

Bow Brickhill Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	134423
Local Authority	Milton Keynes
Inspection number	341472
Inspection dates	1–2 December 2009
Reporting inspector	John Earish

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	95
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Martin Horne
Headteacher	Catherine Jane Bellamy
Date of previous school inspection	6 October 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited eight lessons or part lessons and held discussions with governors, pupils and staff. They observed the school's work, its policies, teachers' plans and school improvement planning. The inspection team analysed 54 questionnaires from parents and others from staff.

Inspectors reviewed many aspects of the school's work. They looked in detail at the following:

- the progress made by pupils in core subjects especially at Key Stage 2
- the impact of the quality of teaching and the use of assessment on raising achievement for all groups of pupils
- the effectiveness of senior leaders and governors at ensuring that pupils make sufficient progress.

Information about the school

This smaller than average school has increased in size since the last inspection and now accommodates the full primary age range. Pupils are taught in three mixed-age classes and a Reception class. They come from a variety of social backgrounds and are almost all of White British heritage. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities varies significantly from year to year but is currently just below that found nationally. Their range of needs includes problems with speech, language and communication as well as behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. The school holds a number of accreditations including the Activemark and Healthy Schools Status.

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

This is a good school where all pupils are equally valued. They achieve well because of good teaching and an exciting curriculum. The very positive atmosphere and effective care, guidance and support contribute well to pupils' good personal outcomes. Parents and carers are extremely happy with the care and education provided for their children. The overwhelming majority recognise that teachers and assistants are caring and talented, know the children very well and nurture them as individuals. Adults are described as 'approachable' and 'good listeners' who are all working well together to 'provide a happy, safe and productive learning environment'.

The headteacher with her staff are successfully promoting good quality outcomes and provision for pupils including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Senior leaders and governors have accurately identified the extent of the school's strengths and weaknesses in its provision. Firm and successful action has been taken to address any deficiencies identified as a result of systematic reviews of its performance. In addition, the school has managed the expansion to accommodate pupils in Key Stage 2 well. This confirms the school's good capacity for future improvement.

In their pursuit of high quality teaching and the promotion of equal opportunities, the headteacher and her deputy continually review classroom practice through regular monitoring. Teamwork among the staff is strong. As a result, most pupils are learning well and making consistently good progress between Years 1 and 6. Lessons are interesting and well matched to the wide range of individual needs and abilities. Occasionally the rate of learning slows when pupils are not sufficiently involved in their learning because introductions to lessons are overlong.

A scrutiny of pupils' work, teachers' assessments and lessons observed confirm that standards by the end of Year 6 are well above average in English, mathematics and science. The dip in the numbers attaining the higher Level 5 in mathematics last year has been successfully addressed. This represents good progress and achievement from the pupils' starting points in Year 1.

Pupils' well-developed personal skills are evident in their good behaviour, interest in and enjoyment of learning. The good quality curriculum ensures that pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills are built systematically throughout each year and from one year to the next. They adopt healthy lifestyles extremely well and feel safe. They make good contributions to the school and to the wider community. However, as the school recognises, pupils require more opportunities to work independently and to use their initiative in order to sustain their rapid progress. For example, one higher attaining pupil in Class 3/4 was challenged to find different ways of fitting a range of regular polygons

together without leaving gaps. This activity was seen as challenging because the pupil was using and applying previous knowledge in a new and original way and progress was rapid. Pupils realise that teachers have started to increase the opportunities for them to work in this way and say it is an effective way of exploring new ideas.

Target setting is particularly effective in English and enables pupils to fully understand how well they are working and what they must do to improve. However, this is less well developed in other subjects and consequently pupils have less guidance on the next steps in their learning.

