

Bosley St Mary's Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111253
Local authority	Cheshire East
Inspection number	325329
Inspection dates	7 July 2009
Reporting inspector	Sonya Williamson HMI

The inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 under pilot arrangements; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	44
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Penny Hughes
Headteacher	Mrs Janet Welch
Date of previous school inspection	February 2006
School address	Leek Road Bosley Macclesfield SK11 0NX
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Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one additional inspector. The inspectors made seven visits to lessons, watched presentations from visitors and assembly, and had discussions with governors, staff, groups of pupils and the School Improvement Partner. They observed the school's work, and looked at pupils' work books, assessment and tracking data, teachers' planning, school development planning and 14 parental questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the challenge and support provided to individual pupils
- how well the curriculum meets the needs of pupils
- the effectiveness of partnerships
- the effectiveness of self-evaluation and improvement planning.

Information about the school

Bosley St Mary's Church of England is a small rural primary school. A small number are eligible for free school meals. The school serves a predominantly White rural community and all pupils have English as their first language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average, although no pupils have statements of special educational need. The pupils are grouped into two mixed-age classes; one for Reception and Key Stage 1 and one for Key Stage 2. The new headteacher, appointed in September 2008, is the fourth at the school in the last three years. The school has a formal partnership with Winkle Church of England primary school. A breakfast club and a pre-school group that are not managed by the governing body operate on the school site. The school holds the Sports Activemark.

Inspection judgements

Grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory and 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness

3

Capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

The pupils at Bosley St Mary's school are happy and well cared for. Despite being a small school, it provides many exciting opportunities for its pupils. They love participating in dramatic productions, mixing with pupils from other schools for sporting activities and going on a range of educationally based visits. Pupils appreciate being asked what topics they are interested in and so respond well, for example, when a visitor to the school talked to them about guide dogs for the blind. Pupils are encouraged to be independent learners and this promotes their self-esteem so that they look forward with confidence to the move to high school.

Pupils' achievement overall is satisfactory. Although some make good progress, some do not make consistent progress over the years. Several other outcomes are good. Pupils behave well, feel safe, make good contributions to their community and adopt healthy lifestyles. They make a good start to their education as a result of good provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Teaching and learning and the curriculum are satisfactory with both aspects of provision having strengths and weaknesses. The outstanding teaching stimulates pupils, is well matched to individual needs and ensures good progress. Satisfactory teaching results from teachers not having incisive enough knowledge about what is required for different aspects of the curriculum and not linking their planning sufficiently well to accurate information about pupils' prior attainment. Assessment and tracking systems are not yet sufficiently refined. Too few pupils know their learning targets and higher attaining pupils do not consistently receive appropriate challenge. The curriculum is being appropriately developed through a topic approach to encourage creativity. It is not yet rigorously checked to ensure it promotes the progression of pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding.

Care, guidance and support of pupils are strong. All staff know their pupils well; vulnerable pupils get good attention. One parent commented that 'All the children are provided with individual and group support. They are taught good values and to respect each other and also to nurture their younger peers.'

The frequent changes of headteachers have had a considerable impact on the school. Staff have been asked to change their approach often and this has slowed the pace of improvement since the last inspection. The governors, the headteacher and the teachers are all leaders and managers of different aspects of the school's work and they are working well together to move the school forward; this helps promote the school's satisfactory capacity to sustain improvement. Leaders and

managers understand key priorities, are responding to new initiatives and know what the next steps should be. They are benefiting from the range of partnership working but also contribute their own ideas to support other schools. The headteacher recognises that self-evaluation is not yet securely underpinned by checking the impact of provision on outcomes for pupils. Parents and carers are well engaged with the school. They are listened to and work well with the school and governors, for example in promoting safety for the pupils on the main road outside the school.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall 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.

