

Baschurch C of E Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123534
Local Authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	327933
Inspection dates	17–18 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Ted Wheatley

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	166
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mark Orton
Headteacher	Andrew Everett
Date of previous school inspection	17–18 January 2006
School address	Eyton Lane Baschurch Shrewsbury Shropshire SY4 2AU
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Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 11 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff, groups of pupils, a local authority representative and parents in the playground. The inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at the school's development plan, governors' minutes, records of pupils' progress and analysed 56 parent questionnaires.

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

- how well Reception class children, and boys and the most able pupils in the rest of the school achieve
- how well the school uses assessment information to make sure lessons are challenging and fast paced
- how rigorously leaders at all levels work to make the school more effective
- how well the school works to help pupils understand the values and beliefs of people from other cultures.

Information about the school

This is a small school. Numbers have fallen recently and the size of year groups varies considerably. Generally, attainment on entry is above average but occasionally it is close to average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average and almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds.

The governing body has an acting chair of governors and includes seven foundation governors.

Inspection judgements

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

Overall effectiveness

4

Capacity for sustained improvement

4

Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing less well than in all the circumstances it could be reasonably expected to perform. The school is therefore given a notice to improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to leadership and management and how it engages with parents.

A large proportion of the returned parent questionnaires expressed disquiet with how well the school communicates with parents or deals with their concerns, how it manages unacceptable behaviour and in the inconsistencies and slowness of decision making. Their concerns are justified and are reflected in the unease of staff. The most important factor is the breakdown in effective working relationships among the senior leaders of the school. Despite the headteacher's clear vision for the school's improvement, the poor working relationships are detracting from the school's effectiveness and its capacity to drive forward improvement at a fast enough pace. Staff say they feel insecure and that their efforts are unappreciated, the pace of change and improvements are slow and implementation of policies is inconsistent. Leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory, although staff have not had opportunities to find out how to improve provision. However, there have been some improvements in the school. For example, accuracy in assessment and tracking pupils' progress, the range of extra-curricular activities and residential experiences, the provision for gifted and talented pupils and for pupils' personal, social and health education have all improved.

The school provides a satisfactory standard of education and, despite the considerable concern expressed by parents about other aspects of the school's work, they largely agree that this is true. In the Reception class children make satisfactory progress. In the main school both boys' and girls' achievement is satisfactory and pupils enjoy learning. The standards they reach vary a little from year to year but currently are broadly average. The attainment of the most able pupils has risen and the improving use of assessment information to match work to pupils' needs is helping this. However, the improvement has been slow and a small number of pupils do not do quite as well as they should in both literacy and numeracy. Some pupils and parents recognise this too, and several pupils also accurately observed that lessons are sometimes slow, leading to boredom and inattention. Pupils also show

some lack of confidence in their speaking skills and make simple errors in mental arithmetic.

Teaching is satisfactory overall and in some classes it is good. In the best lessons work is challenging, pupils are fully involved in learning, the pace of work is fast and work is well matched to pupils' needs. However, marking is inconsistent and most pupils do not always know what standards they are working at, what their targets are or how they could make further progress. The curriculum is satisfactory and the provision for gifted and talented pupils is good. The use of information and communication technology is improving and pupils enjoy the opportunities they have to use computers. For example, in a poetry lesson pupils used laptop computers enthusiastically to research the meanings of unfamiliar words in a poem.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that senior staff work closely together so that the school can be effective in its day-to-day working and the pace of improvement can accelerate.
- Raise standards by making sure that work is consistently challenging, and pupils have opportunities in all subjects to improve their literacy and numeracy skills.
- Make sure that pupils know the levels they are working at, what their targets are, and that they receive accurate guidance on how these can be achieved so that the pace of progress increases.
- Improve communications so that parents are fully informed about what happens in school and feel that they are consulted about school decision making.
- Provide support for the Early Years Foundation Stage leader to help plan improvements to provision.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Achievement has declined since the last inspection but there are signs that it is beginning to improve again. Pupils' progress is satisfactory in most classes and good in some. The improved accuracy of assessment and better use of this information to match work to pupils' needs is having a positive impact. There are still some pupils who do not make as much progress as they should and this is because the use of assessment information is not fully embedded. However, underachievement by boys or the most able pupils is no longer evident. Pupils' reading skills are generally good, and writing is broadly average and improving. Speaking skills are less well developed and pupils lack confidence in speaking aloud in some lessons or in assembly. Progress in numeracy is similar, although many pupils make errors in simple mental calculations and do not practise enough to ensure accuracy. In science, pupils have well-developed investigative skills, and grasp the importance of fair testing.

