

The Batt Church of England Voluntary Aided School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123193
Local Authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	380618
Inspection dates	19–20 October 2011
Reporting inspector	Alex Baxter

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	310
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alison Bettle
Headteacher	Christopher Payne
Date of previous school inspection	6–7 March 2007
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 33 lessons taught by 12 teachers. The inspectors also attended assemblies and observed break times and held meetings with representatives of the governing body, staff, pupils, and parents and carers. They observed the school's work, and looked at plans and policies, records of assessments and the tracking of pupils' progress. In addition, the team analysed 159 questionnaires completed by parents and carers as well as those returned by 98 pupils and 35 staff.

The inspectors reviewed many aspects of the school's work. They looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The development of pupils' independent learning skills to determine whether teaching is sufficiently challenging and effective in accelerating pupils' achievements.
- The effectiveness of strategies to integrate pupils arriving from other schools and to meet pupils' needs across the range of ability.
- The effectiveness of strategies taken by leaders and managers at all levels, especially curriculum and subject leaders, to develop consistency of good practice in teaching and learning.

Information about the school

This primary school is above average in size. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. Most pupils attending the school are of White British heritage and there is a below average percentage of pupils who speak English as an additional language. About half the pupils start school in Reception and most of the remainder transfer to the school in Year 3 from St Mary's Infant School. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in a single Reception class. The substantive leader of the Early Years Foundation Stage was on long-term absence due to ill health at the time of the inspection. The school has achieved several awards, including, most recently in July of this year, the 'Platinum Award for Sing Up'.

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?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

This is an outstanding school with a proven track record of successful achievement and continued improvement. By focusing on pupils' differing starting points, the school also promotes excellent learning for the substantial number of pupils entering Year 3 and for several pupils with complex learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The caring ethos of the school underpins the warm relationships which foster confidence and high expectations among staff and pupils. Parents welcome the inclusive nature of the school; as one typically said, 'Despite its size, The Batt feels like a village school and has a comforting homely feel.'

The inspirational force behind the school's success is undoubtedly the very supportive headteacher. His open and excellent communication has established a shared vision of how teamwork between all those associated with the school can bring continuing improvement and success for all groups of pupils. Strong governance and closer collaboration between curriculum and subject leaders underpin excellent self-evaluation and ensure that the right priorities are identified and tackled rigorously. This is seen in the pupils' rapidly improving and above average writing skills. Although this is so, some aspects such as spelling still require further improvement. The governing body, senior and administrative staff now work very diligently as a team to promote excellent partnerships with parents and other groups to support pupils' learning and fully safeguard their welfare. By these means, attainment has been lifted and is now high, especially in speaking, reading and mathematics. The pupils' mature commitment to learning and willingness to work collaboratively with each other, their creative art and craft work and the high quality of their choral singing, also further illustrate their outstanding achievement and the school's outstanding capacity to bring about further improvement.

Teaching is never less than good; often it is inspirational and cumulatively it is outstanding in the way that it promotes the pupils' excellent learning. Good teaching and high quality care in Reception ensure that the youngest children learn well across the required Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum. Outdoor learning is particularly well developed; however, inside, too much furniture and equipment sometimes restricts children's ability to access activities and learn independently. Similarly, at times in some other classes, while pupils' self-evaluation is a strong feature, opportunities for pupils to engage in self-enquiry activities are not always maximised and this limits their independence. Even so, as they move up through the school, the pupils' full enjoyment and engagement in learning in response to challenging teaching, support their excellent progress. Pupils say, 'We really enjoy

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being at this school!’ Consequently their exemplary behaviour, very positive attitudes towards learning and highly developed social skills also reflect outstanding achievements.