What does the school need to do to improve further

- Improve the rates of progress for individual pupils and ensure that progress is made in each year by:
 - accurately assessing pupils on entry to the school and at the start of each key stage
 - personalising teaching to pupils' strengths and weaknesses identified through assessment of learning
 - developing pupils' awareness of their learning targets
 - ensuring higher attaining pupils are sufficiently challenged.
- Strengthen teaching by:
 - ensuring planning is based on the accurate assessment of pupils' learning
 - extending teachers' subject knowledge across all aspects of the curriculum and raising their awareness of common difficulties for pupils
 - sharing the outstanding practice that exists within school.
- Develop the curriculum by:
 - ensuring that the progression of knowledge, skills and understanding and key subject concepts are covered within topics.
- Strengthen self-evaluation by:
 - extending and formalising systems for checking and analysing the impact of teaching and the curriculum on outcomes for pupils.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

The standards reached by pupils at ages seven and eleven, as seen in lessons and pupils' books, are broadly average and this represents satisfactory progress from their starting points in the Early Years Foundation Stage. However, rates of progress are variable between different year groups and between subjects. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make similar progress to that of their peers. Not all pupils achieve as well as they should, especially those that are higher attaining. Too many pupils are unsure of their learning targets. National test results at age 11 also show variability between year groups as would be expected with such small groups of pupils in each cohort. They also show variability in performance between subjects, with pupils achieving much higher standards in English than in mathematics. The average performance of pupils in all core subjects was above that

found nationally for the first time in three years in 2008, following a period of decline. National test results at age seven show above average performance in 2008, but with writing being a relatively weaker area.

Pupils and their parents say that they enjoy school. Their attendance is broadly average. They are adamant there is no bullying and that they feel safe and secure in school. They have a large number of adults in school to whom they can turn to for care and support at any time. This includes parent helpers, teaching assistants and governors as well as teachers. Pupils are confident to express their views because of the way the school raises their self-esteem. Pupils behave well and their behaviour is outstanding when lessons stimulate their interest and are tailored to their needs. They willingly accept the opportunities provided for them to contribute to their school community through acting as members of the school council or as reading buddies, for example. Pupils take joint responsibility for promoting healthy lifestyles with the school by participating in the wide range of physical education and sporting activities. This is enhanced through links with other schools and by promoting healthy eating for those who bring packed lunches through pupil inputs to assemblies. They have been successful at growing their own vegetables too. Pupils have good skills in information and communication technology and this contributes to their enjoyment of independent learning opportunities.

Pupils' social and moral development is very strong and is enhanced as a result of the many opportunities they have to mix with pupils from other schools and to go on trips and visits. However, they are aware that they do not understand enough about other cultures or people living in different circumstances than their own either in England or abroad.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and their progress	3
How well do pupils achieve and enjoy their learning?	3
To what extent do pupils feel safe?	2
How well do pupils behave?	2
To what extent do pupils adopt healthy lifestyles?	2
To what extent do pupils contribute to the school and wider community?	2
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
How well do pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	3
What is the extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development?	3

How effective is the provision?

There is too much variation in the quality of teaching and insufficient formal opportunities for teachers to share what is best about each other's practice. Some teaching is outstanding and results in pupils showing enthusiasm and making very

¹The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

good progress. Some is satisfactory and pupils make only slow progress because what is taught is not well matched to their individual needs and does not ensure the progressive development of their skills and understanding.

The school is aware that the curriculum needs to be further developed. It has made a good start in responding to government initiatives to promote enjoyment and creativity. Teachers show good teamwork in planning to deliver a range of subjects through topics of interest to pupils. However, this planning is not yet securely based in ensuring progression for pupils within subjects and is not checked against all aspects of the National Curriculum. Teachers' subject knowledge does not ensure that they are always aware of pupils' common misconceptions. Pupils enjoy the large range of extra-curricular opportunities provided by the school and the enrichment from visits and visitors.

Although the school has begun to develop an assessment and tracking system, it is not yet underpinned by sufficiently accurate teacher assessment; neither do teachers make sufficient use of opportunities to assess learning during lessons. As a result, teachers' planning is not consistently personalised to the needs of different groups and individual pupils.

