

The Bishops' Church of England and Roman Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115204
Local Authority	Essex
Inspection number	338535
Inspection dates	5–6 July 2010
Reporting inspector	Graham Preston

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	311
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Marian Uzzell
Headteacher	Gregory Waters
Date of previous school inspection	27 February 2007
School address	Beardsley Drive North Springfield Chelmsford
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 11 teachers in 19 lessons. Inspectors held meetings with governors, groups of pupils and staff. Different aspects of the school's work were observed and documentation scrutinised, including that relating to safeguarding practices, the school's self-evaluation and development planning, as well as 84 returned questionnaires from parents and carers.

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

- evidence of recent improvement in pupils' attainment and progress from school data and observations
- engagement of pupils in their learning and their behaviour in lessons and around the school
- the quality of teaching and any improvements in response to school improvement initiatives
- the positive features of care, guidance and support and their impact on pupils' development
- the impact of the new headteacher working with governors and staff in promoting school improvement.

Information about the school

This school is a jointly aided Church of England and Roman Catholic primary school that predominantly draws its intake from mixed housing areas in north Chelmsford. It is larger than most primary schools and has a steadily increasing roll. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is average, as is the percentage known to be eligible for free school meals. An increasing number of pupils come from minority ethnic groups and the proportion who speak English as an additional language is now above average. The school has achieved the Activemark and has recently gained the International Schools Award.

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

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Under the leadership of its new headteacher, the school has made significant improvements to its provision which have begun to raise standards, particularly for younger children. Staff morale is high and there is now a concerted effort by staff, governors and the headteacher to work together to bring about further improvement. Parents commented positively about the expansion of music and the arts that has enriched their children's experiences. Good progress has been made in engaging pupils and making them more reflective and responsible. This is proving successful in helping to ensure good behaviour through the school and strengthening the school's positive and inclusive ethos.

Current standards are broadly average with pupils achieving in line with national averages by the time they leave school. Efforts to improve outcomes are beginning to take effect, especially in Reception and Years 1 and 2 where end of year assessments show a rise in standards. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve as well as others in reaching their targets. The school is having success in some of its intervention work with particular groups. For example, pupils attending the early-morning reading group make good progress in improving their reading ages.

Teachers are effective in engaging pupils' interest in lessons and ensuring good behaviour. They use varied activities, including effective paired and group work. The best practice reflects confident, well-informed teaching in lessons which are fast paced and challenging. However, some learning activities are not challenging enough for all pupils and teachers are not always clear on what exactly what they want pupils to learn during the lesson. Marking is positive and encouraging, although it does not always show pupils how to improve their work and meet their targets. The curriculum is now a strength, with many more pupils having access to music tuition, working with art specialists and benefiting from expertise in sports and French. The range of extra-curricular activities is considerable. The one curriculum subject that is not strong in the school is information and communication technology (ICT). Pupils are able to develop their ICT skills but there are relatively few planned opportunities for pupils to use ICT in the different lessons. Part of the reason for this is the limited number of computers in the school. Care, guidance and support are strong throughout the school. Pupils feel safe and all children, with their varying needs, are well supported.

The new headteacher makes good use of his exceptional interpersonal skills and a love of music. His high visibility around the school includes meeting parents at the gate, leading assemblies and working positively and constructively with staff and governors. This has enabled the school to make good progress in some areas such as engaging with parents and carers, enhancing the curriculum, improving teaching, and raising