Many of the pupils’ excellent academic and personal gains stem from a curriculum that is enhanced by a wealth of interesting activities which include memorable moments across a range of expressive arts and sporting experiences. Pupils clearly show, and readily say, that they feel very safe. They also adopt very healthy lifestyles and show high regard for the feelings and contributions of others, all of which reflect the excellence of the care provided by all adults who work in the school. In particular, exemplary support for some pupils with very complex needs helps them to make exceptional progress, as parents, pupils and visitors to the school readily testify.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Build upon the best practice seen in the school to:
 - extend the pupils’ independent learning, especially indoors in Reception
 - advance writing skills, particularly for some more-able pupils, to match the high quality of their speaking and reading skills.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Observations of lessons, and a variety of additional activities and intervention support provided in small groups, show that pupils greatly enjoy their learning and make excellent progress. This applies equally for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, pupils of high ability and those who join the school in Year 3. Children make a good start in Reception where they are particularly enthused by outdoor practical activity. Pupils’ progress accelerates as they move through the rest of school, in response to excellent teaching and learning. As a result, pupils’ attainment builds to a high level at the end of Year 6, as evident in recorded work, spoken responses in lessons and in sustained national and school assessments. This represents outstanding achievement from the broadly expected levels of skill present at the time children began their full-time schooling. High levels of attainment in speaking and reading were seen, for example, during Year 6 literacy lessons, as pupils responded perceptively to the teachers’ progressively challenging questioning. Improving and clearly above-average writing skills were also evident in these lessons and, for example, in a Year 4 lesson, where pupils evaluated and corrected their own work in response to the teacher’s informative marking. On occasions though, limited opportunities for pupils to make their own learning choices constrains their independent learning skills. Nevertheless, the pupils’ very knowledgeable replies to adult questioning during mathematics lessons as, for example, in Years 4 and 5, when combined with the perceptive quality of their own confident questioning also showed high levels of understanding. Observations of the pupils’ highly creative art and craft work, for example, their clay models in the style of Barbara Hepworth and their highly

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accomplished singing in the choir and during hymn practice, further reflect excellent achievements.

Pupils make excellent contributions to school and community events, for example in their July production of Joseph and the second open-air music festival in September. Pupils are also diligent in exercising responsibility on the School Council where they accurately present the views of other pupils and when choral singing to achieve the prestigious 'Platinum Award for Sing Up'. Pupils receive very caring support and consequently behave extremely well in and out of lessons and clearly feel very safe. The pupils' very friendly relationships show the success of the school's efforts to welcome and include pupils entering the school in Year 3. As a result, by the time they leave school, the pupils' good attendance, excellent academic achievement and very positive attitudes to school and learning prepare them extremely well for the future.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is typified by excellent support of pupils' behaviour, very warm relationships and challenging questioning that stimulates their thinking. Teachers use interactive whiteboards and other displays to ensure that pupils are very clear about the learning intentions of each lesson. Teachers also make supportive links with previous work to develop pupils' understanding. These strategies as seen, for example, in Years 3 and 5 literacy lessons, were also accompanied by the teachers' precise marking which identified the next steps that each pupil needed to make to

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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progress. High quality teaching extends beyond the classroom, for example, during the whole school hymn practice and choir sessions. Regular visits around the immediate locality and the local community are also used well to stimulate pupils’ learning, as in the current Year 5 topic of ‘Britain since the 1930s’.

Teachers deploy their assistants extremely effectively and their detailed planning, informed by accurate assessment, ensures that all staff have a clear understanding of their roles. As a result, all pupils, including more-able pupils and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, are supported very effectively. All staff develop the pupils’ vocabulary effectively. A concerted effort to develop and use pupils’ understanding of letter sounds and words to improve writing skills is significantly lifting standards. Pupils are increasingly involved to very good effect in evaluating the quality of their completed work. Observations of lessons in Year 1 and, for example, in mathematics lessons in Year 6 when pupils were grouped by ability, also showed very good opportunities for pupils to undertake their own investigations. However, such consistent emphasis is not evident in developing pupils’ independence and self-enquiry skills across all classes. Nevertheless, the pupils’ use of ‘marking ladders’, which show success criteria and the teachers’ rigour in ensuring that pupils respond to their marking and correct their work, are helping to accelerate progress. As they move through the school, these consistently applied methods are enriching the pupils’ confidence and understanding and result in outstanding achievement.

The curriculum is enhanced by a very good range of clubs and visits, which fully promotes pupils’ adoption of healthy living. Literacy, numeracy, information and communication technology (ICT) and the expressive arts are used well across a full breadth of subjects. In particular, the pupils’ clay modelling, collages of African Arts, for example, and singing strongly promote the imaginative and community dimension of the curriculum.

The outstanding care, guidance and support provided by all staff, and their excellent links with parents and outside specialists, are clearly apparent in the pupils’ confident enjoyment of school and year-on-year above average attendance. Good safeguarding checks, which include exemplary child protection procedures, also ensure the safety of all pupils.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	1
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	1
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils’ needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

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How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher’s empowering drive secures high-quality commitment from leaders and managers at all levels. This fully shared aspiration to seek and achieve further improvement, now supported by strengthened teamwork between curricular and subject leaders, informs accurate self-evaluation. With excellent support also from the governing body, the headteacher ensures that planning for improvement is securely based on accurate data about the pupils’ progress and is used systematically to secure high quality teaching and learning and value for money. Such close collaboration and excellent links with parents and outside agencies also eliminate discrimination and ensure that all pupils are included equally. As a result, all pupils achieve with equal success in relation to their needs and starting points.

