



# The Bliss Charity School

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 122048  
**LEA** Northamptonshire  
**Inspection number** 281160  
**Inspection dates** 26 June 2006 to 27 June 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Jane Melbourne HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	The Green
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided		Nether Heyford
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11		Northampton, Northamptonshire NN7 3LE
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01327 340758
<b>Number on roll</b>	122	<b>Fax number</b>	01327 342341
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mrs Veneeta Rayner
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	4 December 2000	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Christopher Scanlan

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools.

## Description of the school

This is a smaller than average primary school. Currently all pupils are from White British backgrounds with a broad socio-economic profile. Only a very small number of pupils are eligible for free school meals. Slightly fewer than average pupils have learning difficulties or disabilities, but the number of pupils with statements of special educational need is in line with what is usual. There is some pupil mobility in and out of the school, but pupil stability remains better than the national figure. Most pupils enter school with achievement that is usual for their age, or above.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This is a good school providing good value for money. Effective leadership has resulted in an improving school where standards are above the national average. The school's strengths lie in its effective governance, the high quality and standards in the Foundation Stage and the outstanding personal development of its pupils. Pupils' behaviour is almost always exemplary and relationships are excellent throughout.

Pupils make good progress overall. However, the progress of pupils in some classes and of the higher attaining pupils overall is satisfactory, but not as good as that of others. This is because planning does not always effectively meet their needs and teaching is sometimes variable in its quality and challenge. The school has correctly identified this as an area for improvement. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, with frequent outstanding lessons and some effective systems of monitoring in place. However, monitoring and subject leadership is stronger in some subjects than in others.

The curriculum and the range of other activities provided is good, with some innovative ways of broadening pupils' experiences. Pupils are well cared for and mostly receive good guidance and support. The marking of work is variable. Most pupils understand their targets, but some teachers revisit them more frequently than others. The school accurately tracks pupils' progress and identifies when pupils require additional support. It continually strives to further involve parents in these important issues.

The school's self-evaluation is accurate and it too judges itself to be good. Pupils, staff, governors and representatives from the local community, support the school in moving forward. Very effective steps have been made to promote improvement under the new leadership structure. The school has the capacity to improve further and has an accurate grasp of the areas in which this is needed.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that all pupils in every class and those pupils with the potential of attaining high standards achieve as well as they can do, with planning that always takes account of the full range of learners' needs.
- Ensure that standards of teaching, learning and marking are consistently strong across the whole school.
- Further develop procedures for revisiting targets and assessing pupils' learning, making sure that these are consistent across the school and improving parental involvement.
- As the roles of the new leadership team are embedded, ensure that monitoring is consistently carried out to a high standard and that all subject leaders continue to monitor and lead their area effectively.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Standards are consistently above average in all core subjects in all key stages. Learners achieve well overall, but they do better in some year groups than others. For example,

progress is very good in the Foundation Stage. Achievement is at its best when pupils receive sufficient challenge, where they are really focused on their targets and expectations are high.

The progress of the high-attainers, whilst satisfactory, is not as good as that of pupils of other abilities. Sometimes work that is set is too easy, or their needs are not accurately identified and provided for. Although the number of higher levels attained in mathematics and science at Key Stage 2 is above average, the number of higher level English results was not as good last year. The school correctly recognises that pupils in both key stages achieve better in reading than in writing, but strategies to address this have been successful and the writing of some pupils has improved. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress because of the effective support they receive and the close monitoring by staff.

The school has strived hard to address the issues of boys performing better than girls in some subjects. Consultation with girls regarding science and mathematics has enabled staff to focus support appropriately and the difference is reducing.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. The school has worked very effectively to achieve this, successfully raising pupils' confidence and levels of responsibility. There is a model school council, which plays a significant part in contributing to school improvement. Many of the older pupils support younger ones, for example in 'Huff and Puff' playtime sessions or with reading, and there is an effective buddy system operating in the playground. This means that pupils understand where to go if there is a problem and as a result incidences of bullying are rare. The behaviour of pupils is almost always excellent, and as most parents believe, the school sets high standards and pupils respond accordingly. Pupils are respectful of adults and there is a calm working environment.

The enthusiasm and enjoyment for learning is evident. Pupils operate safely around the school and make healthy choices. They understand about the importance of regular exercise and safety in the sun. They have recently undertaken accreditation for the Healthy School Award. Pupils make a very positive contribution to the school and wider community. They often work effectively as a team and organise many of their own initiatives. In the special Thursday sessions they learn new skills, such as creative skills, French and touch typing, which contribute to their future well being. Pupils' attendance at school is good.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good overall. By monitoring regularly, the school has rightly identified that many lessons are outstanding, but that some still waiver around satisfactory to good.