Attainment is above average at the end of Key Stage 1 and pupils of all abilities make satisfactory progress. In Key Stage 2, progress had slowed down a little but is picking up again and the most able pupils are now performing better than they have in the past. The increased use of support staff is helping pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress.

Around school, the great majority of pupils behave well but behaviour is not so good when work is not challenging or lessons are slow. However, even in these circumstances, misbehaviour rarely gets beyond low-level disruption or inattention. This is because pupils come to school wanting to learn. Indeed, their attendance is excellent. Pupils accept that there is occasional bullying but feel confident that the school will deal with problems quickly and effectively. Relationships are generally good which leads to a secure learning atmosphere. Pupils have a good grasp of the importance of healthy lifestyles. They eat healthily and the great majority take part in some form of physical activity. Pupils are ready to take on responsibilities. For example, some pupils help rear chickens, others take an active part in the school council, fund raising and church-related activities, and there is a sound involvement with the local community.

Pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. Assemblies provide good opportunities for their spiritual and moral development and improved personal, social and health education contributes effectively to their social maturity. Most pupils are considerate and polite to each other. Their knowledge and understanding of the values and beliefs of other cultures is underdeveloped, but the school knows improvement is needed and is working on this. Pupils talk with enthusiasm of a link they have with a school in Spain. Given broadly average attainment and good social skills, pupils’ preparation for their future economic well-being is satisfactory.

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?	3
To what extent do pupils adopt healthy lifestyles?	2
To what extent do pupils contribute to the school and wider community?	3
Pupils’ attendance ¹	1
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?	2

How effective is the provision?

Teaching has slipped in quality since the previous inspection but is broadly satisfactory and has some strengths. It is improving now that teachers are matching

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

work more closely to pupils' needs, although there is still a way to go in this. Where work is closely matched to needs, questioning is searching and pupils are expected to give clear answers and explanations. Pupils enjoy this, rise to the challenge and produce high standards of work. Most lessons have interesting activities that capture pupils' imaginations and help their enjoyment, but sometimes work is too slow or activities are repetitious and pupils become uninterested. While there is some good marking, much does not give a clear picture of how well pupils are doing or what they should do to make further progress.

There are too few planned opportunities for pupils to improve their literacy and numeracy skills. The range of visits and visitors to the school is good and enriches pupils' experiences. The wide choice of out of school activities is also good and pupils are keen to talk about the ones they take part in.

The school has good arrangements for admitting pupils and for transfer to the next stage of their education. Links with agencies to support vulnerable pupils are secure. The school has sound and improving procedures to identify the learning needs of pupils. Parental concerns about their children are dealt with quickly, although the school does not adequately inform parents of what it has done. Pupils are quick to praise teachers and other adults for the support they give.

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	3

How effective are leadership and management?

There are serious weaknesses in the leadership and management of this school as relationships among senior leaders have broken down. The headteacher's and governors' views of how the school should improve are ambitious but realistic. However, the pace of improvement is unlikely to quicken until relationships in the senior leadership team improve. Demonstrable improvements in some areas show the school has the capacity to improve, and staff are keen to do so. The school's evaluation of its own performance is a little generous but it has identified suitable areas for improvement in teaching, assessment and the curriculum. The governing body is very supportive but has experienced considerable changes in membership recently. Current governors are working hard to keep themselves well informed and to gain the skills they need to challenge and support the school effectively.

