

# Bridstow CofE Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	116869
<b>Local Authority</b>	Herefordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	326471
<b>Inspection date</b>	26 February 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Patricia Potheary

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.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	90
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
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Norman Bricknell
<b>Headteacher</b>	Paul Sockett
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 March 2006
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Bridstow Ross-on-Wye HR9 6PZ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01989 562 623
<b>Fax number</b>	01989 564 662

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Bridstow is smaller than most primary schools, with four mixed-age classes. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds, with a very small minority from Traveller groups. Few are eligible for free school meals. There is an average number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, although none have statements of special educational needs. The youngest class contains Reception-aged pupils from the Early Years Foundation Stage, who are taught alongside some pupils from Year 1.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Bridstow is a satisfactory school. The attractive surroundings are well respected by the pupils, who much enjoy a harmonious and caring environment where they feel very safe. The school helps pupils of all ages to make satisfactory academic progress and develop well personally. Children enter Reception with skills broadly typical for their age and by the time they leave Year 6, standards are in line with national averages. This results from satisfactory teaching, leadership and management.

The school is beginning to increase the rate of progress pupils make, by paying careful and regular attention to pupils' individual achievement and by setting more challenging targets for them to reach. Practice in English and mathematics lessons varies, though, with some pupils knowing the next steps in their learning while others are unsure. Some lesson aims are closely matched to individual targets, but others are more general. This leads to variations in the rate of progress different pupils make from their starting points. For a few more able pupils, particularly in mathematics, expectations in some lessons remain too low so their progress is slow. The school recognises this and is acting to improve the consistency of the progress made, especially for more able pupils. The quality of relationships in lessons and the use of technology are strong and teaching assistants contribute skilfully to pupils' learning.

Parents are largely positive about the school and particularly appreciate the good standard of care and the regular events, trips and visitors which enliven the curriculum and add to their children's enjoyment of school. One parent explained, 'The school has a warmth and vibrancy,' and several mentioned their children's enthusiasm for learning. Pupils most like the variety of activities in lessons and the way they can see their learning progressing. Pupils behave well and look after each other, for example by helping at playtime or working together on tasks. They respect the differences in each other's lives within the school community, but have little knowledge of the breadth of cultures further afield, in this country or abroad. In this respect the school is not fulfilling its duties to actively promote community cohesion.

The good curriculum provides a well-balanced range of subjects and meets the needs of mixed-age classes well. It helps pupils to contribute in many ways during the school day, and to learn how to take responsibility. For example, they run the school tuck shop and younger pupils grow vegetables which they sell to raise money for charity.

School leaders have a clear view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and know what they need to do to make improvements. They have recently developed a strong system for tracking just how well each pupil is doing and are providing support where it is needed. This is beginning to produce better results.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 3

Provision in Reception and its leadership are satisfactory. Children make steady progress and enter Year 1 having reached the goals expected for their age. Assessment when children first enter Reception has not been sufficient to build on their skills and understanding at a faster rate. For this reason a new system is being tried which collects more detailed information and so matches the curriculum and teaching to their individual needs more closely. This means that teaching and the progress pupils make is better, especially in literacy and numeracy. This is a very recent development and the impact on progress is not yet evident over time.

There is a good balance between learning in the classroom and outside, and children have plenty of opportunities to learn for themselves. An inviting array of sand, water, paint and construction materials is used enthusiastically throughout the day as children explore their ideas. The teacher-led sessions, for example in phonics, ensure that children's grounding in the basic skills is thorough. Children enjoy their work. In one lesson, for instance, they watched excitedly and were keen to find the 'oo' words to put in the word pool. They then expanded their understanding with a lively discussion of 'doom and gloom'. The children are well cared for and develop well socially, getting on amicably with others and learning how to take turns. They show a caring side and are ready to help each other out by fetching equipment or sharing ideas.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Increase the challenge provided in lessons to improve the progress more able pupils are making, particularly in mathematics.
- Make sure that staff are clear about the next steps in learning for individual pupils in English and mathematics and see that these steps are consistently and closely used to plan lessons.
- Ensure that requirements are met for the school to actively promote community cohesion.

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.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Progress is satisfactory overall in English, mathematics and science, although standards vary widely each year because of the small numbers of pupils in each cohort. The most able pupils have been making the least progress over time but this is improving. Indications are that rates of learning are currently increasing in all classes, with more pupils of all abilities making good progress. There is, for example, good progress now being made in writing for pupils aged five to seven. Standards in mathematics are gradually increasing, but some more able pupils in all age groups do not make enough progress in this subject. The school recognises this and is bringing in programmes to enhance the teaching of mathematics. Progress for pupils with learning difficulties is generally strong because they receive good individual support.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils enjoy school, saying the things they like best are 'learning', and the way 'teachers are really friendly'. Pupils are proud of their school, work hard to do their best and contribute well to the community. For example, the choir sings at the local hospice and some pupils were involved in developing the town library. In school, pupils are willing to take on responsibilities in class and look out for one another in the playground. Despite this good involvement, the role of the school council is underdeveloped. The school has a strong spiritual ethos, providing pupils with a curiosity for learning and finding out about the world. Despite limitations in their understanding of how different people live, pupils learn about various religions and show empathy and respect for those they meet. They behave well and safely, knowing how to avoid dangers. In lessons pupils pay good attention and rarely disrupt learning. They are usually kind to one another and polite to adults. Attendance is satisfactory. It is good for the majority but one or two pupils travel for extended periods with their families. Pupils demonstrate sound

