

Bladon Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123119
Local Authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	327851
Inspection date	17 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Steven Hill

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)	73
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	Ray Banks
Headteacher	Tracey Smith
Date of previous school inspection	29 November 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Park Street Bladon Woodstock OX20 1RW

Age group	4–11
Inspection date	17 March 2009
Inspection number	327851

Telephone number
Fax number

01993 811192
01993 811192

Age group	4-11
Inspection date	17 March 2009
Inspection number	327851

© 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. The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- the progress that pupils make, particularly in Key Stage 2
- pupils' personal development
- the quality of provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage
- how well the school promotes community cohesion.

Evidence was gathered from observation of lessons; discussions with staff, pupils and governors; the school's documentation; the results of national assessments; samples of pupils' work; and questionnaires returned by parents.

Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but inspectors found that the school's own assessments, as given its self-evaluation, were generally accurate, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This is a small, rural primary school with three classes. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in one class alongside the pupils in Years 1 and 2. Most pupils are of White British heritage, with only a tiny minority of other ethnic groups. Almost all pupils speak English as a home language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average, but varies considerably between year groups. Most of these pupils struggle with basic literacy or numeracy. An above-average proportion of pupils join or leave the school other than at the usual time. A new hall and a new outside area for the youngest children have been built since the previous inspection. A new headteacher took up post in September 2008.

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. Staff maintained a good quality of education despite disruption caused by building work last year, and the school continues to flourish under the good leadership of a new headteacher. Pupils' personal development is outstanding because of the excellent pastoral care and guidance provided. Academic achievement is good. Pupils make good progress because of good teaching and their own very positive attitudes to learning.

From the time they start in the youngest class, pupils thoroughly enjoy their time at Bladon. They get on extremely well together and their very positive relationships with each other and with staff strongly support their learning. Pupils take a keen interest in the world around them and make an excellent contribution to the community, both in school and further afield. The school council provides an early insight into democratic processes, and pupils are convinced that they make a difference to school life. Their contribution to the caring and positive ethos in the school is shown by how pupils demonstrate care and concern for each other, exemplified by how older pupils enjoy helping younger ones. They told an inspector that this was not only 'really fun', but made them feel 'like a really good role model', so, 'we have to behave well, because they look up to us.' Behaviour is excellent and pupils were adamant that there is no bullying because everyone gets on so well together. They have great confidence in teachers and other staff, and feel safe and secure in school. They understand how to keep themselves safe, because of the school's excellent provision for this. As well as being a thread running through school life, special events such as the Junior Citizens programme, or cycling proficiency, add to their knowledge. Pupils have an excellent understanding of healthy lifestyles, are keen on sport and exercise, and try to eat healthily. Mealtimes in the new hall are very positive, civilised and enjoyable social occasions.

Pupils who join the school at different times quickly feel at home. One recent arrival reported that 'everyone is friends' and praised the 'very nice atmosphere'. Pupils' excellent collaborative skills were apparent in an outstanding lesson in the hall, when older pupils debated whether an imaginary school should be closed. Working in groups, they took the roles of different interest groups, arguing their cases with insight and thoughtfulness.

Standards are above average overall, although results of national assessments vary considerably year on year, because of small cohorts and different levels of ability within these. Progress is good overall across the school, and pupils do particularly well in reading. However, pupils' achievement in writing, while always at least satisfactory, is more variable, and not as good as in other subjects. The school is seeking to address this through a more varied and interesting curriculum. Pupils who struggle with literacy and numeracy make good progress because of the effective extra help they receive to meet their needs. The school has recently introduced a more detailed and thorough tracking system to check pupils' progress more frequently. This is providing teachers with a clearer view of how individuals are getting on, so that any who start to fall behind can be identified and helped more quickly. These improvements mean that academic guidance is now good. However, subject leaders have not yet used this data to check on the overall picture of pupils' progress across the school.

The key to pupils' good progress is the quality of teaching, which is good overall, ranging from the occasional satisfactory lesson to some that are outstanding. Classes are orderly and pupils respond positively to teachers' high expectations of work and behaviour. Pupils are enthusiastic to learn and take a pride in their work. Older pupils agreed that 'we always find out things that

we never knew before'. Another said, 'You learn everything you need to learn, but it's fun at the same time.' The school's emphasis on a more 'creative' curriculum this year contributes to this enjoyment and learning. Links between different subjects make learning more meaningful and interesting for pupils. This was illustrated by an excellent French lesson, where elements of art, literacy and geography all contributed to pupils' outstanding enthusiasm and progress in the lesson.

