

# Bishops Castle Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	123354
<b>Local Authority</b>	Shropshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	327888
<b>Inspection date</b>	17 November 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Mike Capper

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>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	139
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>	Claire Perry
<b>Headteacher</b>	Andrew Barker
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 September 2005
<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>	Oak Meadow Bishops Castle SY9 5PA
<b>Telephone number</b>	01588 638522
<b>Fax number</b>	01588 638418

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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This small rural primary school takes most of its pupils from the small town of Bishop's Castle. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is broadly average. The proportion identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. Nearly all pupils are from White British backgrounds. There is one Reception class in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and children are admitted at the start of the autumn and spring terms. Attainment on entry to the school varies from year to year, but is broadly at the levels expected nationally. The headteacher has been in post for just over two years.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school where pupils are happy, behave well and learn good values. The school is moving in the right direction under the clear direction of the headteacher, who has accurately identified what needs improving and is taking the right steps to ensure that pupils learn even more quickly. Satisfactory teaching means that pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Children settle quickly in the EYFS and they make satisfactory progress. This steady progress is maintained in the rest of the school, and standards reach broadly average levels by the end of Year 6. Pupils make the best progress in reading, where a recent focus on providing greater challenge and making resources more boy-friendly has had a positive effect on learning. In mathematics, progress is more variable across the school because teachers do not always pitch work at the right level for all pupils. This means that on occasions work is too hard or too easy for some pupils. There are good features to teaching across the school. Teachers work hard and they manage pupils' behaviour well. Pupils clearly enjoy school because they get on so well with their teachers. However, teachers' expectations are not always high enough when pupils are writing, and this results in some work being untidy and not of sufficiently good quality. Parents are rightly pleased with the way in which members of staff look after pupils. One parent summed up their views by saying that there is a 'friendly and supportive environment'. The school works closely with outside bodies such as social services and 'Parent Partnership' to safeguard pupils' well-being and to support those who are finding home or school life difficult. Pupils who find it hard to behave well are helped to improve so that they can take a full part in school life. Academic support is satisfactory. The headteacher has established detailed systems for tracking pupils' progress from year to year and this information is used well to identify where additional support is needed. Teachers are beginning to use marking and targets to help pupils understand how to improve, although this is not yet consistently good in all classes. Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils are friendly, polite and helpful and are keen to take responsibility. They develop a good understanding of how to stay safe and healthy, taking a good part in sporting competitions. Pupils speak very positively of school. They especially like the way that adults enrich the satisfactory curriculum by providing interesting activities beyond lessons. As one pupil commented, 'We do lots of fun things out of lessons.' For example, pupils were enraptured by a visit from a theatre company that helped to make work on playscripts purposeful and fun. Strong links with a school in Dudley contribute well to community cohesion by giving the pupils a good understanding of the world beyond Bishop's Castle. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The well-respected headteacher is passionate about improving the school and parents are rightly pleased with the way that things have moved on in the last two years. There have been many helpful recent initiatives such as a focus on improving pupils' attitudes towards reading. These are starting to have a good effect on standards, demonstrating that the school has a satisfactory capacity to improve further. However, the impact of initiatives is not being monitored with sufficient rigour by leaders at all levels to check that they are having the desired effect and are being implemented consistently. Most parents are pleased that their children come to this school, and although a few are concerned that class sizes are large in some year groups, they realise that this is beyond the school's control. One parent summed up the views of many by writing, 'The headteacher and staff are very enthusiastic and do a lot to help the children.' This comment successfully captures the essence of this steadily improving school.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 3

Children's achievement in the EYFS is satisfactory. They make steady progress and by the time they start in Year 1, standards are broadly average. Adults take good care of the children and there are good procedures to help them settle when they first start school. As a result, children's personal development is good. Children cooperate well with adults and each other and are keen to take part in activities. For example, they enjoy 'passing a smile' around the class. Teaching is satisfactory. Interesting projects such as work on Goldilocks and the Three Bears help to make learning meaningful, and good use is made of the 'Forest School' to develop work outdoors. However, there are occasions during whole-class lessons when children are not all sufficiently involved and when this happens they lose concentration. Provision is satisfactorily led and managed. Leaders have clear plans to improve provision. For example, they know that they do not moderate assessments sufficiently and that there are too few opportunities for children to work independently.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that teachers plan work in mathematics that builds consistently on pupils' different starting points.
- Raise teachers' expectations in writing so that pupils' presentation improves and they always produce their best work when writing.
- Strengthen monitoring by leaders at all levels to ensure that recent initiatives are implemented consistently and are helping to improve learning.

