

The Ellis Church of England (Voluntary Aided) Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106638
Local Authority	Barnsley
Inspection number	336711
Inspection dates	17–18 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Carmen Markham

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	214
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs J Horner
Headteacher	Mrs Pam Randall
Date of previous school inspection	9 July 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 10 lessons and observed the 9 teachers working in school during the inspection. They spoke with pupils about their learning and looking at teaching and learning in lessons and in pupils' books. The inspectors held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils and spoke informally to parents. They observed the school's work and looked at the school improvement plan, school policies, safeguarding documents and details of the progress made by pupils. The responses to 56 parental questionnaires, together with responses to pupil and staff questionnaires, were also scrutinised.

- the progress of pupils from the Early Years Foundation Stage to the end of Year 6 to identify whether any groups of pupils are underachieving
- whether pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and other outcomes in relation to their personal development are strengths of the school
- whether the quality of teaching is good enough to enable all groups of pupils to learn effectively
- the effectiveness of the school's monitoring, self-evaluation and development planning in improving pupils' attainment and achievement.

Information about the school

This primary school is average in size and serves a mainly white British population. There are no pupils who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below the national average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well below the national average. The school holds the Silver Healthy School Award. In recent years the school has experienced the long-term absence of several members of staff including senior leaders. At the time of the inspection three out of eight teaching staff were supply teachers.

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

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

4

The school's 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 special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement.

There are weaknesses in teaching, the curriculum and in the way the school is led and managed. These aspects are inadequate and result in pupils underachieving and making insufficient progress in their learning. Since her appointment, four years ago, the headteacher has not had a stable enough leadership team to help her manage the school because of staff absence as a result of ill- health. The headteacher is very committed to the school and has worked hard to try to improve the quality of provision but without success. This is because she has found the staffing situation increasingly difficult to manage. While the supply staff are usually effective, they do not provide the continuity that the school requires and are not able to play a full part in school improvement. Effective monitoring of the quality of provision and secure evaluation of the school's performance to identify clear action for improvement has taken second place to keeping the school working on a day-to-day basis. This has meant that issues raised in the last inspection have not been dealt with effectively and areas of weakness arising since then, for example in the Early Years Foundation Stage, have gone unnoticed or not been addressed.

There is no leader of the Early Years Foundation Stage. While day-to-day provision and children's progress are mainly satisfactory, children could achieve better. The lack of leadership and management in this phase is a key weakness and significantly contributes to the overall effectiveness of the provision being inadequate.

The learning and progress of pupils are inadequate because they are too variable throughout the school. This variability is directly related to the quality of teaching, which is unsatisfactory overall. Pupils start school with skills that are broadly in line with those expected for their age. Progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 although variable is broadly satisfactory. However, in lower Key Stage 2 pupils' learning and progress are inadequate, including for those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. In Years 5 and 6 pupils' progress accelerates. Here, teachers are effective and provide exciting activities that promote good learning. By the end of Year 6 standards have risen and are broadly in line with the national averages in English, mathematics and science. However, pupils are capable of attaining higher standards of attainment and consequently their overall achievement is inadequate. The curriculum is not good enough because it is not adapted sufficiently to enable all pupils to reach their

potential or continuously develop the basic skills they need. The school is not preparing pupils adequately for the next stage of their education. The variability in the quality of provision and its impact on the underachievement of a sizeable proportion of pupils means that the school is failing to promote equal opportunities for all pupils.

A strength of the school is the good personal development of pupils including their spiritual, moral and social development; cultural development is not as strong. Pupils have a good understanding of local culture, including brass bands, and have a developing understanding of a range of world faiths. They are reflective about their own beliefs and are kind and considerate to each other. Their behaviour is good and they know how to stay healthy and safe, including how to report dangers. Pupils make a good contribution to the local community through the local junior action group. However, a whole-school strategy to promote community cohesion has not been implemented. The school provides satisfactory care, guidance and support for pupils.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' attainment and improve their achievement, particularly in the main subjects of English, mathematics and science.
- Improve the effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage in raising children's achievement by ensuring that there is appropriate leadership and management of the provision.
- Improve the consistency of teaching so that inadequate teaching is eliminated and the majority of teaching is good or better.
- Improve the quality and effectiveness of leadership and management at all levels, including governance, in monitoring and evaluating the school's performance to raise pupils' attainment and achievement.
- Promote equality of opportunity and community cohesion more effectively.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

4

Although there are groups of pupils who do achieve satisfactorily and enjoy their learning, overall pupils' achievement is inadequate because learning and progress are inconsistent across the school. Consequently, there are sizeable groups of pupils who underachieve. Some pupils have written in their responses to the inspection questionnaires about how they would like to make more progress. The majority of these pupils are in classes where teaching is inadequate. In such lessons, the work pupils undertake does not engage them sufficiently in their own learning.