Care, guidance and support for pupils are strengths of the school and are why pupils are happy and feel safe in school. Pupils' welfare is of paramount importance and is enhanced through partnership working that supports vulnerable pupils particularly well.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

All teaching staff hold a number of leadership and management responsibilities. In many aspects of the school's work there is collegiate responsibility which has been developed by the headteacher. This has helped strengthen teamwork and promote a sense of ownership of new initiatives so that the vision for progress is clear to all. Although the improvements have not yet resulted in consistently better outcomes for pupils, they have ensured that the school has come through a period of changes to leadership ready to move forward. This is exemplified by the correct identification of weaknesses in mathematics and subsequent new developments that are already resulting in better progress for pupils. Leaders and managers, including governors, know that in such a small school correct prioritisation is important and they have been successful this year in focusing on ways that partnerships can help them move forward more quickly. Governors are well informed. They actively seek training, are regular visitors to the school and are developing their challenge to the school significantly as well as continuing their support.

All statutory duties are met with regard to safeguarding. Training for staff to ensure the effectiveness of safeguarding is up to date. Appropriate policies are in place to promote equality and community cohesion. However they have not yet resulted in equality for pupils in terms of the progress made by individuals and groups; weaknesses remain in pupils' cultural understanding and awareness of national and international differences, and the impact of policies is not yet formally analysed.

Relationships with parents are strong and parents support the school's work, helping wherever they can. The school consults parents and has made some appropriate changes to provision in response to their comments.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in communicating ambition and driving improvement	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

From starting points which are generally at those expected for their age, children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress and achieve well, so that by the end of the Reception Year most are working above the expected levels for this age group. This is as a result of good provision overall. It is enhanced by the small numbers of children, the large numbers of adults supporting children, the use of information and communication technology and the balance between focused activities and opportunities for choice. Leaders and managers are aware of the need to designate an area for outdoor activities, to develop assessment systems from entry onwards and to ensure all activities have appropriate challenge. This year, children have been particularly successful in developing their mathematical understanding in response to an emphasis in improving provision in this aspect. Close links between the Early Years Foundation Stage and the work of the pre-school group help many children to get off to a positive start.

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Bosley St Mary's Church of England Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. If a parent has more than one child at the school, we ask them to record an answer against all the questions, for each of their children.

The inspection team received 14 completed questionnaires. In total, there are 65 parents/carers registered at the school.

	Always	Most of the time	Occasionally	Never
Overall I am happy with my child's experience at this school	10	3	1	0

Of the questionnaires received by the inspectors half contained comments. There were no common concerns. Parents were overwhelmingly pleased with the work of the school and how happy their children were. Several parents commented on the strong leadership of the headteacher.

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. In 2007-8, 15% of schools were judged to be outstanding.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well. In 2007-8, 49% of schools were judged good.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils. In 2007-8, 32% of schools were judged satisfactory.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves. In 2007-8, 5% of schools were judged inadequate.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, training or development. This may refer to the acquisition of skills, knowledge, understanding or desired attributes. Attributes include qualities or personal competencies which are important to the development of the pupil; for example personal, social, cultural, emotional or health.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.

8 July 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Bosley St Mary's Church of England Primary School,
Macclesfield, SK11 0NX

Thank you so much for helping me and Mr Peacock with the inspection of your school in the summer term. It was lovely to speak to so many of you, see you in lessons and look at the work in your books. I was impressed by your confidence. The opportunities you have to join in so many activities, such as the visits to Manchester and Delamere Forest and growing your own vegetables, are really helping you to enjoy school and make your learning interesting.

The things I think are particularly good about your school are:

- the way you behave well and are helped to feel safe and happy in school
- the way you do your best to lead healthy lifestyles and encourage others to do the same
- the help and encouragement you give to each other
- the good progress made by children in the Early Years Foundation Stage
- the cooperation between your school and others
- the way your parents/carers work together with the school.

I have asked the governors, Mrs Welch and all the staff to continue to keep up their good teamwork and to focus especially on improving the progress that each of you makes; making all teaching as good as the best; looking at what you are taught so that it stays exciting but covers everything you need in each subject; checking whether the changes make a positive difference for you.

You can all help by continuing to behave well and work hard, especially if your work seems even more challenging. Try to remember what your learning targets are and let the teachers know what you think about the improvements they make.

I wish you a very happy, healthy and successful future.

Yours sincerely

Sonya Williamson
Her Majesty's Inspector

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