standards among younger pupils. In this he has been well supported by all the staff. Nonetheless, the delay in appointing a deputy headteacher because of financial constraints, and the consequently slower development of a school leadership team, has hindered the rate of school development. The governing body is a strength of the school. Governors know the school well and work very closely with the headteacher and staff through their links with subject leaders and year groups. The school recognises that whole-school procedures for involving staff and governors in monitoring and evaluating the impact of the school's provision are not sufficiently well developed. The improvements brought about by the new headteacher, strengths in governance, the commitment of staff and the increasing support of parents together indicate a good capacity for further improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of good and better teaching by:
 - having a much sharper focus in lesson planning on what teachers want pupils to learn
 - providing more varied challenge in learning activities for all abilities and making the most effective use of learning support staff
 - ensuring that all teachers' marking indicates clear advice on how pupils can improve their work.
- Improve provision for ICT by:
 - providing more planned opportunities for its use across the curriculum
 - involve pupils more in the use of the interactive whiteboards.
- Develop leadership and management by:
 - providing training and development, particularly in monitoring and evaluation, for senior staff and governors.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged to be satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Over recent years pupils in Year 6 have consistently reached standards in line with the national averages for mathematics and science and slightly better in reading and writing. This reflects appropriate progress for most pupils including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, who benefit from effective learning support. Analysis of school data and observations of learning indicate that pupils' progress and standards are improving in the earlier years where there is a greater proportion of good teaching. Progress of pupils in later years is satisfactory though it reflects some earlier variability in the quality of teaching and assessment which have now been resolved. The school is making effective use of a range of intervention strategies to target particular groups of learners. The before-school reading club, for example, is enabling 18

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

lower-ability pupils to considerably improve their reading skills. One parent commented "Reading club has revolutionised my child's ability to access the curriculum. From two and half years behind to five months ahead" The school's provision for the increasing proportion of pupils for whom English is an additional language is similarly ensuring that almost all are making better than expected progress.

Pupils enjoy coming to school and this is reflected in their good attendance and good relationships with teachers and others. They work well with each other and talk positively about the improved atmosphere around the school as a result of the work of the headteacher and staff in encouraging good and considerate behaviour. The school council is active in supporting the school's focus on healthy lifestyles and pupils talk enthusiastically about the wide range of activities they are involved in. Groups are involved in raising money to support schools in Africa and 'eco-warriors' in each class keep an eye on ecological matters. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. Pupils study a wide range of religions and are well aware of other cultures, particularly in Kenya where there are close links with a school, as well as from the increasing international mix of new pupils.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

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

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is satisfactory with developing strengths that reflect the work of staff as a whole to improve their practice. Behaviour management in lessons is consistently effective and staff have worked hard to achieve improved accuracy in assessing pupils' progress. The atmosphere in lessons is positive and teachers make considerable efforts to engage the pupils through interesting and varied work, which is often linked to relevant outside visits and activities. During the inspection this involved work based on a 'Pirates' theme culminating in a visit to a country park. Teachers make good use of the interactive whiteboards to present information, although there were few instances observed where pupils actively participate in their use. All lessons have purpose but the best are those that have more specific learning outcomes that pupils understand and so are able to evaluate their progress in meeting them. Teachers almost always endeavour to vary the work for students of different abilities, although they do not consistently make best use of learning support staff to help in this. Marking is regular and most effective in helping pupils improve literacy, but varies in quality in other subject areas. Pupils appreciate teachers' advice but do not necessarily relate it to their progress towards their targets and National Curriculum levels.

Teachers do not provide enough planned opportunities to use computers in lessons, in part because of the limited number of computers in the school. However, the curriculum is otherwise strong. Music and art are significant areas of enrichment, alongside a wide range of physical activities such as dance, swimming, gymnastics and various other sports. Outside visits are well used to enhance the curriculum, as are the efforts to integrate an understanding of other cultures and beliefs into different aspects of the curriculum. Staff have made a conscious effort to promote shared values that strongly reflect the school's ethos. Caring for, valuing and respecting others are all evident, for example, in the work of Year 6 pupil helpers.

These values are similarly reflected in the strong provision of care, guidance and support for pupils. Vulnerable pupils are well supported and all arrangements are made to ensure all pupils can participate in the life of the school including residential and other visits. Support staff play an important role in providing much individual support, as does the school counsellor. Some of the support staff are also involved as mentors. All this reflects a caring and inclusive school.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