Communications with parents are poor, and although the school has initiated some improvements they are at an early stage. Parents' other concerns are mostly justified and although a small number appreciate the work the school does and its plans for the future, they are outnumbered by those expressing concerns.

The school promotes equality of opportunity for its pupils satisfactorily, and this is

evident in the narrowing of the gap in achievement of different groups of pupils. It promotes fair treatment for all pupils and pupils respond well to this. Promoting community cohesion is at an early stage, but the school has identified the areas it needs to work on and has recognised the need to ensure pupils know more about different cultures in this country and around the world.

At the time of the inspection, the school's safeguarding procedures were rigorous and met statutory requirements.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in communicating ambition and driving improvement	4
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
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	4
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
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

Children make satisfactory gains in their learning and by the time they enter Year 1 standards are generally above average. Children make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development. They enjoy school and they join in all the activities with enthusiasm. Children thoroughly enjoyed the 'bug hunt,' and carefully handled and observed small animals such as worms, spiders and beetles. They showed concern for the welfare of the creatures stating, 'they will enjoy the fresh air more than the plastic container'. More able children independently found non-fiction books to compare different spiders. Teaching is satisfactory and children respond to their teacher well but opportunities to challenge children are not always seized. Occasionally the pace of learning slows down when activities change and expectations are not always clearly stated. Children relate well to each other, work well together and show respect for visitors and adults. They develop a good understanding of how to stay safe and healthy. They munch happily on fruit snacks and understand that they need to wash their hands after handling bugs. Assessment procedures are adequate but not always used to inform planning. Consequently, not all children make as much progress as they should. Children who need extra care are well supported. The outdoor area has improved well since the previous inspection and the school increasingly uses it to extend learning. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Induction arrangements for children starting school are good. Well planned visits with parents ensure children are familiar with the teacher and the school. Transition to Year 1 is well organised and children make a smooth move to

the main school.

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

While parents have many negative comments about the school, they feel that their children mainly receive a satisfactory standard of education. They are most pleased with how safe their children are and that they enjoy school. Their concerns outweigh what they are pleased with. They are most concerned about poor communication between school and homes, how unacceptable behaviour is dealt with, lack of support in classrooms, leadership and management, and slow progress. Inspectors agree with some parents' concerns, especially the quality of communications with home and the quality of leadership and management. There have been improvements in the other areas, but these have not been communicated sufficiently well with parents and carers.

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Baschurch C of E 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 56 completed questionnaires. In total, there are 123 parents and carers registered at the school.

	Always	Most of the time	Occasionally	Never
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	22	35	9	1

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.

19 June 2009

Dear Pupils



Inspection of Baschurch C of E Primary School, Baschurch, SY4 2AU

Thank you for making us welcome when we inspected your school. We spoke to many of you and you told us a lot about what you think of your school.

- You make satisfactory progress and your attainment is broadly average. How well you do is improving slowly, although your speaking and numeracy skills are not as good as they should be. Most of the time you enjoy learning.
- Your behaviour is satisfactory overall. You told us you behave well and work hard when lessons are challenging, otherwise you become bored.
- Teaching is satisfactory and it is improving because teachers are using what they know about how well you do to plan future work.
- Computers are used well in lessons and you like that. There is a good range of out-of-school activities which you really enjoy.
- You have a very good understanding of the importance of healthy lifestyles. You eat sensibly most of the time and take part in physical activities.
- Your attendance is fantastic! Keep it up!

We are asking the school to do the following things.

- Make sure senior staff work closely together to help the school improve.
- Raise standards by making sure work is hard enough and that you have opportunities to speak and use numeracy in other subjects.
- Make sure you know what levels you reach, what your targets are, and how to reach them.
- Improve communications so that your parents are fully informed about what happens in school and feel that they are consulted about decisions which affect you.
- Provide support in the Reception class to help plan improvements there.

You can help by making sure you tell an adult if you feel the work is not hard enough, or if you would like to know how to improve your work.

Yours faithfully

Ted Wheatley
Lead inspector

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