

Bulmer St Andrews Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115067
Local Authority	Essex
Inspection number	338503
Inspection dates	2–3 December 2009
Reporting inspector	Sheelagh Barnes

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	82
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Alison Burke
Headteacher	Mrs Ellena Mortimer
Date of previous school inspection	5 July 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited seven lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation including pupils' work in books, records for the tracking of pupils' progress, individual education plans, school development planning and information provided to the governors, health and safety policies, curriculum policies and a range of other policies and plans. The inspectors also took account of the 45 parental questionnaires which were returned.

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

- the quality of provision for children in the early years and the progress they make
- the standards and progress in mathematics, particularly for the more able pupils
- the consistency of the quality of teaching across all year groups.

Information about the school

Bulmer St Andrews is a much smaller than average school. The vast majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is slightly below average overall but varies so that in some classes it is above average at around a third. The proportion known to be entitled to free school meals is below average. The school has gained the Activemark award. There is pre-school provision on site, but it is not run by the governing body and is inspected separately. There have been recent significant changes to the governing body, including a number of new members.

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

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Bulmer St Andrews provides a good quality of education for its pupils. Recently, there have been good, rapid improvements in many aspects of the school's work. This is because of the committed and determined leadership of the headteacher combined with the wholehearted support of staff, parents, governors and pupils alike. Morale is high and pupils are proud of their school.

Recent improvement is a result of actions taken that were identified in the school's honest and rigorous self-evaluation. Because of this, there is a good capacity for further improvement and all share a vision for the future of the school. Progress towards this vision is firmly underway and, while some aspects are still being addressed, other aspects of school life are already good or better. Provision for pupils to learn about and choose healthy lifestyles is outstanding. As a result, pupils make many choices that improve their health and well-being and they are excellent ambassadors for healthy lifestyles when talking to others. Pupils of all ages interact and behave well, and are highly considerate and very supportive of each other in lessons and around the school. They enjoy school and attendance is above average. This has a positive impact on the ethos of the school and on learning. A recent successful whole school focus has been to raise the quality of teaching and assessment. Good teaching was observed in all classes during the inspection and this, together with good use of assessment and an improved curriculum, is ensuring that pupils from all groups, including more able pupils, are making good gains in their learning. This improved progress is helping to raise standards quickly and current pupils in Year 6 are in line to exceed the expected performance for their age by the end of the school year.

Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory, and has rightly been highlighted in the school development plan as an area for improvement. While school leaders ensure that the best use is made of currently available resources, accommodation restrictions and the organisation of the class have a negative impact on children's development because the children cannot always freely choose from a wide range of suitably stimulating activities, both indoors and out.

School leaders and governors are also aware that while links within the school are strong and those with parents and other local groups are good, links with the wider national and global community are only just developing. There has been some evaluation of wider links, but not of their impact on pupils' development.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage by ensuring that:

- children in the Reception class have full access on a daily basis to freely-chosen activities
- all activities are carefully planned to improve children's achievement in all six areas of learning.
- Develop the strategy for enhancing pupils' awareness of the wider world by
- strengthening links beyond the school and local community, and undertaking regular analysis of the impact of this on pupils' learning.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

In lessons observed during the inspection, pupils from all groups and all levels of prior attainment were seen to be making good gains in their learning. Work in lessons and in pupils' books confirmed that a very large majority are making good progress in writing and mathematics, and sometimes outstanding progress in learning to read. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are making good progress towards their targets because of carefully structured support. Pupils in Year 6 are on track to reach the challenging targets in the national tests at the end of the year that the school has set for them. Pupils really do enjoy learning because of skilled teaching, and maintain good levels of concentration and application as a result. They have a good understanding of how well they are doing and want to come to school because it is enjoyable. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education.

Pupils in discussions and in their questionnaire responses say that they feel safe and enjoy school. They take part wholeheartedly in activities outside lessons, which include sports and the arts. Most pupils take part in at least one extra activity with many attending a number of activities. They are exceedingly well aware of the need to adopt healthy lifestyles and older pupils talk with confidence of how they try to persuade younger pupils, for example, to at least try vegetables at lunchtime. Pupils seize opportunities for community contributions enthusiastically, such as their charitable contributions and working to make things for the Christmas Fair. They explain how proud they are that their views are taken into consideration when whole school decisions are made. Pupils' contribution to the school community has developed rapidly and is good.

Pupils use their imaginations well and demonstrate a maturity in the way they reflect on their experiences. They show a readiness to consider the thoughts of others and to resolve conflicts. They say that there is little arguing or difference of opinion and when this does occur it is resolved quickly. They show well thought-out views of the differences between right and wrong and a great willingness to participate with others. However, their understanding of the attitudes and views of other religious, ethnic and socio-economic groups in the national and global community is more limited.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

There has been significant improvement in the quality of teaching since the previous inspection, and inadequate teaching has been eradicated. The care that teachers take when planning and delivering lessons leads to pupils making good progress in their learning. Teachers pay good regard to information from rigorous and accurate assessments. Effective support is given to any pupil who is falling behind his or her peers. Extra challenge is given to those who find learning easier. Teachers and adults make sure that pupils know what is expected of them and what they need to do to make their work even better. Because of this, pupils feel actively involved and take good levels of responsibility for their learning.