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How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has made a significant difference in the short time he has been at the school. One parent commented, "He is very enthusiastic, friendly and approachable and is making a real difference to the school. Parents are now welcomed into the school as partners in our children's education. He and his staff are extremely caring and have made the school into a real community with a family atmosphere". This is typical of many comments received and reflects both the progress the school is making and its potential for the future. The changes have been made against a background of much change among senior staff. This has resulted in the headteacher working with an interim leadership group largely made up of full-time class teachers, including an acting deputy headteacher. Governors are working closely in support and the governing body has done much to ensure the school's policies for teaching, curriculum and care are implemented fully. Governors also have a strong role in ensuring that the school's safeguarding policies are fully in place and are reflected in the good practices around the school. There has been considerable strategic development but some procedures, such as those for school monitoring and evaluation, are less well documented than they should be and data analysis lacks rigour. However those procedures that identify and meet each child's needs are fully in place and, combined with the school's caring and inclusive ethos, ensure the school successfully tackles discrimination and promotes equality of opportunity. The school's work on community cohesion is good. An audit as part of the school's successful application for the International School Award demonstrated the range of its local and wider community links, its links abroad and the impact on the school's provision.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
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	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children in both Reception classes settle in readily and gain confidence through working and sharing with others. As a result of good teaching in these classes, they make good progress with their learning. Induction procedures are thorough and include careful diagnosis of additional and special educational needs. As children come from a variety of pre-school settings and home backgrounds, the school makes an early start to involving parents and has worked hard to establish good and inclusive partnerships. The two parallel classes have a common indoor area along with a large and secure outdoor play space that has been specifically developed to encourage active physical and social development through shared play. The teachers and learning support assistants jointly plan and prepare a range of engaging learning activities tailored to the children's developmental needs and abilities. Careful observation and regular assessment is used to track each child's progress and improve the learning opportunities. There has been a continuing trend of improvement in children's progress in the school's Reception classes. Children's are developing well socially and physically. Standards in communication, language and literacy are broadly similar to those nationally and a little above average in mathematical skills. The Early Years Foundation Stage is well led, and learning outcomes and welfare provision are good.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Parents are very positive about the school with a quarter of replies writing glowing comments about the new headteacher. A number of others expressed concerns about misbehaviour of a few pupils but these reflect past situations now resolved. Similarly, although a number of parents felt the school could be more responsive, inspectors found that the school has made considerable efforts recently to engage more effectively with parents and carers. As a result, it is one of the strengths recognised in the new leadership of the school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at The Bishops' Church of England and Roman Catholic 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 84 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 311 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	55	65	26	31	0	0	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	60	71	23	27	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	40	48	40	48	4	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	41	49	36	43	5	6	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	39	46	43	51	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	39	46	40	48	4	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	44	52	38	45	1	1	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)	36	43	40	48	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	47	56	32	38	5	6	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	39	46	34	40	5	6	3	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	38	45	34	40	8	10	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	55	65	27	32	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	55	65	26	31	3	4	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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

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 is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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.



7 July 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Bishops' Church of England and Roman Catholic Primary School, Chelmsford, CM1 6ZQ

Thank you for making us so welcome when we came to visit your school. Your school gives you a satisfactory and improving education, and ensures that most of you achieve as well as you should by the time you leave. The good learning support in lessons enables many of you with particular learning needs to make good progress.

A number of your parents were very pleased with the early morning reading club that has helped a number of you to considerably improve your reading.

It was good that so many of you really like coming to school and feel it is a very safe place to be. We were pleased to see how well behaved you were and how you worked well together in lessons. We noted that many of you have responsibilities around the school, such as Year 6 helpers, being 'eco-warriors' and representing your class on the school council. Many of you eat healthily and are actively involved in different sports and clubs. We were very impressed with the range of activities at the school and the considerable opportunities for music, dance and art. It was good to see that you were learning about other religions and cultures and were doing much of this through your links with a school in Kenya. Very many of your parents told us how much you like school, and this is reflected in your good attendance. You get on with your teachers and like the opportunities to be actively involved in discussion and group work. We could see that your teachers plan different activities and visits that make your learning interesting. However, we think you could do even better if teachers set out what exactly they wanted you to learn in a lesson and tailored classwork more closely to your individual needs to make sure you are all fully challenged. Your teachers mark your work regularly and often tell you how you can improve it. This is very important and we have asked them to do more of this.

The headteacher, the school governors and all the staff are working hard to improve the school further. You can all help by maintaining your good attendance and continuing to take an active part in school affairs. Thank you again for being so friendly and helpful on our visit.

Yours sincerely

Graham Preston

Lead inspector

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