

St Bartholomew's CofE VC Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	135041
Local Authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	329010
Inspection dates	18–19 May 2009
Reporting inspector	Anthony O'Malley HMI

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	278
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	Paul Ames
Headteacher	Susan Helps
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Princess Way Stourport-on-Severn DY13 0EL
Telephone number	01299 823454

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	18–19 May 2009
Inspection number	329010

Fax number

01299 825655

Age group	3-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

The school opened in September 2007 as part of the local reorganisation of schools that occurred in the Wyre Forest area of Worcestershire. Most of the current pupils transferred from two first schools. The majority of the school's members of staff were appointed at that time from these schools and a former middle school. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is much higher than the national average. The great majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds, but there are a handful of pupils with minority ethnic backgrounds including pupils from Traveller communities. Early Years Foundation Stage education is provided through a pre-nursery, a Nursery and a Reception class. The after-school club based on the site is managed privately, and subject to a separate inspection.

In September 2008, a new acting headteacher was appointed. In April 2009, she was appointed as the headteacher of the school. The school has gained an Activemark for physical education and the Healthy Schools Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

St Bartholomew's provides its pupils with a satisfactory education. It cares well for pupils and this contributes greatly to their good personal development. Parents, pupils and staff agree that the school has improved dramatically since the appointment of the new headteacher. Her inspirational leadership has helped the school overcome many of the issues that can arise when new schools are created as part of a local review. Standards and achievement have improved significantly and the school is a happy place in which to learn and work. Comments written by parents emphasise that the new school is already a valued part of the local community. One parent's comment expressed the views of many: 'It is nice to see how much the school has changed and continues to develop for the better. Both my children are happy to come to school each day.'

Children start in the pre-nursery with skills below those typical of children their age. Throughout the school, they make satisfactory progress but standards, although improving, remain below average. This is because inadequate provision in the past has resulted in many pupils having a weaker grasp of basic literacy and number skills than is expected for their age. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities generally make the same progress as others. However, additional provision for the most vulnerable pupils helps them achieve well.

Exclusion rates were very high before the appointment of the present headteacher. A new behaviour policy and good quality care, guidance and support have had a very positive impact and there have been no exclusions this school year. Pupils enjoy coming to school and almost all behave well. They feel safe and secure in their surroundings because pastoral care is strong. They choose healthy lunches and are keen to participate in the good range of sporting activities. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is also good. In assemblies and in lessons, pupils show they are able to reflect sensitively and show respect for others' needs, interests and feelings. Pupils respond well to a good range of opportunities to share their views and take part in community activities within and beyond the school.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory but varies across the different year groups and sets. Some teaching is good or outstanding but in too many lessons, particularly in Key Stage 2, the tasks set for pupils do not match their learning needs precisely enough. When this happens, most pupils remain on task but are not challenged enough to make good progress. The school's curriculum is satisfactory. There is a necessary focus on literacy and numeracy, and information and communication technology (ICT) supports this work well. However, initiatives linking different subjects and teaching them in a creative way to raise standards are still at the planning stage. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher has acted quickly to develop the leadership roles of governors and senior staff. They have a good grasp of the school's strengths as well as its weaker areas. Already they are skilled in motivating and supporting others. They recognise that while the school has made good improvement in most areas of its work over the last year, turning it into a good school will be dependent on the continued hard work of the whole school community. Many middle managers are new to their roles, and so have not yet had the chance to make an impact within their subject areas. The school's capacity for further improvement is satisfactory.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

With satisfactory teaching and support from classroom assistants, children of all abilities and backgrounds make satisfactory, and sometimes better, progress in all the areas of learning. They make most progress in their personal, social and emotional development. Their skills in writing and calculating have improved during the year. However, these areas remain relative weaknesses and a significant number of children do not have the skills expected when they enter Year 1 because of their low starting points. The good quality of care helps children to settle quickly into the pre-nursery, Nursery and Reception classes. All children are happy to approach staff for assistance or support. The accommodation, soon to be replaced, is organised effectively to promote interest, exploration and excitement although at present the outside area is less attractive. The leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are satisfactory. All staff are fully aware of the statutory requirements to safeguard these young children and the required documentation is in place. At present the systems used to track progress at different points in the Early Years Foundation Stage are not consistently applied, and so staff are not always sharply aware of how children are developing and achieving in relation to the age-related statements in the national framework. This blunts the ability of the staff to focus timely support where it is most needed. Despite this weakness, parents are very pleased with the start their children make and appreciate how friendly and approachable staff are at the beginning and end of each session.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards by securing improvement in the pupils' grasp of basic literacy and numeracy skills.
- Increase the proportion of good teaching and learning by ensuring that tasks set in all lessons more precisely match the pupils' learning needs.
- Develop the leadership roles of middle managers to improve the school's capacity for improvement.
- Implement a consistent assessment policy in the Early Years Foundation Stage that will help track the children's development and achievement.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged to be 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 throughout the school are below average but they are improving. The school took appropriate action when national assessments in 2008 showed that standards at the end of Year 6 were exceptionally low and rates of progress were inadequate. The legacy of inadequate provision is still evident and gaps in the pupils' basic literacy and numeracy skills remain. However, evidence in lessons and in books shows an increasing proportion of pupils working at or above the expected levels. There is a particularly good improvement in the standards in mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress. Additional provision introduced to help accelerate their progress and enable them to catch up with the others is starting to have a positive impact. The most vulnerable