There has been a recent review to ensure that the curriculum remains both well organised and imaginative. It is carefully managed to ensure it meets the needs of all pupils including potentially higher attaining pupils and also those who need more time to consolidate what they have been taught. Particularly good use is made of information and communication technology to support learning in literacy and numeracy. Opportunities for enrichment are varied and hugely enjoyed.

Arrangements for the care of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, contribute effectively to their good development and well-being. Pupils say how safe and happy they feel in school. Parents are also full of praise for the way school ensures that children settle in well when they start, move seamlessly from

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

one class to another and are provided with good information before they move to secondary school. Good quality advice and guidance enables pupils to make well informed choices and develop good levels of confidence and self-esteem.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

New staff appointments and the ambitious vision for the school of the headteacher have provided a catalyst for improvement that has already resulted in significant changes. All parties, including staff, pupils, parents, carers and governors, now share the same aims, which include high expectations and the striving for challenging targets. The clarity of vision of the headteacher and her commitment are backed by all and have resulted not only in improvements, but also in a strong feeling of pride in the school amongst staff, pupils and governors alike. Governors take part in shaping the direction of the school and fulfil their statutory responsibilities well. Many governors are new, however, and the governing body has identified the need to re-evaluate roles and update training to enable all governors to have more confidence to provide challenge to the school.

Strong leadership ensures good promotion of equality for all through close links with a wide range of outside professional agencies and effective steps to tackle discrimination. Safeguarding procedures are thorough, rigorously applied and reviewed regularly. The school works well to ensure pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe. Governors and leaders are aware that links within the school and local community are strong, but the school has not done enough to improve community cohesion beyond the school and the local area. There are plans to extend national and international links. The school has started to evaluate its work in this area, but has not formally evaluated the impact across religious, ethnic and socio-economic contexts for pupils and for others.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3

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

The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Good relationships with parents and carers, combined with the positive and friendly attitudes of older pupils, work well to help children settle quickly when they join the school. Reception children are taught in one class with pupils in Year 1. Staff working with children concentrate, rightly, on laying the foundations for learning by focusing on developing well-established routines and children's cooperation skills. As a result, children are happy to come to school and know what is expected of them.

Children have some opportunity to work outdoors on most days. However, restrictions of the classroom and the curriculum for older pupils in the same class limit opportunities for 'free-flow' play between indoors and out, or for children to make decisions as to what equipment to use and when. School leaders have identified this as an area for improvement. Assessment is detailed and covers the six areas of learning for children of this age. Teachers take satisfactory regard of the information from assessment when planning lessons. As a result, children make satisfactory progress across all areas of learning.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
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	3

Views of parents and carers

Views from parents and carers in response to the questionnaire were generally very positive with many commenting on how supportive they found the school. Many commented on how happy and settled their children are in the school. This reflects the

good relationships between the school and parents and carers. However, a significant minority said they had reservations about the quality of leadership and management and that there are sometimes some last minute changes to arrangements. Inspectors looked at the evidence from communication, including parental responses to the school's own questionnaires and the leadership and management of the school, which strongly points to effective leadership and organisation. A number of recent changes have been outside the control of the school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Bulmer St Andrews Church of England Voluntary Controlled 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 45 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 82 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	37	84	7	16	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	28	64	11	25	4	9	1	2
The school informs me about my child's progress	18	41	22	50	3	7	1	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	13	30	29	66	1	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	13	30	29	66	2	5	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	18	41	24	55	2	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	33	75	11	25	0	0	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)	24	55	18	41	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	18	41	26	59	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	14	32	23	52	2	5	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	13	30	27	61	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	10	23	18	41	11	25	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	23	52	21	48	0	0	0	0

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.



4 December 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Bulmer St Andrews Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School, Bulmer, CO10 7EH

Thank you for making us so welcome and for being so friendly and helpful when we visited your school recently. I particularly want to thank those pupils who gave time to talk to me, because it was a great help in getting to know more about your school.

Bulmer St Andrews is a good school that is improving rapidly and already has a really excellent feature, which is your knowledge of and commitment to having a healthy lifestyle. Your teachers have been working hard with you, your parents and governors to make your school better and better and I know you are really proud of it. One of the improvements is that a lot of work has been done to make the quality of teaching and your resulting progress even better. We could see how good lessons are and how much you enjoy them.

We think you get on really well with each other and many of you learn new skills by helping to take care of other children. You told me how you quickly sort out any differences you have. You have a super range of clubs and enjoy a lot of exciting and interesting things outside lessons. You do a lot for your school and local community. However, I think you could make even more of a difference on a wider level, beyond Bulmer. Your headteacher and governors had already decided that this will be one of the next things for you all to improve together.

Your teachers have also decided to develop the outside area for Reception into an even more attractive and better place to play and work. I know your headteacher and governors have plans to make all this easier. I have asked them to do all they can so that the Reception class has a bigger space and the children can go inside and out to work and play more easily, which will help them to make even more progress.

Best wishes for your future.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Barnes

Lead inspector

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