

Baltonsborough Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	123740
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	395421
Inspection dates	20–21 June 2012
Lead inspector	Juliet Jaggs

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	88
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Anne Moody
Headteacher	Lesley Fenwick
Date of previous school inspection	10 December 2008
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Juliet Jaggs

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector observed teaching and learning in seven part lessons taught by four teachers. She held meetings with members of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. The inspector took account of the responses to the on-line Parent View survey in planning the inspection and observed the school's work as well as looking at self-evaluation documentation, development planning, assessment information and safeguarding procedures. The inspector analysed 53 questionnaires received from parents and carers.

Information about the school

Baltonsborough Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School is much smaller than most primary schools. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. A smaller proportion of pupils than average is known to be eligible for free school meals. The percentage of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is above average, with most of these pupils receiving support for moderate learning difficulties and needs associated with autism spectrum disorder. Since the last inspection, Year 2 pupils have been placed in a separate teaching group so that they are no longer learning alongside pupils in Key Stage 2. The school is a Food for Life flagship school and has gained bronze Food for Life status. It has recently been awarded the Healthy Schools Plus award. The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

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	3
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	3

Key findings

- This is a satisfactory school. It is not yet good because inconsistencies in the quality of teaching mean that pupils' achievement is no better than satisfactory; in addition, there are shortcomings in the school's systems for identifying and tackling areas for development. Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.
- Pupils' behaviour is good and the pupils have positive attitudes to learning because there is a strong emphasis on their contribution to the school community. This promotes pupils' respect for one another as pupils alternate between leading their peers and following the leadership of others. Pupils feel extremely safe in school.
- Teaching is satisfactory. Teachers have good subject knowledge and plan conscientiously to meet the needs of pupils in their classes, but pupils are not always made aware of what steps they need to take in order to succeed. Teachers' questioning does not always extend pupils' knowledge and sometimes too much emphasis is placed on the techniques for completing exercises rather than on developing pupils' understanding.
- Children's skills when children join the school are typical of those expected for their age. Although the curriculum provides a range of interesting learning experiences that take advantage of the school's rural setting, the focus on literacy and numeracy has not been stringent enough. Pupils' progress is satisfactory and their attainment in both English and mathematics is average by the time pupils leave the school.
- Leaders and managers know the school well and they have made a concerted effort to address inconsistencies in pupils' performance. Staff performance is managed satisfactorily and teaching has benefited from a recent focus on provision in mathematics. Nevertheless, the school's systems for determining where more detailed improvements are required are underdeveloped so refinements take longer to introduce.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate pupils' progress and raise attainment in English and mathematics to above average levels by:
 - making pupils aware of the purpose of their learning so that they can more readily understand concepts and apply them independently
 - reviewing targets more frequently with individual pupils so that they have an accurate view of their own level of performance and can begin to take responsibility for managing their progress
 - providing children in the Early Years Foundation Stage with more choices for learning, both inside and out of doors.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is good or better by:
 - making pupils aware of the criteria for success in lessons so that they can assess their progress and understand what they need to do to improve
 - using a variety of questioning techniques so that pupils have more opportunities to think about their learning in different ways and to consolidate their understanding by expressing ideas in their own words
 - including more developmental comments when marking pupils' books so that they help pupils understand how to improve.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - reviewing the work of the school more systematically so that these findings can be evaluated and used to identify and tackle quickly areas for improvement
 - developing the role of middle leaders so that they can play a greater part in managing and supporting the work of their colleagues.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Pupils learn well when they work with a partner to solve puzzles. For example, in one Year 2 lesson in which pupils were learning how to interpret mathematical word problems, two pupils deduced that for a number of items to be shared equally between two people, the original total would have to be halved. They were then able to calculate the answer correctly and demonstrate that they had understood the concept by volunteering their own example to illustrate it. When pupils are able to make suggestions about their learning, this sustains their enthusiasm. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 wanted to find out about, and then bake, traditional Greek buns in support of their topic work on the Olympics. Pupils were able to draw on this experience to write more vividly about life in Ancient Greece. Pupils make slower progress in some lessons where they are not made fully aware of the purpose of their learning; in such lessons, teachers rely on routines for learning and pupils complete repetitive tasks based on worksheet activities, unable to apply knowledge so that they can work more independently.

