

Benson Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

| | |
|--------------------------------|------------------|
| Unique Reference Number | 123125 |
| Local Authority | Oxfordshire |
| Inspection number | 340285 |
| Inspection dates | 27–28 April 2010 |
| Reporting inspector | Barbara Atcheson |

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 | 225 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Mr Adam Wood |
| Headteacher | Linda Neely |
| Date of previous school inspection | 28 April 2010 |
| School address | Oxford Road Wallingford OX10 6LX |
| Telephone number | 01491 202502 |
| Fax number | 01491 201546 |
| Email address | head.3181@benson.oxon.sch.uk |

| | |
|--------------------------|------------------|
| Age group | 4–11 |
| Inspection dates | 27–28 April 2010 |
| Inspection number | 340285 |

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It rates council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 08456 404045, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 08456 404045

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2010

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 14 lessons and observed all of the eight teachers. Inspectors also held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at school policies, governors' minutes, planning documents, pupils' work and questionnaires returned from pupils, staff and 113 parents and carers.

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

- the rate of pupils' progress from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2 and the achievement of more-able pupils to determine whether teaching is sufficiently challenging
- the effect of checks made by leaders and managers in improving achievement and the quality of teaching and learning
- the effectiveness of strategies to improve boys' progress
- the promotion and understanding of the diversity of cultures beyond the immediate location.

Information about the school

The school is of average size. Most of the pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is also below average. Their needs mainly relate to speech, language and communication difficulties. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in one Reception class and one mixed Reception and Year 1 class. Since the last inspection there have been five new teachers and four changes in the leadership team. The Early Years Foundation Stage leader was appointed in January 2010. The deputy headteacher left in 2008 and has not yet been replaced. There have been major changes in the governing body in the last year.

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

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

Benson Church of England Primary School provides a satisfactory education for its pupils and has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection. The resolve of the headteacher and her commitment to improvement has enabled the school to overcome unforeseen changes in staff and financial constraints. The school is now more settled and moving forward securely. The dip in achievement at Year 3 has been halted and pupils are successfully building on the good progress that is made throughout Key Stage 1. Good teaching at the end of Key Stage 2 has accelerated pupils' achievement. Although most pupils reach average levels of attainment at the end of Year 6, an above-average number of pupils are on track to reach the higher Level 5 in English and mathematics. Significant changes in the Early Years Foundation Stage have made a dramatic improvement in children's achievement. The current Reception children, for example, are already reaching levels which are above those expected for their age. There is a new, proactive governing body, whose strategic input is already having a positive impact on the work of the school. Successful actions have been taken to address deficiencies, based on a clear and accurate review of the school's performance. This has ensured continuing improvements in pupils' progress and enjoyment of learning and confirms the school's satisfactory capacity to continue improving.

The care, guidance and support that pupils receive are good. As a consequence, pupils behave well, have good relationships with adults and other pupils and respect each other's achievements. This cohesive community provides a warm, welcoming, stimulating environment where pupils feel cared for, safe, secure and ready to learn. Teaching is satisfactory overall. There is good teaching when the pace of learning is brisk and expectations are high, which results in good progress. However, this is not yet consistent across the school. Changes in the leadership team have meant that the impact of initiatives has not always been monitored as closely as it could have been and in some areas accountability has slipped. Consequently teachers' expectations are not always high enough and pupils, particularly the more able, are not always sufficiently challenged. Some teachers do not always make the best use of the time available for learning and in some classes boys do not take a sufficiently active part in their learning. Pupils make the best progress when teachers' marking helps to improve their work, but again this is not always the case. Pupils enjoy the exciting, creative curriculum that has been planned for them. However, in some areas the focus on the progression of basic skills is not clear enough and work is repeated or learning gaps occur. This is not helpful in raising pupils' attainment or increasing the rate of pupil progress. Leaders have focused on building a cohesive community within the school, but their plans to widen their commitment to community cohesion are still at an early stage of implantation.

