

Bilston Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	130305
Local Authority	Wolverhampton
Inspection number	341020
Inspection dates	25–26 January 2010
Reporting inspector	David Edwards

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	186
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Andrew Johnson
Headteacher	Gary Gentle
Date of previous school inspection	6 September 2006
School address	Albany Crescent Bilston West Midlands
Telephone number	01902 558 690
Fax number	01902 558 692
Email address	bilstonprimaryschool@wolverhampton.gov.uk

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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

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 10 lessons, observing eight teachers. This amounted to approximately 45% of the time inspectors spent in the school during school hours., observing They held meetings with governors, staff, groups of pupils, parents and the school's advisor. They observed the school's work, and looked at pupils' work and records of their progress. They also looked at a range of documents, including governors' minutes, the school development plan, a range of policies and the school's monitoring of its own performance. The inspectors took account of 36 questionnaires from parents and carers, 90 questionnaires from pupils in Key Stage 2 and 16 questionnaires from staff.

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

the progress made by different groups of pupils

- how effectively the curriculum meets the needs of these groups
- how effectively the school's monitoring and evaluation systems promote better outcomes for pupils
- the impact of the recent writing initiative on standards, achievement and progress of all pupils.

Information about the school

Bilston Church of England Primary is smaller than average. Half of the pupils are White British and the remainder are from a range of other ethnic groups, including other White background, White and Black Caribbean, Asian, Caribbean and African. The percentage of pupils whose first language is believed not to be English is in line with the national average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is about the same as the national average but the proportion eligible for free school meals is significantly above the national average. Early Years Foundation Stage provision is provided for children in the Reception class. There is a before and after school club on the school site providing childcare facilities. This is managed by the governing body of the school. Pupils aged four to 11 attend the club. The school has received the Healthy Schools Award, the PE Active Mark and International Fair Trade Award.

Since the previous inspection in September 2006 the school has experienced a significant turnover of staff. Three teachers who were in post at the time of the previous inspection have left. The governors appointed a new headteacher in April 2008 and a new deputy in October 2009. Staffing has now stabilised, but an above average proportion of pupils join or leave the school partway through their primary education.

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

The school has been through some difficult and significant changes over recent years. Staff turbulence and the significant number of pupils who join the school partway through the year have had a negative impact on the drive to raise standards. However, the ambitious and relatively new leadership team has risen to the challenge and standards are rising rapidly, particularly in Year 2 and Year 6, because of the effective actions taken to improve provision. The role played by subject leaders is now more effective, behaviour has improved, and a focus on communication, language and literacy in the Early Years Foundation Stage is beginning to have a positive impact on children's progress in gaining key skills from an early age. Managers and subject leaders are using a wide range of strategies to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning and to identify the actions needed to accelerate progress. These evaluations provide a clear and accurate picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses, but are not yet rigorous or regular enough to ensure that all staff are consistently implementing improvement actions. This is the key reason why, despite the significant steps already taken, the school's capacity to improve further is not yet judged to be good.

Pupils' personal development is already a strength of the school. Their positive attitudes and good social skills ensure that there is a productive, safe learning environment in lessons. Regular attendance and rapidly improving key skills mean that they are adequately prepared for the future, and the good care and guidance provided by staff ensure that all have the opportunity to succeed. Through strong links with parents and effective partnerships with a range of agencies, the school provides good support for pupils with specific needs, including the most vulnerable, to ensure they make progress in line with their classmates.

Achievement and pupils' progress are currently satisfactory. This is the result of sound teaching overall, although the good teaching already evident in lessons for the older Key Stage 2 pupils and those in Year 2 is leading the way forward in overcoming the legacy of previously low attainment. In one effective example the Year 5 teacher asked pupils a good range of questions to assess their understanding and extend their learning. This strategy ensured all pupils were sufficiently challenged throughout the lesson. In some lessons, the pace of learning slows when teachers do not use assessment information well enough to ensure activities are well matched to pupils' different abilities. This has led to a lack of sufficient challenge, particularly for higher ability pupils. Through oral feedback teachers acknowledge pupils' achievements but do not always provide them with specific guidance about how to improve their work and achieve their learning targets. The initiative to improve writing across the school is beginning to make a positive impact on pupils' progress, but pupils do not yet have enough opportunities to

