



Berkswell Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 104093
LEA Solihull
Inspection number 277069
Inspection dates 7 December 2005 to 8 December 2005
Reporting inspector Marianick Ellender-Gele HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary	School address	Church Lane
School category	Voluntary aided		Berkswell
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		Coventry, West Midlands CV7 7BJ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01676 532141
Number on roll	212	Fax number	01676 535794
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr MR Burns
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable	Headteacher	Mrs Alison Wellings

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one HMI and one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This average-sized primary school draws its pupils from the village. An increasing number of parents living further afield choose this school. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is below the national average. Children join Reception with above-average levels of knowledge and understanding. There are no pupils whose first language is not English. Three teachers joined the school at the start of this school year. The school has been awarded the Gold Artsmark in recognition of its very good work in the arts.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Berkswell is an outstanding school giving very good value for money. It judges its own effectiveness generally accurately, although too modestly in some areas. The determination of the headteacher to ensure that all pupils achieve as much as they can stimulates high levels of commitment from children and staff. The school's caring, family ethos makes it a very safe and welcoming place to be. Pupils achieve very well and reach standards that are well above average. The 2005 Year 6 tests results were particularly strong.

The quality of teaching is very good, with some outstanding features. Lessons are stimulating and, consequently, pupils are eager to learn. Teachers set challenging targets and check each child's progress towards them very carefully, providing effective support for those who need it. The excellent curriculum is accessible to all pupils and its planning is exemplary. Effective provision for children in nursery and reception enables them to reach above-average standards and they achieve very well.

Pupils and parents are rightly proud of the school. Leadership and management are outstanding at all levels. Staff and governors rightly recognise that pupils could do even better in their writing and that strategies to raise the achievement of very able children need consistent reinforcement across all groups. Since the previous inspection the school has made dramatic improvements to the nursery and to learning resources, particularly in information and communication technology (ICT). The school has excellent capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing so that they match the very good levels achieved in other subjects.
- Apply consistently the agreed strategies to get the most out of all able children.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Pupils achieve very well. Children enter the nursery with above-average skills in speaking and listening. Their social skills are also well developed. By the time they leave the reception class, standards are above those expected for their age. Pupils continue to make good progress in Years 1 and 2, reaching standards that are above average in writing and well above in reading and mathematics. This good progress gathers even more momentum in Years 3 to 6, leading to consistently high standards in English, mathematics and science. Results in 2005 were high and targets were exceeded. The school is currently revising its targets for 2006 to ensure that they are suitably challenging. Pupils with learning difficulties achieve very well as a result of the very effective support they receive, with some making outstanding progress.

The school has recognised the relative weakness of writing skills and has put in place strategies to address this issue. Standards in ICT have risen significantly since the

previous inspection and ICT is now used well to support pupils' learning across the curriculum.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils love their school. It is very clear that they thoroughly enjoy all aspects of school life. Consequently, behaviour, both inside and outside the classroom, is commendable. Pupils also show exemplary attitudes to each other and their teachers. All these attributes contribute significantly to their outstanding personal development and enthusiasm for learning. They are mature, courteous and are willing to engage in sensible and responsible discussion. The well-above-average attendance rate in the school reflects pupils' understanding of the importance of learning and their enjoyment of it.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. This is underpinned by the Christian ethos that permeates all aspects of school life. Pupils are offered opportunities for prayerful reflection, to consider the needs of others and to accept personal responsibility. For example, volunteer pupils, the 'blue band' group in Year 6, provide a wide range of activities during lunchtime for younger pupils, including games, use of computers, drawing and writing. Pupils' social development and community awareness are very well supported through work for national and international charities and pupils are very confident in contributing their views about the school in the recently established whole-school council.

The importance of staying healthy and safe is well understood by pupils. The school underscores this understanding by providing a good range of sporting activities and by, for example, the introduction of the 'fruit for schools' scheme and the availability of drinking water in all classrooms. Older pupils show that they have mastered the necessary skills to move to secondary education and they understand very well what is important for their future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