The school is well led and managed. The new headteacher is building on the many existing strengths in the school and, with the full support of the governing body, is working with colleagues to raise standards further. The new assessment systems provide a solid basis for this. Very effective work has been done in Key Stage 2 to address the weaknesses in mathematics achievement shown by the disappointing results in the 2008 tests. Pupils currently in Year 6 have made very good progress in mathematics over the last two terms, and are well on the way to achieving higher standards than last year. The continuing relative weaknesses in writing throughout the school have been identified as a priority, and the school is analysing and starting to address these. The already good curriculum is improving rapidly as teachers work to match activities more closely to pupils' interests and needs, and make meaningful links between subjects. The school's subject leaders are keen to support each other and do so well in many informal ways. However, they have few opportunities to work alongside colleagues in the classroom to share expertise and good practice.

The school's promotion of community cohesion, which is good, is also being extended. Excellent work with the local community, and a long-established programme of contacts overseas, are to be enhanced by proposed links to give pupils a better understanding of the range and nature of different communities in other parts of the United Kingdom. A careful analysis of need and an evaluation of the effectiveness of existing provision are supporting this improvement. For example, links are being established with a school where pupils come from very different ethnic backgrounds than those in Bladon. The maintenance of good progress and improvements to pupils' already strong personal development since the last inspection show the school is well placed to improve further. Parents are very appreciative of the school, although a few would like more information about their children's progress. Their views were summed up by one who wrote, 'the children are enjoying their time there enormously. There is a strikingly positive atmosphere of friendship and confidence and staff actively show their appreciation of children's efforts and accomplishments.'

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children get off to a good start when they join Reception. Many of the positive aspects of the rest of the school apply to the Early Years Foundation Stage, including good teaching and excellent provision to support children's welfare. Not only the staff, but also older pupils in their own class and beyond, contribute to their feelings of safety and happiness when they start. Their allocation of a 'reading buddy' from the oldest class is a good example of this. Children make good progress and do particularly well in their personal, social and emotional development. Their early writing skills, however, are relatively weak when they start school, and remain a weakness when they move on to Year 1. The adults are skilled at helping pupils to learn when they work with them directly in the class. Good relationships and clear planning underpin children's learning and enjoyment. There is a good balance between such directed activities and opportunities for pupils to choose play activities for themselves. However, adults do not intervene sufficiently in these play activities to extend children's thinking, or make

enough use of the assessment opportunities they present. Assessments of children's progress in adult-directed activities are good, and used well to plan further work. Children thoroughly enjoy playing in the new outside area, but activities there are not consistently planned to link with other work. The lack of any covered section outside severely restricts its use during bad weather.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise achievement in writing throughout the school.
- Improve the curriculum for Reception children, particularly by more carefully structuring play activities to support their learning.
- Extend the role of subject leaders, particularly by providing more opportunities for them to work alongside colleagues in the classroom.

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?	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	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

31 March 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Bladon Church of England Primary School, Woodstock, OX20 1RW

Thank you very much for all the help you gave to us when we visited your school. We really enjoyed talking to you and watching you working so hard in lessons. You told us that you think Bladon is a good school, and you are right.

The school is helping you all to grow up as caring, sensible and confident young people. You all get on extremely well together, and we were very impressed by how well older children look after and help younger ones. Your behaviour is excellent, so the school is a safe and happy place for everyone. You make a very good contribution to the school and local community and are learning well about people who live in very different places.

The Reception children really enjoy learning in class and playing in their new outside area. We have suggested that the adults could help them do even better if they spent more time helping them learn when they are playing.

You are making good progress because teachers are good at helping you to learn. You do particularly well in reading, but you are not all making such good progress in writing. The teachers have worked hard this year to give you even more exciting things to do, and it is clear that you are enjoying them. We have agreed with them that they will concentrate particularly on helping you do better in writing, and they are all keen to give you exciting work to help this.

The adults are good at organising the school, and they all want to make it even better. We have suggested that those teachers who are in charge of different subjects should have more chances to work together in each other's classrooms, so they can share tips to help you learn even more.

You can help the school to get even better by keeping up your hard work and excellent behaviour, and trying particularly hard with your writing. We hope that you carry on enjoying school so much.

Yours faithfully

Steven Hill

Lead Inspector