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use their writing skills across the curriculum.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards in all subjects across the school by using assessment information more effectively to:
 - match activities accurately to pupils' abilities
 - identify, within lessons, when pupils are ready for the next steps in their learning
 - respond to pupils' work and inform them of the actions they need to take to improve and achieve their learning targets.
- Raise standards in writing by creating more opportunities to use writing skills consistently across the curriculum.
- Ensure that monitoring and evaluation procedures are more effective by:
 - regularly evaluating the impact of new initiatives on pupils' learning
 - ensuring that they are implemented by all staff.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

The quality of learning observed during the inspection was satisfactory overall, but good in the lessons seen in Year 2, and Year 5 and 6. Results in English, mathematics and science were significantly below average in the unvalidated 2009 Year 6 tests. This was due to a variety of factors, including a high proportion of pupils with special needs. A significant minority of pupils, who joined Year 2 part way through the school year, affected the overall standards of pupil attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 in 2009. The current standards observed in lessons and in pupils' work, are much improved and more pupils are on track to reach the higher levels in the national tests at the end of Year 6 this year. Targets set for the current Year 2 and Year 6 are challenging and effective teaching is helping to make them achievable. In a number of lessons teachers set tasks at a challenging level to help pupils to accelerate their progress. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported through a range of interventions that ensure they make the same level of progress as other pupils. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds make the same progress and achieve as well as other groups of pupils in the school. The school's assessment information is showing that a much greater proportion of pupils across the school are expected to reach levels expected of their age than previously.

In general girls' attainment has historically been lower than that of boys. To tackle this inequality teachers have been taking greater account of girls' interests when planning. This approach is having a positive impact and inspectors did not see any significant differences between the performance of girls and boys during lessons or in pupils'

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current work. School assessment data also indicate that girls' achievement is gaining greater parity with that of boys.

Pupils are friendly and considerate towards each other and the adults they work with. They feel safe and secure, and know what to do if they have concerns. Pupils' behaviour is good in lessons and around school and this reflects the good work that the school has undertaken to have a positive impact in this area. Pupils enjoy coming to school and are positive about the improvements taking place. One Year 6 pupil commented, 'The work is challenging so it gives us a better education for the future.' They display the ability to take on positions of responsibility such as the role of peer mentors and school councillors to make a positive difference to the lives of pupils in the school.

Pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is good. Levels of attendance have risen rapidly over the past two years and are now in line with national averages. This is an indication of how much pupils enjoy coming to school.

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	4
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	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching is improving. Strengths of teaching include:

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

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- teachers setting activities which capture pupils' interests
- positive relationships between staff and pupils which set a positive climate for effective learning
- the way staff use new technology and other resources to engage pupils in their learning
- the effective support that teaching assistants provide for individuals and groups of pupils to ensure that they make expected or better progress.

The interpretation and use of assessment information to plan work are not always effective in ensuring activities meet the needs of different ability groups, particularly higher attainers.

The school has a satisfactory curriculum but has plans to develop it over the coming year to create more effective links between subjects so pupils can use their skills in different situations. The curriculum is enriched through a good range of extra-curricular activities and clubs, educational visits and visitors to school.

Strong relationships between staff, pupils and parents contribute to the good care, guidance and support. The positive responses to the parental questionnaire demonstrate the efforts that the school puts into this aspect of its work.

Pupils are supervised well in the before and after school care club. Relationships between staff and pupils are good. As a consequence pupils feel safe and enjoy attending the different sessions. They are positive about the range of activities on offer at the club. These activities effectively meet the needs of all pupils.