The pace of lessons is good with almost always very clear learning objectives. The tracking of pupils' progress is now firmly embedded in the school culture and staff are therefore able to plan broadly to pupil needs. The less able pupils and those with learning difficulties and disabilities learn well and to their potential, ably supported by class teachers and teaching assistants. Where teaching is less strong, the high attaining pupils are not always challenged enough.

There are effective systems where pupils mark each other's work, demonstrating a good knowledge of different levels and the criteria for each subject. Teachers' marking is mostly constructive, although occasionally this gives insufficient information on how to improve and is not always of the same consistent high quality. Learning is aided by much practical and independent learning and by staff allowing for a range of learning styles. The school has effectively focused on improving the enthusiasm for and quality of writing across the school.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 2

The school offers all pupils a good, balanced curriculum. It often successfully integrates different curriculum areas through interesting topics. This year it has successfully improved writing skills across many curriculum areas. Pupils are encouraged to practically apply new skills and knowledge, preparing them very well for independent research, problem solving and their future economic well-being. Through the provision of out-of-school activities, very good use of the outdoor facilities and the skilful utilisation of visiting specialists and teaching assistants, the school provides a broad curriculum which enhances pupils' all round development. The Foundation Stage curriculum is particularly successful in allowing both planned and spontaneous opportunities for learning.

The school has tailored the broader curriculum to the needs of its pupils, for example, it has made science a more practical subject that has a wider appeal. Although very detailed and based upon the necessary next steps, planning occasionally does not always give sufficient consideration as to how best support the higher achievers.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 2

The quality of care, guidance and support provided for pupils is good overall, which significantly contributes to their confidence and well-being. Procedures for analysing

risks are good and the school has in place the expected procedures to ensure pupils' continued safety, including child protection.

This is a caring school, including pupils caring for each other. They are supportive of each other's work, providing helpful comments and relevant advice. Teachers' marking is mostly constructive, although occasionally this gives insufficient information on how to improve and is not always of the same consistent high quality. Most pupils are aware of their targets and parents too are becoming increasingly aware of these. The school is working hard to improve the quality of information for, and partnership with, parents. The revisiting of targets is not yet consistent across the school, although it is always regular.

The buddy system works effectively, particularly in the playground. There is evidence of co-operation and mutual support, including teamwork across the school. The school has excellent relationships with the local pre-school and therefore settling into the school is well planned, taking account of children's needs upon entry. The Year 6 children are adequately prepared for the transition to secondary school, with positive links across the two schools in place.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The leadership and management are good. There are some outstanding aspects. The governing body now has a more prominent role and a greater presence around the school. It has been outstanding in supporting the school in terms of monitoring teaching and standards, which was a previous key issue, and has quality assured systems of tracking pupils' progress with a good degree of rigour and professional knowledge. Duties are well designated and performance management is effectively linked to school targets, which are mostly agreed upon at the beginning of each school year in an innovative way. Whole staff and a representative range of stakeholders come together to focus on the school's change agenda.

The headteacher has established a new and increasingly effective leadership team, which is committed to taking the school forward. Staff have mostly risen to their new responsibilities well. There are some sound initiatives taking place which are making a real impact on school improvement. Some roles have yet to be firmly embedded, but systems already initiated enable the school to assess pupils' progress more accurately. Staff aim to ensure that all pupils achieve as well as they can, correctly focused on improving outcomes for potential high achievers. Resources, including technological resources, the library and teaching assistants, are well deployed to achieve value for money. Each class now makes sufficient use of information and communication technology to support pupils' learning, which was an issue at the last inspection. The headteacher is effective in the development of staff and ensuring their skills are best utilised to improve the outcomes for learners.

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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>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	2	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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	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	1	NA

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2	NA
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2	NA

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	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

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
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**

Dear Pupils

Thank you for making me so welcome when I visited your school earlier this week. You all spoke highly of your school, as do the staff, your parents and the school governors, and I understand why you are so positive about being there. You all try very hard and understand why you always need to attend school during term times to make sure you don't miss important lessons. You are respectful to all the adults who work in school and are kind to each other, which was pleasing to see.

These are the things I like most at Bliss Charity

- How much you care about your school and each other.
- The quality of the things you learn in Reception.
- The use you are making of the new fantastic outdoor area.
- The planning day that the school holds before each school year.
- The buzz of excitement in many of the lessons.
- The fact that most of you and many parents now understand your targets.
- The fine school council and the really good buddy system.
- The teachers are working hard to record your progress and often tell you how to improve.

Here are the things I think would make the school even better

- Make sure those of you that find work easy achieve even higher levels and that interesting work is always planned for you.
- Ensure that all of your teachers teach as well as they can to make all of your lessons good or even better, and put helpful comments on your work.
- Ensure that all of you regularly check your targets and your progress against them and that all of your parents are also involved in this.
- Ensure teachers check the quality of the lessons and your progress in all subjects really well.

Yours sincerely

Jane Melbourne Her Majesty's Inspector