pupils make good progress and benefit from the school's accurate understanding of their needs and the targeted provision in the nurture unit and learning support base.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils have a good understanding of right and wrong and a clear sense of what it means to belong to a community. They are aware of the school's expectations and show a good level of respect for one another and for the different backgrounds and beliefs of others. Assemblies are calm and reflective times, and the playground is a happy place where pupils get on well. Pupils' attendance and punctuality have improved over the last year. Attendance is now broadly average, though there are still too many pupils who arrive late. Pupils feel safe at school. They are confident that staff, prefects or members of the 'Jumping Jax' team will quickly resolve any problems they have. Pupils enjoy taking on responsibility, and all feel that the school listens carefully to their views. Pupils' good social skills and their satisfactory literacy, numeracy and ICT skills mean that they are adequately prepared for the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The most rapid progress occurs in lessons where adults have a clear awareness of individual pupils' learning needs and good subject knowledge. This enables them to anticipate the difficulties pupils are likely to encounter during the lesson and plan resources, questions and individual activities accordingly. Such strong practice was evident in an outstanding English lesson where ICT helped pupils make excellent progress with their reading, and in the nurture unit and the learning support base, where improving the pupils' self-confidence is essential. However, not all teachers and teaching assistants display such good subject knowledge. Consequently, in about half of their lessons pupils only make satisfactory progress because the explanations of concepts lack clarity or because the tasks chosen to help them meet the lesson's learning objectives do not effectively consolidate or extend understanding.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The restructuring of the curriculum to focus on raising standards in reading, writing and mathematics is helping to bring about improvement in these vital areas. However, although pupils still experience a broad curriculum, their work in subjects such as history and geography is relatively shallow. Opportunities to enliven and enrich the pupils' learning experiences and further develop basic skills through these subjects are limited. Resources for ICT are good and effective use is made of these to enhance learning both at school and at home. The good range of extra-curricular clubs is very popular with pupils and contributes well to their personal development. Links with the local church and charities both at home and abroad help secure good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school takes great care to promote the pupils' welfare, and procedures for safeguarding their well-being meet requirements. Particularly impressive is the school's commitment to

ensuring equality of opportunity. Parents of pupils with disabilities meet regularly with the headteacher to share their views and discuss any barriers to their children's learning. Similarly, the school is active in forming strong links with Traveller families and with the carers of children looked after by the local authority. The actions taken to reduce the high rate of exclusions and support pupils with emotional difficulties are having a very positive impact and reflect good partnerships with a range of external agencies. Academic guidance is less strong because the quality of marking to inform pupils about their progress is variable across the school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The whole school community recognises the tremendous impact the recently appointed headteacher has had on the quality of education and care provided by the school. She has successfully established a clear direction for improvement and has developed a leadership team with high aspirations. The school's self-evaluation processes accurately identify and prioritise the important areas for development. Among these is the building of leadership capacity at all levels. The school makes good use of outside support for pupils and staff, and works closely with other professionals and parents. It has taken strong measures in response to persistent absence and poor punctuality. The school's contribution to community cohesion is satisfactory overall, but it has been particularly successful in responding to the needs of the local area it serves. Governors fulfil their role satisfactorily. They too now have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and support the headteacher and her staff wholeheartedly as they work to improve the school.

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
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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	NA
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 ¹ 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	3

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	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

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	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

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
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**

20 May 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Bartholomew's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School,
Stourport-on-Severn, DY13 0EL

Thank you for being so helpful and friendly when we visited your school recently. We really enjoyed meeting you and talking to you. We found that your school is giving you a satisfactory education at the moment, and that the staff are working hard to improve it so that in future you all do as well as you possibly can.

We know that you like going to school because everybody gets on well together. We found that you behave well in lessons and in the playground. The staff look after you well, and those of you who need extra help are well supported. It was pleasing to hear how you are contributing to improving the school through the work of the school council and the 'Jumping Jax' team. However, we also learned that a few of you are absent from school more than is usual, and that every day some pupils arrive late.

We agree with you that since joining the school your headteacher has done a great job. The changes she has made mean that leadership and management in the school are now satisfactory and your teachers ensure that you are all now making at least satisfactory progress.

At the end of the inspection we asked Mrs Helps, the staff and governors to do four things to make your school more effective. We asked them to make sure that:

- you are all able to read and write well and are confident using numbers
- all of your lessons are taught well so that you make good progress
- more teachers are helping your headteacher to improve your school
- staff in the pre-nursery, Nursery and Reception classes check carefully how well children are learning, so they can always make sure you are doing well.

You too can play your part in helping the school improve by continuing to work hard, and by always trying to attend school and arrive on time.

Yours faithfully

Anthony O'Malley

Her Majesty's Inspector