The quality of teaching is very good, with many outstanding features. Teachers explain clearly to pupils what they are going to learn and then plan tasks that are stimulating and imaginative. At the end of each lesson, teachers and pupils together check that the agreed objectives have been achieved. Teachers' high expectations promote intense concentration and, consequently, pupils achieve very well. For example, in mathematics, pupils were totally engaged and excited by an imaginative activity on world times and they worked with real enthusiasm. Similarly, in English, brisk question-and-answer sessions followed by time for independent work and reflection enabled pupils at different stages of learning to excel. Teachers challenge pupils to give their best and this is very effective because staff know each child very well. Sometimes, however,

opportunities for able children to learn more are missed. Those who experience learning difficulties are identified early and the highly effective support by teachers and teaching assistants helps them to make very good progress. The contribution of the ICT technician to pupils' enjoyment of learning is outstanding. In the reception class, very effective teaching ensures that practical activities and investigations build swiftly on the children's existing good level of knowledge, and ensures good progress in all areas of learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

A frequent comment made by pupils about their teachers was: 'they make the work interesting and fun'. This describes very adequately the broad, stimulating and exceptionally well planned curriculum. The school has devised a very imaginative approach where the timetable is driven by the need of the topic or subject rather than being constrained by time. This helps to ensure that the curriculum is lively and meets the learning needs of pupils. Pupils' creativity is further stimulated by the excellent provision for the arts, resulting in the award of the Gold Artsmark. The skills gained in one subject are used well by pupils to extend their learning in other subjects; for example, literacy skills are used well in Year 2 religious education stories and ICT skills are increasingly used in a range of subjects. The personal and social development programme contributes very effectively to pupils' personal development.

The school offers an extensive range of educational visits and extra-curricular activities, for example, concerts in the Albert Hall, climbing and abseiling for Year 6 and musical and sports clubs after school. Very good provision is made for guidance about drugs and medicines, smoking and alcohol awareness.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school is a large family where every child is of the utmost importance. Each individual is well known at the personal level but their academic needs are also regularly tracked and monitored. Targets set for individuals and groups are used well to support learning. As relationships in the school are so strong, pupils feel able to discuss any problems with an appropriate adult. Each classroom's 'bubble bag' and 'Golden letter box' provide good opportunities for pupils to share a problem with a teacher or to share with everyone in assembly the help they have been given by others. Child protection procedures are fully in place and there is regular training on such issues. Pupils with learning difficulties are given very good support and those with particular talents in, for example, art, music and physical education are well catered for.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Parents and pupils praise the headteacher's dedication and presence around the school. They rightly value the excellent role model that she provides. She is very ably supported

by her new deputy and together they promote a caring and safe learning environment and give staff excellent support and direction. This unity of purpose and excellent teamwork help pupils to develop into confident and caring young people, and staff to go from strength to strength.

The recognition that writing requires further improvement shows that the school is far from complacent. It seeks advice so that all pupils can reach their potential, as exemplified by the developing provision for gifted and talented children. Parents' views are taken into account, for example, when reviewing the effectiveness of educational plans for children who receive learning support. Subject managers make a full contribution to the school's drive for success, for example, through the very effective monitoring and evaluation of their subject. Governors also play an important part in the success of the school. They know what the school does well and where improvements are needed. The investment in ICT and the persistent struggle to extend the play areas are good examples. Governors manage resources and finances very well. Progress since the previous inspection has been very good and the highly effective leadership and management demonstrate an excellent capacity to improve further

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	1	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	1	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	1	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	1	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Berkswell Primary School Church Lane Berkswell Coventry West Midlands CV7 7BJ

12 December 2005

Dear Pupils

Thank you very much for making us feel so welcomed when we visited your school. We very much enjoyed coming into your lessons and looking at your work. We especially enjoyed talking to many of you, and seeing you participate so well in your assembly and in your preparations for Christmas.

You are working very hard in lessons and show great interest in your work. You learn very well and make very good progress. It is obvious that you enjoy school and look forward to coming each day. We thought that you were extremely well behaved, very polite and helpful to each other and visitors.

We saw that you enjoy the interesting work your teachers give you, and the support that they provide in lessons to help you to do well. All the adults in school look after you very well and help you to feel safe and keep healthy. You really appreciate all the extra opportunities the school gives you, especially visits and clubs.

We have seen the excellent way in which your headteacher, staff and school governors run the school. We enjoyed looking at the colourful displays around the school and we learned a lot from them about what you do in school.

Your headteacher and teachers already know what they need to do in order to make your school even better. We have asked them to make sure that you improve your writing even more and, if you are very good at a particular subject, we have asked your teachers to check that the work you do is sufficiently demanding and interesting.

Yours sincerely

Marianick Ellender-Gelé Lead inspector