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

Standards are broadly average by the end of Year 6. Most pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, make satisfactory progress over time. In English, standards are higher in reading than in writing. The school has been focusing on improving pupils' reading skills and the impact of this has been positive. In writing, teachers do not always expect enough of the pupils in their everyday work. When this happens, some work is untidy and does not reflect pupils' ability. In mathematics, although pupils' progress is satisfactory overall, it is uneven from lesson to lesson because teachers do not always plan work that builds closely enough on their different starting points.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 2

Most pupils behave well in class and when playing outside. They appreciate their good relationships with members of staff and are confident about talking to them if they have any worries. Attendance levels do not reflect the pupils' enjoyment of school, but this is because of some parents taking their children on term-time holidays. Nevertheless, due to the school's good efforts, attendance is satisfactory and steadily improving. Pupils particularly enjoy meeting friends and after school clubs. They are keen to learn although they sometimes lose interest when work is insufficiently engaging. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

is good. Pupils learn the difference between right and wrong quickly. They are friendly and show good concern for the needs of others by raising funds for charities. They take responsibility well, ensuring that they make a good contribution to the community. For example, the school council are pleased that they have improved playtime resources and older pupils enjoy answering the telephone during lunchtimes. These activities, along with pupils' sound basic skills, prepare them suitably well for the next stage of their education and later life. Pupils develop healthy lifestyles by eating fruit and taking frequent exercise. They have a good understanding of how to stay safe. They know that they should not wander off with a stranger or give personal details when using the internet.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Staff manage behaviour effectively and this contributes well to the pupils' enjoyment of school. Teaching assistants are deployed well in lessons and often work with small groups of pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, to ensure that they are able to participate fully in activities. Teachers make good use of interactive whiteboards to introduce new skills in mathematics and to share texts in literacy lessons. Whilst teachers plan work for pupils with differing abilities and explain tasks clearly, they do not always ensure that lesson activities match the wide range of needs in each class closely enough, especially in mathematics. This can mean that pupils are less involved and learning slows. Pupils' books show that they can produce good quality written work. However, they do not do so consistently because teachers sometimes accept work that is not good enough.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum enables pupils to make steady progress in developing basic skills. Provision for developing reading is a strong aspect of the curriculum and good use is made of additional support to help those who find reading difficult, including pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Senior leaders are doing the right things to improve the curriculum, although this is still in the early stages of development and the impact on pupils' progress has not yet been fully evaluated. Nevertheless, teachers are beginning to plan a greater number of purposeful learning opportunities so that pupils are more fully engaged in lessons. Enrichment of the curriculum is good, with good use being made of clubs, visits and visitors to bring subjects alive. For example, pupils interviewed local pensioners about their experiences during the Second World War. Most pupils maintain a healthy lifestyle because they are able to take part in different sports in clubs and lessons. Pupils are enthusiastic about their work in drama and music; the choir sings tunefully in two-part harmony without accompaniment and parents speak very positively of recent school performances in the local church.

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

#### **Grade: 2**

The school supports pupils' personal needs very well, ensuring that they are happy and gain confidence. Procedures for safeguarding pupils are securely in place and the school works especially closely with external agencies and parents to help support vulnerable pupils. As a result, pupils feel safe at school and say that members of staff deal with any concerns they

have quickly and effectively. As one pupil said, 'Teachers listen to both sides of the story and are fair.' There are satisfactory procedures for assessing pupils' progress, although inconsistencies in the way teachers mark pupils' work occasionally limit their effectiveness. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are identified swiftly and are given clear targets to help them improve.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The headteacher has brought fresh ideas to the school. There is a strong drive to improve provision and he is doing the right things to move the school forward. There have been many helpful recent developments. For example, a link with a school in Dudley contributes especially well to developing community cohesion and is a wellconsidered and helpful addition to school provision. There are satisfactory systems for monitoring school effectiveness. This means that there is a clear understanding that, despite recent improvements, progress still needs to be faster so that more pupils reach their challenging targets. Leaders are aware that the impact of recent initiatives is not being checked with sufficient rigour to ensure that they are having the intended impact on improving learning and are being applied consistently in all classes. Governance is satisfactory. Governors have strengthened their role since the last inspection. They are kept well informed by the headteacher and are beginning to do more to find out things for themselves.

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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?	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	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	3

<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	2
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?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

## 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?	2
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**

18 November 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Bishop's Castle Primary School, Bishop's Castle, SY9 5PA

Thank you for being so welcoming and for showing us your work. You were polite and friendly and we enjoyed talking to you. At the moment, your school is providing a satisfactory education. This means that we found some good things in the school but also some things that need improving.

Some of the things we found out about your school.

- Satisfactory teaching means that you are making steady progress across the school. At the moment, you make slightly slower progress in mathematics than in other subjects.
- Children in the Reception class settle quickly. Adults make good use of the 'Forest School' to support learning.
- Most of you enjoy school and behave well. You make a good contribution to the community. It is great that you have links with a school in Dudley and are able to learn about life beyond Bishop's Castle.
- You are able to take part in lots of fun activities out of lessons. These help you to develop a good understanding of how to stay safe and healthy.
- All adults in school are kind and caring and they look after you well.
- Your headteacher, teachers and governors are working hard to improve the school and they know what they still need to do.
- What we have asked your school to do now.
- Make sure that work is not too hard or too easy for you in mathematics.
- Ensure that you always do your best work when you are writing.
- Check that the many recent developments in the school are helping you to learn more quickly.

You can help your teachers by taking greater care with your written work so that it is always tidy and is your best work.

We thoroughly enjoyed watching you learn. We wish you all well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mike Capper

Lead inspector