The pattern of attainment over time reached by pupils at the end of Key stage 1 is broadly average. In 2009, attainment rose to above average with some notable improvements in reading and mathematics. These pupils achieved well. However, recent staff absence in Key Stage 1 is having a detrimental effect on the pattern of learning and progress currently seen in lessons. Some parents and carers have expressed concern about declining standards since September 2009. Furthermore, the good progress pupils have made by the end of Year 2 is not maintained when they move to

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lower Key Stage 2. Classroom observations, scrutiny of pupils' work and the school's own tracking data show that insufficient progress is made in English, mathematics and science until pupils join Year 5. Pupils' progress then accelerates and they make up some of their lost learning, but the gap is too large to be fully closed before pupils reach the end of Year 6. Despite attaining standards that are broadly in line with the national average, pupils' overall progress since starting school is inadequate. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities also underachieve. Boys, generally, do not perform as well as their peers nationally or as well as girls in this school.

The school is a harmonious community. Pupils take on responsibilities and care for each other in lessons and around the school. This is seen to work well in the playground where pupils are happy and occupied in activities that are well resourced, and play leaders help games to develop well. Pupils behave well and know how to stay safe. They enjoy working with the local community as a junior action group, looking at ways to resolve problems like litter, and this extends their social awareness. They have good opportunities to apply what they have learned in lessons on personal development. Pupils are aware of the importance of staying healthy and enjoy their involvement in an allotment project and in sporting activities with the local high school. Despite being involved in projects on sustainability and enterprise, pupils' development of skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being is limited by the inadequate development of basic skills in some year groups.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	4
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	4
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	4
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2

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

The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	4
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teaching varies between inadequate and outstanding. Overall the quality is unsatisfactory because it is not consistent or of a high enough standard to ensure all pupils make at least satisfactory progress during their time at the school. In the weaker lessons, teaching assistants are not used effectively enough and teachers direct the lesson while pupils rarely contribute to their own learning. The work pupils are given is often based on worksheets that do not give them opportunities to think for themselves or to be independent learners. They become bored and uninterested in these lessons and sometimes find it difficult to manage their own behaviour. In contrast, where learning is good or better, skilled teachers work in close partnership with their teaching assistants, have very high expectations and meet the needs of different abilities very effectively. They motivate and empower pupils to learn. An impressive example resulting in outstanding learning and progress was seen in the excitement and interest of pupils working on prime numbers.

Assessment to support learning is not used effectively enough by all teachers. Pupils are not sufficiently aware of their targets and often targets are not relevant to where they are in their learning. Pupils have little understanding of what levels they are attaining and have few skills in evaluating their own performance. Some teachers are not sufficiently aware of their pupils' attainment and so do not take this into account in planning lessons. The result is that work is not matched well enough to pupils' needs. Marking is often not helpful in informing pupils of how they can improve.

The school is aware that the curriculum currently does not do enough to foster pupils' basic skills or the application of skills in a range of situations and subjects. Curriculum development, including some work to adapt activities to reflect boys' interests more, has been restricted by the limited capacity of staff to work on this area. The curriculum does however make a strong contribution to the social, moral, spiritual and cultural development of pupils and the evidence for this is seen in the good outcomes for personal development. These are further enhanced by a popular range of clubs and enrichment activities, such as the many school visits based on a historic theme, and the opportunity all pupils have to play a musical instrument in Year 4. Despite these strengths, the curriculum is inadequate because it is not adapted well enough to ensure that all pupils make sufficient progress in developing basic skills.

The school takes appropriate care of pupils and its arrangements for child protection are securely in place. Pastoral arrangements are effective, and parents and carers feel involved with their children's learning. Links with external agencies such as the school psychological service ensure pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are

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supported appropriately. Good relationships with pupils are fostered by staff. Arrangements to ensure regular attendance are usually effective and the school ensures that parents and carers are aware of the need for regular attendance. Transition arrangements at different stages of the pupils' education meet their needs.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	4
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	4
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	4
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	3

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has a strong vision for a school that includes the good achievement of pupils. However, the staffing situation makes this a difficult vision to realise when the school's immediate priority is ensuring that all classes have teachers. Until recently, the headteacher has been the only leader consistently present in school. The impact of this is that leaders' involvement in monitoring provision and ensuring pupils' good progress has not been rigorously undertaken. While the headteacher has been aware of some of the weaknesses in the school, she thought that things were better than they are. Consequently, actions to remedy deep-seated weaknesses and successfully address the recommendations from the school's last inspection have been overlooked. Opportunities to develop the role of middle managers have been missed. As a large group of pupils in school at the lower end of Key Stage 2 are making insufficient progress, the promotion of equality of opportunity is inadequate. The inadequate outcomes for pupils mean that the school provides unsatisfactory value for money.

The school engages with parents and carers with some success. The school website keeps parents and carers well informed about school activities and the work their children will be doing. They are offered regular opportunities to discuss their child's progress. Partnerships with other schools and local organisations have fostered an interest in music and sport. Local schools have provided additional professional support for the school in mathematics as well as in information and communication technology. Pupils have opportunities to develop their knowledge of a range of faiths and to consider the needs of others across the globe, but community cohesion has not been planned or developed more formally. Although the school has identified this as an area for development, the school is not currently meeting its statutory obligations. The effectiveness of safeguarding systems and procedures is satisfactory. All staff are appropriately trained and aware of child protection procedures.