Children join the Early Years Foundation Stage with a range of skills and

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competencies which are typically in line with expectations for their age. There is not always enough variety in the choice of activities planned for them between the indoor and outdoor areas. Children make satisfactory progress, but opportunities for them to learn by pursuing their own interests are limited.

By the end of Key Stage 1 most pupils know their letter sounds and are able to decode words independently so that attainment in reading by the end of Year 2 is broadly average. Pupils make satisfactory, rather than good, progress in reading through the school because their book selections are not always carefully monitored and do not provide the level of progression necessary to sustain good progress. Parents and carers who returned questionnaires commented that enrichment activities had motivated their children to learn, but a few added that they had not made enough progress because they did not always find the work challenging. Pupils know their targets, but they are referred to rarely and so do not provide a useful guide against which pupils can measure their own progress.

Progress has been uneven, particularly at Key Stage 1 and in mathematics, throughout the school. Important changes made by school leaders to address both of these issues have had a positive impact and pupils in Year 2 have benefited considerably from being grouped in a separate class. The whole school initiative to improve attainment in mathematics by making the calculation policy more consistent has been effective. Pupils make satisfactory progress across the school so that by the time they leave, their attainment, including in reading, is broadly average. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are provided with adequate support to enable them to progress at the same rate as their peers. Other groups of pupils, including boys, girls and those of different ability levels, also make satisfactory progress.

Quality of teaching

The quality of teaching is satisfactory over time, which does not support the views of parents and carers who believe it to be better. Most teachers organise lessons to include a variety of activities appropriate to the needs of different groups of learners in the class. In some lessons, planning for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is thoughtful. For example, in one good session the teacher introduced puppets so that pupils with speech and language needs were able to demonstrate their understanding of the Trojan Horse in a group role-play activity. This level of support is not consistent, however, and overall, the teaching of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is satisfactory.

Teachers have good relationships with their pupils and manage their classes well. They promote pupils' personal development well. Sometimes opportunities are missed to capitalise on pupils' sensible attitudes by encouraging them to take more responsibility for their learning. Pupils are not always made aware of the purpose of their learning at the beginning of the lesson or how they will be able to measure their success during it. Although the marking of books is conscientious, references to these criteria and developmental comments are too often missing from teachers'

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marking in exercise books. Consequently, pupils have few opportunities to reflect objectively on the progress they are making or to identify for themselves how to improve. Some teachers overemphasise the method for completing tasks so pupils work accurately but they fail to understand underlying concepts in numeracy and literacy. Difficulties arise for these pupils when they forget the mathematical procedure or the grammatical pattern so they are unable to progress independently.

In some lessons teachers use questioning effectively to consolidate pupils' learning and deepen their understanding. However, in some lessons, the questions teachers ask often require single word answers that emphasise a methodical approach to learning. There are not enough challenging open questions so pupils have too few opportunities to consolidate learning by expressing ideas in their own words. This means that some teachers are not always alert to misconceptions so relevant interventions can be delayed and this slows pupils' progress. Some teachers respond effectively when they become aware of the gaps in pupils' learning. For example, one teacher introduced more structured discussions about plot when it became clear that groups of pupils were not developing comprehension skills when reading. These Key Stage 1 pupils now read in small groups unsupervised, skilfully taking turns reading aloud and discussing their views.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

The 'learning to lead' initiative makes a strong contribution to pupils' social development by giving them a good opportunity to understand the importance of sharing responsibility within a community. For example, the sports team leads the whole school through a physical activity session at the start of the day. Other pupils respect the group leaders and they participate enthusiastically as befits their commitment to their Healthy Schools Plus award. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are equally involved in the scheme and their representatives on the design team have been influential in suggesting improvements to their outdoor learning area. Parents and carers commented that their children have a strong sense of belonging to the school because of the way in which they are encouraged to take on responsibilities through membership of the various teams.