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 headteacher has been a stabilising influence during a period of instability. He has worked hard to develop teamwork and create a common sense of purpose. The work to improve behaviour and to assess strengths and weaknesses in other aspects of provision clearly shows the potential for much improvement. The staff are striving, with growing success, to ensure that all pupils have equal opportunity to achieve well. Above all, the school is open about what it needs to do to improve and leaders are willing to make effective use of outside support to raise standards. For example, local authority expertise is being well used to improve the teaching of communication, language and literacy skills in the Early Years Foundation Stage and staff demonstrate a very positive attitude towards accepting advice and trying new ideas. Such good partnerships have a

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positive impact on provision and pupil outcomes. Subject leaders are developing their roles satisfactorily. The governors are supportive. They are becoming increasingly knowledgeable and effective in exercising their role, including holding the school to account for the progress pupils make. They have ensured that safeguarding is given a suitably high priority. Their work on creating community cohesion is good. Pupils' understanding of Fair Trade issues and the school's International Fair Trade award demonstrate the effective teaching of a global dimension in school. The school community is cohesive and it engages well with the local community. The school recognises the scope for developing further opportunities for pupils to gain a greater understanding of the different cultures in the locality.

The school is making strenuous efforts to engage parents in their children's education. The good example of the Family Learning initiative demonstrates this and the way the school actively seeks and acts upon parents' views and concerns.

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	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Staff work well to ensure that children settle quickly. Children's behaviour is good and they demonstrate enjoyment in their learning. When children begin in Reception their skill levels are below those expected for their age, particularly in communication, language and literacy and personal and social development. Children make satisfactory progress because of satisfactory provision, but the small teaching area is insufficient to provide pupils with the full range of experiences which would enhance their learning. The planned building extension work should help to address this issue.

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Children respond with enthusiasm when they are encouraged to take an active part in lessons. On occasions, children do not have enough opportunities to develop their independence and discover things for themselves. This is because there is an imbalance between adult-led activities and those children can choose for themselves.

The Early Years Foundation Stage is managed jointly by the deputy headteacher and the Reception class teacher. The class teacher is well supported by one teaching assistant and student support. They share information about individual pupils to ensure that pupils feel safe and well cared for. Their use of assessment to match activities to children's needs is satisfactory. There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to use the outdoor area in a constructive way to enrich their learning. The deputy headteacher recognises that staff in the Early Years Foundation Stage have not yet had enough support to make the changes required to improve provision and outcomes for children.

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

Parents and carers hold very positive views about the school. They were overwhelmingly positive about virtually all aspects of the school's work. A small minority were concerned about how well they were informed about their children's progress. However, inspectors' discussions with the school during the inspection demonstrated that the school is endeavouring to keep parents informed about this aspect.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Bilston 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 inspectors received 36 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 186 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	19	61	12	39	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	20	65	11	35	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	19	61	9	29	3	10	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	18	58	11	35	2	6	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	17	55	13	42	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	15	48	14	45	1	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	19	61	11	35	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)	13	42	17	55	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	18	58	13	42	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	18	58	12	39	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	12	39	15	48	2	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	19	61	12	39	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	19	61	12	39	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.



27 January 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Bilston Church of England Primary School, Bilston, WV14 0HU

On behalf of the inspection team I would like to thank you for your friendly welcome. We enjoyed meeting and talking to many of you, looking at your work and visiting your lessons. We would also like to say thank you to the groups of pupils who had discussions with us and the pupils in Years 3 to 6 who completed the inspection questionnaire.

You told us that your lessons have become more interesting and this is helping you to learn. We agree. Your school provides you with a satisfactory education.

Most of you are making satisfactory progress in reading, writing, mathematics and science.

Some of you are making good progress, especially in Years 2 and 6.

The headteacher, the staff and governors work hard to make sure you are safe and well looked after.

You know how to stay safe and keep yourselves healthy. Some of you told us how much you enjoy the different sports clubs, especially netball, dance and football.

In lessons and around school, you behave well. You are polite and kind to each other.

We have asked the headteacher, staff and the governors to do the following to improve the school further:

- make better use of assessment information so that lessons help all of you to make more progress in reading, writing, mathematics and science, and teachers always show you clearly how to improve your work
- check your work regularly, to make sure that you are doing as well as possible
- help you to improve the quality of your writing skills by giving you more opportunities to use writing in other subjects of the curriculum.

You can help by continuing to work hard and applying the positive attitudes we saw so regularly during the inspection. Thank you once again for making us feel so welcome.

We wish you the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

David Edwards

Lead inspector

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