

Bishop Ridley Church of England V A Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	134780
Local Authority	Bexley
Inspection number	328981
Inspection dates	26–27 January 2009
Reporting inspector	Margaret Coussins

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 aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	323
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	31
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Ian Miller
Headteacher	Mr Steven Hall
Date of previous school inspection	23 November 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Northumberland Avenue Welling Bexley DA16 2QE
Telephone number	020 8303 4461

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	26–27 January 2009
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Fax number

020 8301 5014

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average primary school. The large majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds and the largest other group are from Black African backgrounds. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is a little above average. The proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is under half that found nationally; pupils have a range of needs but these mainly relate to dyslexia, behaviour, emotional and social difficulties and speech, language and communication difficulties. There are 72 children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) including 30 who attend the Nursery on a part-time basis. The Reception children are organised into three classes that are mixed with Year 1. The school has been accredited with a Healthy School Award.

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 of which staff, pupils, parents and governors are justifiably very proud. Leaders and managers have been successful in creating a school where pupils achieve well, teaching is good and standards are above average by the time pupils leave in Year 6. This is an improvement since the last inspection when the school was judged to be satisfactory. Children develop as well-rounded, happy individuals. The strong links with the Church, inclusive ethos and good care, guidance and support all make a very positive contribution to pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils say they think their school is good and that they enjoy coming to school. Parents agree that their children are well cared for and make good progress. One parent said, 'We are very happy with the school, our children are thriving there.'

Pupils' behavior is exemplary and, along with their good attitudes and enthusiasm, is a major factor in their good achievement. There is a strong sense of community within the school. The school council is active and influential and pupils said that adults listen to them. They relish their responsibilities and take them very seriously. Pupils feel safe and secure because of the good relationships that are forged, and say that they can always talk to an adult if there is anything they are worried about. They have a good understanding of the need for regular exercise and a healthy, balanced diet to keep fit and well. Their good personal and basic skills mean they are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

From average starting points, standards in English, mathematics and science are above average by the end of Year 6. Good teaching and a good curriculum contribute well to pupils' good achievement. Lessons are planned well to meet the needs of pupils of all abilities and ages in the mixed-age classes. There has been an important focus on science since the last inspection and standards have improved considerably. This reflects the positive impact of the school's work in this area, which includes increased resources and more opportunities for children to learn through problem-solving, enquiry and investigational skills. Pupils said they like learning in this way and are inspired and motivated. One pupil said, 'It's like turning the page in a book, you want to find out what happens next.' Sometimes the pace of lessons is not brisk enough and pupils do not have enough time for independent learning or to use their enquiry and problem-solving skills as effectively as they do in science lessons.

Effective intervention and support ensures that all pupils have the same opportunities, whatever their backgrounds or abilities. As a result, pupils with specific learning needs and those who are learning English as an additional language make similar progress to others. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning as they are well trained to provide good support to individuals and small groups. Pupils know their targets, and some know how they can improve their work to achieve them because of effective marking and feedback, although this is not consistent across all classes.

The leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher is well supported by his deputy and the impact of their work is considerable in school improvement. The senior leadership team has recently expanded and its two new members have already identified areas to develop; with the headteacher and deputy headteacher, they form a strong team. The governing body provides good strategic leadership, supports the school well and holds it to account for its performance. The headteacher's firm belief that everyone in the school community matters motivates staff and pupils. Staff feel valued and supported in developing their skills

and expertise. In the last inspection the school was asked to raise standards in science and the attainment of more able pupils, and to record how progress is measured. These issues have been dealt with well. There is good capacity to improve further, as demonstrated by the successful drive to raise standards while ensuring that pupils' personal development is not overlooked.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children get off to a good start in the EYFS. Children join with abilities that are generally in line with those expected for three-year-olds except in communication, language and literacy, and numeracy where skills are below what is expected. They make good progress, and by the end of the Reception Year almost all reach the learning goals expected for their age. This is because of good teaching and a good curriculum that provides children with a good range of opportunities to develop their skills and achieve well. There is scope, however, to make more effective use of the outdoor area. There is a good balance between activities led by adults and those where children make their own choices. Staff have recently focused on activities and extra support designed to improve writing, especially for boys who were not doing as well as girls, and this has begun to bear fruit. Children benefit from a carefully planned induction process and settle well once they start school because staff provide good care and support. One parent of a child in the Nursery wrote, 'He is already making good progress, he's made lots of friends and is always looking forward to going to school - even at weekends.' Children quickly learn to work together and develop independence. The EYFS is well led and managed and there is a good understanding of the strengths and areas to develop. Staff have worked effectively with the local authority to ensure that assessment procedures are accurate. As a result, there are effective systems to track and analyse progress in order to ensure that all children make good progress.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure all lessons are taught at a brisk pace, making the most of pupils' excellent behaviour and positive attitudes to promote their independent learning and their problem-solving, investigative and enquiry skills.
- Ensure pupils know how they can improve their work and how well they are doing towards achieving their targets.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