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

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By April 2011 accelerate pupils' progress and raise their attainment by ensuring:
 - there is a clear progression of skills across the school
 - leaders at all levels monitor the impact of initiatives and ensure accountability at all levels.
- By April 2011 ensure that all teaching is consistently good by:
 - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can do so that all groups are suitably challenged
 - ensuring that all teachers' marking helps pupils improve their work
 - making the best use of time so that pupils are actively involved in their own learning.
- By September 2010 improve pupils' awareness of the cultural diversity in the United Kingdom so that pupils can gain first-hand experience of meeting pupils from other backgrounds and cultures.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils enjoy school and achieve satisfactorily. Rates of progress vary. Where pupils are challenged and the pace of learning is brisk, pupils make good progress. For example, Year 5 pupils were excited by their investigations to spot patterns and find rules for percentages because it was presented as a 'mission'. One boy said, 'It makes you want to work harder because it is a mission.' All pupils were totally engrossed and challenged at their own level. Pupils talked confidently about their work because they were building on previous learning and had the accurate subject-specific vocabulary to enable them to do so. However, not all learning is of this quality. Some pupils lack confidence in using and applying their skills in writing and numeracy because they have gaps in their learning. Boys are receptive to learning when it is active and practical and when the teacher involves them in their learning. However, this does not always occur and there are occasions when they sit back and do not take an active part in the learning. More-able pupils rise to the challenge when given work which stretches them. Again, there are occasions when they say the work is too easy and they are not fully involved. As a consequence, their progress slows. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress as a result of the effective support they receive in the classroom.

The positive ethos that results from the good care that pupils receive develops their personal qualities effectively. They work and play harmoniously, come to school regularly and their behaviour is good. They say there is very little bullying and know that there will always be someone who will listen to them. Pupils do know how to stay safe, although their knowledge of internet safety is less well developed. They have a good understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle. They enjoy a healthy choice at lunchtime and fruit for their break. They are proud to be members of the school council

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

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

and of the contribution they have made to the behaviour and anti-bullying policy.

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 | 3 |
| Pupils' behaviour | 2 |
| The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles | 2 |
| The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community | 3 |
| 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 |

How effective is the provision?

Teachers have good relationships with their pupils and support them well with good pastoral care so that pupils want to learn and do their best. Where teaching is good, the learning is accurately matched to pupils' ability and teachers use their own good subject knowledge and understanding well to deepen and extend pupils' learning. For example, Year 6 pupils showed a good understanding of how to sort text by annotating features and identifying genre. They talked confidently about what they were doing and were able to explain the reasons for their actions. However, there are times when teachers' expectations are too low and lessons do not have the right level of challenge for all abilities. Time is lost in settling down to work or when pupils take too long to get to their table. Although talk partners are often used well to help pupils sort out their ideas and refine their learning, this sometimes lasts too long and the focus on learning is lost. The new curriculum makes learning enjoyable for all pupils. Boys in Year 3 said they could not wait to start writing their 'Viking Adventure'. Creative links between subject

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

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

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

areas have made learning more meaningful and relevant. However, the progression of skills, particularly in English, has not been maintained, with the result that work can be repeated or gaps can occur in learning. Pupils feel happy and secure because they know that there is a good level of care, guidance and support and that there is always someone there to listen, help or advise. Vulnerable pupils do well because of this nurturing environment which provides them with effective support tailored to their needs.

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 | 3 |
| The effectiveness of care, guidance and support | 2 |

How effective are leadership and management?

The school recognises that changes at leadership level have meant that the impact of initiatives has not always been monitored sufficiently well. Consequently, there are areas where the level of accountability has slipped and this has slowed the pace of progress. However, the school has now successfully emerged from this period because of the hard work and determination of the headteacher to embed ambition and drive improvement. With a new team and a new board of governors, the pace of improvement is already beginning to quicken. Good-quality training, new appointments and the strategic deployment of staff have ensured rapid improvements in, for example, the Early Years Foundation Stage, Year 3 and attainment by the end of Key Stage 2. However, leaders realise that there is much work still to do and realise the urgency with which they must set about their tasks.

Good relationships with parents and carers support pupils' learning in a positive way. Provision to secure equal opportunities and tackle discrimination is satisfactory. The school's accurate tracking system highlights any underperformance. Consequently, the school recognises that progress is not consistently good across the school and until this year, too few more-able pupils have been reaching the higher Level 5 by the end of Year 6.

Governors are actively working to improve their understanding so that they can play a more strategic role and plan to strengthen the leadership and management of the school through the appointment of a deputy headteacher from September. Appropriate procedures for safeguarding are securely in place and ensure that all pupils feel safe and that their emotional and social needs are met. Checks on the suitability of adults to work with children are thorough and child protection arrangements are secure and updated regularly. However, not all pupils fully understand the school's policy on the dangers of

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

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

the internet. There is a satisfactory strategy in place to promote community cohesion, although not enough has been done to enhance pupils' understanding of cultural diversity within the United Kingdom.