The team of peer mentors reinforces the inclusive nature of the community by encouraging pupils' moral responsibility for each another. This is one reason why pupils say that instances of bullying of any kind are rare and that they feel safe in school. This is a view supported by their parents and carers who are unanimous in their view that their children are safe in school. Pupils have a good awareness of the different forms of bullying and understand that they have a role to play in preventing and tackling such incidents. Pupils consistently behave well, both in lessons and around the school. This is also the view of parents and carers. Pupils understand that they are expected to settle quickly to work in lessons and they have the maturity to organise the equipment for one another when appropriate. They talk to one another in support of their learning even when there are no planned opportunities for them to do so.

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Leadership and management

The headteacher has established a distinctive identity for the school. Staff take full advantage of its rural setting to give pupils experiences in sustainability that make a strong contribution to their spiritual development. For example, pupils are enthusiastic gardeners, keen to harvest fruit and vegetables for cooking and they encourage one another to watch the fledglings in the outdoor classroom. Members of the governing body bring particular expertise to their various committees and provide well-organised support for the headteacher. This includes the arrangements for safeguarding pupils' welfare which meet statutory requirements, but which also have a personalised element that reflects the school's care for individual pupils and their families.

Senior leaders have a secure understanding of the school's main strengths and weaknesses. Staff performance has been managed adequately and training opportunities have helped to improve teaching. For example, effective partnership working with local schools and helpful professional development support provided by the subject leader for mathematics are now beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' progress. This, together with other developments since the previous inspection, shows that the school has capacity for sustained improvement. Nevertheless, reviews of the school's work and the analysis of subsequent findings are not always stringent enough to refine practice still further and enable leaders to bring about more rapid improvements. In addition, the role of middle leaders in challenging and supporting their colleagues is not yet fully developed.

The school is determined that all pupils are given an equal opportunity to learn and individual pupil progress is monitored routinely. Where there are specific concerns, teachers respond with effective action plans to prevent underachievement. The curriculum provides a number of memorable enrichment activities that promote pupils' awareness of their heritage, such as the biennial Shakespeare production. The inclusive nature of the school inspires pupils' positive attitudes. They are interested in cultural diversity but they also recognise the similarities amongst humanity. Following on from the previous inspection, the school has developed a more coherent approach to delivering a range of subjects within a theme-based curriculum. In addition, curriculum initiatives that focus on the quality of pupils' literacy skills are having more of an impact and pupils are increasingly able to edit their own prose independently.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data 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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.

22 June 2012

Dear Pupils



Inspection of Baltonsborough Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School, Glastonbury BA6 8PX

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave me when I visited your school. I enjoyed hearing you read and talking to you about your learning, especially your topic work on the Olympics. Your views have been taken into account and I have found that yours is a satisfactory school. Here are some of the key findings from the report.

- Your behaviour is good. The 'learning to lead' scheme gives many of you good opportunities for leadership. You feel safe in school and this is something that is important to your parents and carers as well.
- You have good attitudes to learning and make satisfactory progress so that your attainment is broadly average by the time you leave.
- Teaching is satisfactory overall. Your teachers want you to have some memorable learning experiences. It is good that you enjoy gardening and the Shakespeare productions, for example.
- Your headteacher and the other school leaders have made improvements over recent years.

I have asked the staff to continue to improve the school by:

- planning more choices for the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage to learn, both indoors and outdoors
- explaining what you are going to learn during lessons so you can check your progress while you are working
- asking you questions that make you think in different ways so that you can show them what you understand
- always giving constructive written feedback to help you improve the work in your books
- reviewing your targets more often so that you know how much progress you are making.

I have also asked the leaders to keep a close watch on how well the school is improving.

You can help by continuing to do your best and by talking to your teachers about your learning.

Yours sincerely

Juliet Jaggs
Lead inspector

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