The recently completed Early Years Foundation Stage suite enables children to have access to a spacious outdoor learning area. Staff are busily adapting the curriculum to ensure that learning flows freely between the indoors and outdoors. However, there are still missed opportunities to make these learning activities, both indoors and outdoors, challenging and exciting. As a result, progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory with the majority of children making the expected rates of progress in relation to their starting points.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Extend the very good target-setting practice in English to other subjects so that pupils have a clear understanding of how they can improve.
- Accelerate children's progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage by building on the good start at linking the learning between the indoors and outdoors to make it exciting, purposeful and consistently challenging.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Evidence collected during the inspection matched the school's detailed and accurate assessments that standards by the end of Year 6 are well above average in English, mathematics and science. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are above the national expectations for the age group. For example, pupils in Class 5/6 confidently made animations using flexible moulding materials. They created a storyboard and took a sequence of pictures using a digital camera which were stitched together using commercial software. The overall effect was viewed by the class who offered suggestions on how it might be improved. They decided the action might be made smoother if the number of frames was increased.

The school has successfully improved the number of pupils reaching the higher levels in mathematics. Tracking information shows that an above average proportion of the current Year 6 are already attaining the higher Level 5 because of good teaching and the challenging tasks provided. Pupils with special needs make good progress because they are given suitable work and good quality support.

Pupils achieve well and enjoy their learning because teachers set tasks which are well suited to their abilities. Improving mathematics, particularly for the more able, has been a school priority and good progress has been made. Pupils in the mixed-age classes are now taught in groups based on ability. They thoroughly approve of this and say it has

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really helped them learn better. Teachers have also increased the opportunities for pupils, especially higher attainers, to work independently and use their initiative. Pupils recognise this is an effective way of working because it is more fun and challenging. For example, some higher attaining younger pupils were using laptops to access the internet to test their knowledge and understanding of regular and irregular shapes. All of these activities allowed the pupils to test their own ideas, make decisions and use their initiative. As a consequence, they made good progress and were thoroughly immersed in the activity.

Pupils feel safe, and attend regularly. They are confident that there is always a trusted adult they can turn to if they are upset or worried. Relationships and pupils' behaviour are good across the school. Pupils show an excellent knowledge and understanding of healthy diets and the importance of taking regular exercise. This is recognised through the awards of Healthy School Status and Activemark.

Pupils eagerly take on additional responsibility and support those who are less well off than themselves by raising money for national and overseas charities. School councillors take their responsibilities very seriously and are adamant that they make a difference to the smooth running of the school. They represent their fellow pupils well. They have, for example, promoted a new playground borrowing scheme, act as playtime buddies and help organise the hugely successful 'Bows got Talent Show' at the end of the summer term. Pupils actively participate in the local community, for example, during Sunday services, flower festivals and support the work of the Milton Keynes 'Food Bank'. They are well prepared for the future economic well-being.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	2
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

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

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

How effective is the provision?

Teachers usually share the learning objectives at the beginning of lessons so that all understand what they must do and achieve by the end of each session. There are good opportunities for pupils to review their previous learning, clarify any misunderstandings and to consolidate new ideas. Those who need additional support with language, literacy or numeracy receive effective help from learning support assistants. Assessment information is used well to ensure that work is carefully matched to pupils' individual needs. Target setting is used very well to help pupils understand exactly what they need to do to improve their work in English. However, this is not as effective in other subjects.

The curriculum promotes good academic progress and contributes well to pupils' personal outcomes. Good attention is given to developing reading, writing and mathematics by making good links between subjects which add meaning and relevance to pupils' learning. However, the school recognises it needs to increase further the opportunities within the planning to allow pupils, especially the higher attainers, to work independently and to use their initiative. Themed events such as the science day to celebrate Darwin's birthday are popular and add much to the enjoyment of learning. Visits and visitors enrich the curriculum. Healthy lifestyles are promoted extremely well and pupils have opportunities to cook healthy meals. ICT is used well to support learning across the curriculum. The school has recently introduced an interactive learning platform where the older pupils can access their school work from home using the internet.

The good quality care, support and guidance contribute well to pupils' personal development. The school provides good support to pupils and their families needing extra help and guidance. Pupils with special educational needs are carefully assessed and their support programmes ensure that they make good progress. The much improved methods for keeping track of pupils' progress are used well to set challenging targets for improvement.

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

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How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher, ably supported by her deputy, has high expectations of what is achievable and shows a strong determination to drive improvement so that all pupils reach their potential. Staff work effectively as a team and use a good range of methods to keep all aspects of school life under constant review. Through effective monitoring, leaders have a clear overview of the quality of teaching and pupils' progress. They use this information well to guide improvements and spread good practice.