Governors are very supportive of the school's work and have a high profile in its daily life. Some are well known to the pupils and staff and support the school in a variety of

ways including working in classrooms with pupils. However, they have not been sufficiently effective in challenging the low levels of achievement and poor quality of teaching and the governing body does not meet all of its statutory duties.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	4
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	4
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	4
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	4
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	4
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	4

Early Years Foundation Stage

Although cohorts vary, children generally start school with skills and experiences that are typical for their age. They make satisfactory progress so that their knowledge and understanding is in line with that which is expected on entry to Year 1. Children enjoy school and are confident when talking to adults about what they are doing and learning. They can explain why fruit and vegetables are healthy things to eat and why buns and chocolate are treats. Behaviour is good and children play together well, readily learning to take turns and cooperate.

Despite the smooth day-to-day running, leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage are inadequate. Staffing issues mean that no one has sole responsibility for the direction, development and quality of the provision. There is a lack of monitoring to ensure that activities are interesting and sufficiently varied and that a check is kept on the number of worksheets completed by children. The absence of a leader to demonstrate and foster good practice is a weakness and is evident in the limited use made of the assessments of children's progress to inform lesson planning and the limited record keeping. Across the Early Years Foundation Stage children have restricted opportunities to access the outside provision. There are, however, some clear strengths in the staff; for example, in the Nursery there is good team work and skilled individuals sensitively support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities,

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displaying just the right balance of nurture with developing independent skills. Effective transition arrangements mean that children settle quickly. Throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage relationships between children and adults are positive.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	4
Taking into account:	
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 of the Early Years Foundation Stage	4

Views of parents and carers

Parents were largely positive about the school, comments ranged from children being very happy in the Nursery and making good progress there, to appreciation of the personal help and support provided by the school during a family crisis. A typical comment was, 'The school has a very friendly atmosphere where children come first.' There were also a number of negative comments. These centred on parents' and carers' concerns about poor staffing and the disruption it has caused to their children's learning. They included statements such as teaching being very, 'hit and miss', 'the continuity of teaching being poor and disrupting the flow of learning', and there being, 'too many supply teachers'. Inspectors share these concerns. Although teachers' absence is unavoidable, the school is responsible for minimising the disruption to pupils and we have asked the school to address this.

Some parents were concerned about the way the school manages unacceptable behaviour. These parents expressed the view that they were not listened to and that they did not know how incidents had been handled. They would like the school's website to explain how they can make complaints about poor behaviour. Inspectors did not find evidence of inappropriate behaviour not being effectively managed during the inspection. Several pupils do exhibit challenging behaviour. The school has ensured that these pupils have personal plans to manage their behaviour. All incidents are well documented and the action taken is clearly stated and appropriate.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at The Ellis Church of England (Voluntary Aided) Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 56 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 214 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	39	64	18	30	3	5	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	40	66	20	33	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	26	43	30	49	3	5	1	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	31	51	22	36	5	8	3	5
The teaching is good at this school	32	52	22	36	5	8	1	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	34	56	18	30	6	10	1	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	34	56	26	43	1	2	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	23	38	29	48	4	7	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	33	54	21	34	5	8	1	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	24	39	23	38	9	15	4	7
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	27	44	25	41	5	8	2	3
The school is led and managed effectively	37	61	19	31	0	0	3	5
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	33	54	22	36	4	7	2	3

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
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.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
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.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



19 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Ellis Church of England (Voluntary Aided) Primary School, Barnsley, S73 0PS

I would like to thank you for making the inspection team so welcome. A special thank you goes to the pupils who gave up some of their time to talk to us about their work. You behave well and feel safe in school. You know how to stay healthy. You are usually kind and considerate to each other and enjoy taking on responsibilities in school. Many of you are involved in improving your school through your school council. Your clubs and activities are interesting and we can understand why, in your reply to our questionnaires, most of you said that you enjoy your school. However, we also agree with pupils who said that they do not make enough progress. We judged that your school is not doing as well as it should in helping all of you to learn as well as you can. The school has therefore been put into 'special measures'. This means that the school will be helped to improve and other inspectors will come back frequently to check how well your school is making progress. We have asked the headteacher, senior leaders, teachers and governors to do the following things:

- ensure that you all make the progress you are capable of so that you reach higher standards when you leave school
- put a teacher in charge of Nursery and Reception to check that everything there is working as well as it should be
- improve the quality of teaching so that it is good or better
- ensure that all of those responsible for leading and managing your school work together to keep a closer check on your progress and how well teachers are helping you learn
- do more to help you understand about other communities.

You can all help your school to improve by working hard to meet your targets.

Yours sincerely

Carmen Markham

Lead inspector

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