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 | 3 |
| 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 | 3 |
| The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures | 3 |
| The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion | 3 |
| The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money | 3 |

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children's progress since the appointment of the Early Years Foundation Stage leader has been at least satisfactory. Although this year's figures are only secure since January 2010, tracking shows that the current cohort will enter Year 1 at levels that are above those expected.

Children are very settled in the safe, secure and caring learning environment. They make choices confidently and enjoy the wide variety of well-planned activities available for them inside and out of doors. They relish exciting activities such as going on a hunt for a bear missing in space. The children enjoyed using the computers and torches in their 'space ship' while they were searching the galaxies. Two boys decided to write a letter to the missing bear to cheer him up! A good variety of quality resources support children's purposeful play. Ongoing assessments are accurate and detailed because all adults know the children well. Partnerships with parents are good. Leadership and management are currently satisfactory because the leader has only been in post for a short time and there has not been sufficient time to see the full impact of her work. However, there are already significant areas of good practice.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate
Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

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

The majority of parents have positive views of the school. They are particularly pleased with the welcoming, caring ethos. Evidence from the inspection supports parents' views that children enjoy school and that care, guidance and support for pupils are good. A small minority of parents expressed the view that the school does not deal effectively with unacceptable behaviour. However, behaviour during inspection was found to be good. The team's view concurred with that of the pupils who said that the school sorted out any problems quickly and effectively. A small minority of parents felt that their child was not making enough progress at school. Inspectors found that pupils are now making satisfactory progress. Although there have been improvements, particularly at the end of Key Stage 2, there are some pupils, particularly the more able, who have not always been adequately challenged.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Benson Church of England 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 113 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 225 pupils registered at the school.

| Statements | Strongly Agree | | Agree | | Disagree | | Strongly disagree | |
|---|----------------|----|-------|----|----------|----|-------------------|---|
| | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % |
| My child enjoys school | 52 | 46 | 58 | 51 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| The school keeps my child safe | 61 | 54 | 52 | 46 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school informs me about my child's progress | 32 | 28 | 77 | 68 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| My child is making enough progress at this school | 30 | 27 | 63 | 56 | 17 | 15 | 1 | 1 |
| The teaching is good at this school | 42 | 37 | 63 | 56 | 6 | 5 | 0 | 0 |
| The school helps me to support my child's learning | 35 | 31 | 63 | 56 | 11 | 10 | 0 | 0 |
| The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle | 48 | 42 | 60 | 53 | 5 | 4 | 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) | 26 | 23 | 63 | 56 | 7 | 6 | 1 | 1 |
| The school meets my child's particular needs | 28 | 25 | 71 | 63 | 9 | 8 | 2 | 2 |
| The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour | 24 | 21 | 66 | 58 | 17 | 15 | 2 | 2 |
| The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns | 27 | 24 | 63 | 56 | 10 | 9 | 1 | 1 |
| The school is led and managed effectively | 35 | 31 | 65 | 58 | 5 | 4 | 2 | 2 |
| Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school | 43 | 38 | 59 | 53 | 7 | 6 | 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.



29 April 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Benson Church of England Primary School, Benson OX10 6LX

Thank you for being so friendly when we came to your school. We enjoyed visiting your lessons and talking to you. You really helped us. We think your school gives you a satisfactory standard of education and there are quite a lot of things your school does well.

You told us that you enjoy school and that you feel safe. We found that everybody in school looks after you well, especially those of you who have difficulties from time to time. We were impressed with your understanding of healthy lifestyles and knowledge of how to keep fit. We could see that you behave well, get on well with each other and help the school to run smoothly.

Your headteacher and staff know that there is still work to be done to make the school even better. We have suggested three things that we think will help.

- ? We have asked your teachers to ensure that you do not repeat work or miss bits out and to check that everyone is doing their best to improve.
- ? Teachers should improve the quality of learning so that you all have work that is suitably challenging. We have asked your teachers to make sure they make it clear how you can improve your work when they mark your books and that all your time is spent in learning and that none is wasted.
- ? Teachers should increase the opportunities for you all to gain first-hand experience of meeting people from other backgrounds and cultures so that you learn more about them.

We hope that you will all continue to enjoy coming to school and try your hardest so that you are successful in the future.

Yours sincerely

Barbara Atcheson

Lead inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 08456 404045, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.