because governors are challenging and well informed, and care deeply about the school. They have a clear view of the strengths of the school and the priorities for improvement.

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
--	-----------------------

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?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
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	3
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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
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	2

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	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

23 April 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Bishop Parker Catholic School, Bletchley, MK2 3BT

Thank you for making Mr Davis and me so very welcome and talking to us so openly when we came to inspect your school. We really enjoyed the lessons we visited, looking at your work and joining you during lunch and break times.

We could see very clearly that you enjoy coming to school and we can understand why you do. We found many good things, especially the improving progress you make in your work and the excellent way you all get along with everyone else at the school. We were impressed with your behaviour both in lessons and outside. We liked the way you work hard in lessons and we noticed that the teachers always try to make your lessons interesting and fun for you. Everyone we spoke to said that you feel safe and cared for at school and that the adults look after you very well. Your headteacher and everyone else who works for the school are working incredibly hard to make things better still. They have a good plan in place to make this possible.

We have asked the school to do the following things to make your school even better.

- Make sure that you know what you need to do next to improve your work. You can help by looking at the marking in your books and remembering your targets and, of course, working hard to achieve them.
- Make sure that all of you find that the work you do is challenging and really makes you think hard about what you are doing.

We wish you all the very best for the future and trust that you will continue to work hard.

Yours faithfully

Nigel Grimshaw

Lead Inspector