The governing body discharges its statutory duties very effectively and plays a full role with staff in safeguarding pupils’ welfare, which for example, includes rigorous procedures for vetting new staff and other adults working with pupils. The school lies at the heart of the local and wider community it serves so very well. It takes a strong lead in promoting community cohesion, for example through the choir’s opening of the Parish Fayre, raising funds for charities such as the ‘Helen and Douglas House’ at the annual May Dancing on ‘Church Green’, visiting local Chinese and Indian restaurants and establishing links with a school in Afghanistan. Regular visits from family members of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, for example those of Greek, Filipino, Chinese and Russian heritage, also strongly promote the national and global dimensions of community cohesion.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
The effectiveness of the school’s engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

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Early Years Foundation Stage

Children settle well because of effective induction procedures which include very positive partnerships with parents and carers. The temporary teacher and regular assistants work well together to sustain good leadership during the absence of the permanent teacher. Together, they promote the children’s health, well-being and safety extremely effectively. All children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are fully and very sensitively included and make good progress. Children are purposefully engaged because teaching is good and a range of stimulating activities, especially outside, helps them to become confident learners. Children behave and play very well together and clearly feel safe. Work is planned well to link with the children’s own experiences. It is often based on topics, such as ‘Harvest Time’, which are developed through favourite story books such as *The Little Red Hen* and practical learning activities such as planting seeds and making bread. As a result, children make particularly good progress in their communication and language skills and in their creative development. There is a good balance of adult-led activities and those chosen by the children themselves. At times, the combination of limited space indoors and too much furniture and equipment restricts the ability of staff to support and draw new learning from the children’s freely chosen activity.

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

An above-average proportion of parents and carers responded to the questionnaire. The vast majority of those who responded to the questionnaire and the small number of parents interviewed by an inspector expressed agreement with the work of the school and, in particular, indicated that they are happy with their child’s experience at this school. The few written comments were mostly very positive with particularly appreciative views expressed about the school’s very caring ethos and the pupils’ high academic standards. There were very few negative comments. These concerned individual issues mostly about homework. The inspection team found that overall children are challenged very effectively with work set at a level that matches their needs.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at The Batt C of E VA 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 159 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 310 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	105	66	52	33	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	120	75	38	24	0	0	1	1
The school informs me about my child’s progress	73	46	70	44	7	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	79	50	62	39	7	4	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	82	52	63	39	4	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	78	49	60	38	12	8	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	87	55	68	43	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)	82	52	65	41	1	1	1	1
The school meets my child’s particular needs	73	46	74	46	5	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	69	43	73	46	4	3	2	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	64	41	78	50	6	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	103	65	46	28	2	1	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	102	64	50	31	3	1	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 all 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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 are for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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.



20 October 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Batt Cof E VA School, Witney OX28 6DY

Thank you very much for making us feel so welcome during our recent inspection of your school. You were all extremely polite and friendly. Special thanks to the members of the school council and the group of Years 5 and 6 pupils who talked to my colleague so sincerely about your school. They said that you really enjoy being at this school. We agree with you and with many of your parents who feel that yours is an outstanding school.

These are the other main things we found.

- You work very hard and make excellent progress, especially in your speaking, reading and mathematics skills and your singing too was truly inspirational.
- You behave extremely well and feel very safe because everyone at the school looks after you in an exemplary way.
- Teaching and learning are extremely effective because you do a lot of interesting things and because all adults and pupils get on so very well together.
- You contribute really well in all activities and are very good at living healthily.
- Your school is led in an exemplary way and continues to go from strength to strength. This is because your headteacher is an outstanding leader who works very supportively with staff and governors and with your parents and other people to make sure that the school continues to improve.

All this adds up to a very successful school but, as your teachers so often rightly say to you, 'We can do even better', and so I have asked the headteacher and the teachers to give you more opportunities to set up and follow your own learning activities. This will also help some of you to bring your writing skills to a level that matches your highly developed speaking, reading and mathematics skills.

You can help by keeping your wonderful enthusiasm for school.

Yours sincerely

Alex Baxter
Lead inspector

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