Good partnerships have been established with parents. Parents make valuable contributions to the school. Their views are actively sought and valued, and the overwhelming majority believe the school understands and helps their children.

Governors are supportive of the headteacher and the school. They have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and provide suitable challenge in order to hold the school to account. Statutory requirements are met and there are good procedures to protect and safeguard pupils. Leaders and governors take seriously their responsibility to promote equal opportunities and tackle discrimination and the success of this commitment is evident in the way barriers to learning are being tackled. For example, the school has built a detailed knowledge of children's talents and skills whatever their background. Staff have conducted a parental survey to gain greater knowledge of their out of school activities and interests so they can provide greater challenges. They monitor the pupils' progress towards meeting them.

The school has a good understanding of the community it serves and promotes community cohesion well. A productive partnership has been formed with the local schools. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of the global community is developing well.

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	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	2
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Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter with a range of abilities from well below to above the expectations for their age group. This varies considerably from year to year. Progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory with the majority of children making the expected rates of progress in relation to their starting points. They make good progress in physical and creative development and in their dispositions and attitudes. However, progress in communication, language and literacy and knowledge and understanding of the world is not as rapid.

Recent improvements to the building have enabled children to have access to an extensive outdoor area. The staff have made a good start at linking the learning between the indoors and outdoors. However, there are still missed opportunities for the children to take responsibility for their learning, to select their own resources or initiate their own learning. Although there is a good emphasis on the development of basic skills, such as linking sounds and letters, to help children's early reading and writing skills, there are missed opportunities to move learning on at a sufficiently rapid rate, especially for the more able children.

Adults establish very good relationships with the children who thoroughly enjoy their learning, behave well and relate positively to adults and their peers. They feel safe, secure and well cared for because of the good attention given to care and welfare. Teaching and learning are satisfactory and there are clear systems to assess and record children's attainment. Leadership is satisfactory and has rightly identified the need to increase opportunities to develop early writing and literacy skills which it is beginning to address.

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 overwhelming majority of parents and carers who made comments are happy with their child's school experience. They are particularly pleased with the sense of enjoyment, safety and the teaching. The inspection team agrees with the parents' positive views. A small minority of parents who responded to the questionnaire do not

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believe that the school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour. The school has a few pupils with challenging behaviour but these pupils are well managed by staff.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Bow Brickhill CofE (VA) 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 54 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 95 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	34	63	18	33	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	35	65	17	32	1	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	22	41	29	54	2	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	22	41	27	50	3	6	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	25	46	26	48	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	24	44	27	50	2	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	31	57	21	39	1	2	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	23	43	21	39	3	6	1	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	24	44	24	44	4	7	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	17	32	19	35	15	28	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	19	35	32	59	1	2	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	19	35	33	61	1	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	28	52	24	44	1	2	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 pupils' 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.



Dear Pupils

Inspection of Bow Brickhill CofE (Aided) Primary School, Milton Keynes MK17 9JT

Thank you for being so welcoming and helpful when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed looking at your work, seeing you in lessons and talking to so many of you. We were pleased to hear that you like your school very much. Almost all your parents are happy with the school too.

Yours is a good school, where staff and governors are working hard to make it even better. This means that there are lots of things that it does really well, but also that there are some things that could be even better

Your headteacher and teachers have made your school an attractive place to learn. You and your parents told us that you like school and that it is a welcoming, caring place where you feel safe. You have an excellent knowledge of how to stay healthy. You get on well with each other and help the school to run smoothly. Many of you said that you found the work of the school council very helpful. Well done councillors!

We have asked your teachers to give you more help to understand how to improve your work, as they are already doing in English. You told us that this really helps you improve your work. You must play your part by reading the comments teachers write in your books and listening carefully to their advice. We have also asked the adults to think of different ways of using the indoors and outdoors to make learning for the very youngest children exciting and challenging.

Each of you can play your part in making this school even better by continuing to work hard to meet the targets you are set.

Yours sincerely

John Earish

Lead Inspector

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