School data and pupils' work show that they are making good progress across the school. When children join the school they have skills and knowledge expected for their age. They achieve well; by the end of Year 2 standards are broadly average, and by time they leave standards are above average in English, mathematics and science. The school has been successful at improving standards by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 since the last inspection, especially in science and writing. The proportion of pupils reaching higher levels than expected for their ages is more than found nationally. This is considerable in science because of the school's focus on this subject since the last inspection, and science lessons offer good opportunities for practical, investigational learning. Pupils do not do as well in writing as they do in reading, but standards have improved and the gap between attainment in reading and writing has narrowed.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' good personal development is evident in their outgoing, friendly nature and positive relationships. They are courteous, lively and enthusiastic and behaviour is excellent in lessons and in the playground. They feel safe and free from bullying. The work the school has done to gain a Healthy School Award means that pupils adopt healthy lifestyles. One child said 'You should cut down the number of fizzy drinks you have and drink lots of water.' They are considerate and accepting of differences in others' social, religious and cultural backgrounds. Pupils raise considerable funds for charities. They gain a good awareness of people less fortunate than themselves through their involvement in initiatives such as sending Christmas gifts to children in need overseas. Pupils enjoy and develop an understanding and interest in the worlds of art and music, and working in and for the community, and reflect on matters concerning society as a whole, such as environmental issues. Pupils enjoy school for the friendships they make as well as for their learning. Attendance is just below average but improving. There are a small number of children who are persistently absent and some who are taken out of school during term time. As a result, they miss out on important learning.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Pupils have positive attitudes to their work. Teachers ask searching questions to extend pupils' thinking skills and give pupils opportunities to discuss their views and opinions with each other. In one outstanding literacy lesson children were happily and confidently reading each other's writing and making suggestions for improvements. Teachers' subject knowledge is secure, and learning objectives are regularly shared with the pupils. In science, a more practical approach to learning has been successfully adopted. This has given pupils more opportunities to investigate and explore, which has had a positive impact on the quality of learning and standards in science. Introductions to some lessons are overlong, which can slow the pace and lead to a lack of opportunities for independent learning, but the pupils continue to stay on task and are keen to contribute.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Events such as the themed weeks, visits and visitors to school and after school activities successfully add to the richness of the curriculum. These activities broaden pupils' personal experiences and widen their horizons. Pupils spoke with enthusiasm about a recent trip to the British Museum as part of their study of the Egyptians, where, as one pupils said, 'Seeing things makes everything more exciting than just reading about it in a book.' Pupils appreciate the wide range of after school clubs that help them keep fit and healthy, and those where they can learn new skills such as playing hand bells and learning Spanish. They are particularly proud of their musical achievements that enable them to perform in the local community and beyond. One parent wrote, 'The school offers lots of after school activities which help to enhance the children's learning. The Year 6 trip to France was a wonderful opportunity for our children to experience others' culture, language and ways of gaining independence.' Nevertheless, the curriculum does not always make the most of pupils' good personal skills and excellent behaviour to provide problem-solving and independent activities that enliven learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Good care and support is based firmly on the values that the school promotes and which are well understood by pupils and parents. As a result, pupils learn to value and respect others. One parent commented, 'I am very pleased to send my child to Bishop Ridley, a Church of England school. Even though we as a family are Muslims, I knew she would not be treated differently and that our culture would be respected.' Arrangements for safeguarding pupils are robust. The school works in good partnership with parents and with a wide range of external agencies to support pupils' needs. There are effective measures to work with families to promote better attendance and the number of children who are taken out of school for holidays has reduced, as has the number of persistent absentees. Reminders and initiatives directly aimed at pupils to encourage better attendance are not frequent enough. Pupils have clear targets for learning displayed in their books and on wall charts. Marking and feedback to help pupils improve their work lacks consistency across classes and subjects.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The leadership of the school at all levels is focused very well on helping pupils to develop their personal as well as their academic skills. The school's evaluation of itself is accurate and clear plans are in place to improve the school still further. Governors provide good support. They know the school very well and have taken action to help the school improve. The school has set challenging targets to raise standards further and is well on the way to meeting them in 2009. There is a shared drive to improve standards and the provision by working well together in the school, Church and local communities and keeping the needs of all pupils at the forefront of the school's work. As a result, pupils achieve well in their work and make good gains in their personal development. Subject managers have a good knowledge of the curriculum area they are leading.

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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?	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?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
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?	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	1
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	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**

06 February 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Bishop Ridley Church of England V A Primary School, Bexley, DA16 2QE

I am writing to let you know how much my colleagues and I enjoyed our visit to your school and what we found out. Thank you for making us so welcome, for talking to us about your work and telling us what you think about your school. We found out that yours is a good school and here are the reasons why.

- You like being at the school and get on very well with each other and all of the staff.
- Teachers provide lots of extra things to do in school and organise lots of visits, which you told us you really enjoy.
- Your behaviour is excellent and this helps you learn well in your lessons.
- You work hard and achieve well. Well done for this, as it means that the standard of your English, mathematics and science work is above average when you go to your next school.
- Teachers have helped you to really improve your achievements in science and you told us how much you like your science lessons. Now your writing is getting much better too. Well done for this.
- You know what to do to keep fit and healthy and make good choices for yourselves.
- Everyone in the school looks after you well and helps you to succeed.
- Your headteacher and the senior leaders do a good job in running the school.

These are the things we have asked your headteacher and teachers to do to make your school even better.

- Because you behave so well and are very positive and enthusiastic about all that you do, we want teachers to make sure you have enough time in your lessons to learn independently and use your problem-solving and investigating skills which help you do so well in science.
- We want teachers to make sure you know how you can improve your work and how well you are doing towards achieving your targets.

You must help by coming to school every day and being on time, otherwise you will miss out on important learning. Thank you again for all your help and for being so interesting and friendly to talk to.

Yours faithfully

Margaret Coussins

Lead Inspector