team-working skills, learn how to manage money and are suitably prepared for their future schools and careers.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Although satisfactory overall, there is an increasing number of good lessons. In these, pupils are beginning to make faster progress as a result of the school's focus on matching work more closely to their different needs. Relationships in lessons are very positive as skilled individual support and a caring approach by staff successfully encourage effort. This also ensures that those with learning difficulties do well. As one pupil commented, 'The teacher is good at getting you to try things that you are not sure of.' Most lessons are based upon an accurate assessment of pupils' abilities and they are given challenging individual targets to guide them. However, this is not systematically applied. In some lessons, targets are not evident in books and work does not always match pupils' level of understanding. This is particularly noticeable in mathematics, where work for the most able sometimes lacks pace and the expectation of what can be achieved is not always high enough. Pupils appreciate the exciting activities they do, such as watching a production of Macbeth before writing about it in English.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum meets requirements and is well planned to meet the needs of mixed-age classes and for those with learning difficulties. There is an increasing range of activities to help pupils take good levels of responsibility and prepare for their futures, particularly working in groups and independently. There is strong provision for sport and exercise, although, because of staff changes, the programme to encourage healthy eating has been slower to develop, which has restricted pupils' understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle. The school works well to provide for pupils from the Traveller community, which secures benefits to all pupils in understanding different ways of living. However, not enough is done to teach pupils about a broad range of cultures. Good links with other providers ensure plenty of activities such as field trips, festivals, concerts, sporting tournaments and book fairs, which help to bring learning to life. This provides a good, deep range of experiences for pupils to draw on in their lessons. Music is a particular strength of the school, with good levels of participation in singing, instrument playing and performance.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 3**

Safeguarding procedures meet requirements. There is a very caring approach, where pupils' personal needs are supported well. Measures to improve behaviour are effective and the school has a good record of helping pupils whose behaviour has been difficult in the past. Responses to occasional bullying are effective but, in a very few instances, concerns have not become apparent quickly enough. This is being addressed. Links with other agencies to support those with learning and any other difficulties are strong. Guidance to help pupils do well academically is satisfactory. In particular, there is the new system to assess pupils' achievements and regularly monitor their progress towards challenging targets. However, this is not always used effectively to guide lesson planning, which is why progress, although improving, is variable.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

There has been clear direction by the school's leadership, well supported by the local authority, in beginning to address the legacy of underachievement for a few pupils and raise progress above satisfactory. This has resulted in improvements in teaching and writing particularly. Until now, expected rates of progress have been achieved, but the more challenging whole-school targets set have not been met. As a result of sound self-evaluation, effective steps are now in place to increase the rate of school improvement. The school has identified that new systems have sometimes not been used well to secure consistency in practice. In order to address this, a closer check is being kept on what is actually happening. The school's capacity to improve is satisfactory.

The school successfully seeks to ensure that all pupils are included equally in the life of the school, and are valued highly for their individual differences. The governors have not written a community cohesion policy and, although pupils are encouraged well to respect others, there is no systematic response to this government requirement.





## 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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

### Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
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?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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/or disabilities make progress	2

<sup>1</sup>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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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?	3

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	4
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	3
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**

27 February 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Bridstow CofE Primary School, Ross-on-Wye, HR9 6PZ Thank you for being so welcoming when we visited your school. We enjoyed meeting you very much, joining you for lunch, and seeing some of your lessons.

Your school has a friendly and caring atmosphere. It is a satisfactory school, with many good things going on, just like you told us. Satisfactory teaching helps you to make at least adequate progress in your lessons. You make good progress in your social and personal skills, especially the way you contribute to the school, help each other and get involved in the local community. Your lessons are enjoyable and teachers help you make steady progress. Some of you, especially those who sometimes find learning difficult, make good progress. You have a good curriculum and your teachers see to it that you have lots of exciting activities, trips and projects to keep you interested and to help you develop many different types of skills. We think those among you who learn quickly should have more challenge in your lessons, particularly in mathematics. We would also like to see that you and your teachers are clear about your individual targets in all English and mathematics lessons.

Staff do a sound job in running the school. They know how to help you improve and for this reason you are doing better, in writing for example. We have now asked them to plan carefully, so that you have more opportunities to understand people from communities which are different to yours.

Adults in the school keep you safe and look after you well. We were impressed with your good behaviour and the way you work hard. You clearly enjoy coming to school. We would particularly like to see you carry on with the good work you all do to help in improving the school. We think that all these things, alongside your good skills in working together, give you a suitable preparation for your next school and future lives.

Yours sincerely

Patricia Potheary

Lead inspector