



Bakewell Methodist Junior School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 112870
Local Authority DERBYSHIRE
Inspection number 289445
Inspection dates 13–14 September 2006
Reporting inspector Mrs. Sue Hall

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Stoney Close
School category	Voluntary controlled		Bakewell
Age range of pupils	7–11		Derbyshire DE45 1FR
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01629 812389
Number on roll (school)	109	Fax number	01629 812389
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Rev.Margaret Roe
		Headteacher	Miss. Sarah Watson
Date of previous school inspection	11 June 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This smaller than average sized junior school serves a small town in rural North Derbyshire. Relatively few pupils are entitled to free school meals. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds. Attainment on entry varies but is typically above average and the number of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is about average for a school of this size. The present headteacher has been in post since January, following a period when the school had a succession of acting headteachers and numbers on roll fell markedly. Some parents place their children at the school because they want them to move on to the well-regarded local secondary school.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Bakewell Methodist Junior School provides a satisfactory education. This judgement matches that of the school, which now recognises its strengths and weaknesses well. After a period of uncertain leadership standards and numbers on roll fell dramatically. Inspection findings confirm that, as one parent notes, the school has 'come through this bad patch ... with positive, clear leadership'. Pupils' personal development is satisfactory overall. They are generally happy and friendly, attendance is good and most behave well. The school makes good provision for sport and, with an emphasis on healthy eating, encourages pupils to make appropriate lifestyle choices. Pupils feel safe and parents are pleased with recent work to challenge the few instances of bullying. When they arrive, pupils have made good early progress and many attain standards that are above average. In recent years, standards at the age of eleven have been average. Early progress was not maintained there were elements of underachievement. The school was initially slow to recognise such weaknesses but has now improved the level of challenge offered to pupils. Consequently standards in the 2006 national tests for eleven-year-olds rose considerably and were higher than in the previous three years. Inspection evidence confirms that standards are now above average and that pupils of all abilities make at least satisfactory progress. These improvements have come about because the headteacher's thorough evaluation of teaching and learning quickly identified that some teaching was inadequate. Steps were taken to address this and the quality of teaching and learning, whilst still variable, has improved. It is now satisfactory overall and much is better than that. Consequently, most pupils have satisfactory attitudes to work but some do not find great joy in learning or try as hard as they could, because of some less effective behaviour management. Standards of pastoral care are good and staff work effectively to safeguard pupils. The school has, rightly, introduced systems for tracking pupils' progress and for providing them with guidance on how to improve their work. These arrangements have a beneficial impact in English but are still at an early stage other subjects. As a result, the use of such information to enable pupils to meet challenging targets has yet to impact fully on standards and achievement. Another key factor influencing recent improvement and the school's satisfactory capacity to improve further has been the rigorous way in which the new headteacher has pursued the necessary changes. Nevertheless, leadership is currently no better than satisfactory because governors were slow to act on the many weaknesses highlighted by the previous inspection and to monitor school improvement. Consequently, important initiatives, such as involving subject leaders in monitoring standards and quality, have been delayed and this has slowed the rate of school improvement and the building of consistency in key areas of the school's work. Furthermore, despite improved communication with parents, not all are fully 'on board' with recent changes or understand why these were necessary.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that the management of pupils' behaviour is consistently effective throughout school.
- Extend the checks on pupils' progress and the use of such information to

provide the highest appropriate level of challenge for all pupils in all subjects. - Give subject leaders and governors a more prominent role in monitoring the work of the school and in planning for school improvement. - Work more closely with parents to increase their understanding of and involvement in school improvement.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement and standards are satisfactory. The majority of pupils enter Year 3 attaining standards that are above the national average. However, samples of pupils' work indicate that progress in Years 3 and 4 has not been good enough and has adversely affected overall standards and achievement. This has been reflected in national test results in recent years, which show standards at age eleven have been no more than average. This underachievement by younger pupils has now been addressed by an effective programme of support, which enabled pupils to do well in the most recent national tests in Year 6. Inspection evidence confirms that standards are now above average at the age of eleven. The progress of pupils of all abilities is satisfactory and enables them to attain the standards that they should. Achievement is best in English because the tracking of progress is particularly effective.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Personal development and well-being are satisfactory. Attendance is good. Most pupils are happy and say they particularly enjoy playtimes and art. They know how to keep themselves safe and improving standards of literacy and numeracy are laying sound foundations for adult life. Recent work on improving behaviour is beginning to have a positive impact, although some pupils still do not behave as well as they could. Pupils enjoy their award-winning healthy school lunches and the good range of sporting activities available. Consequently, many have positive attitudes to school but some pupils do not always try to do their best. The school council allows pupils to contribute to the school community but is at a relatively early stage of development. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory, although staff do not make the most of opportunities to develop spirituality or an understanding of a range of cultures.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall but provision for different classes still varies considerably, especially in Years 4 and 5 largely because of the weak management of pupils. During the inspection, the majority of teaching was good and rigorous external monitoring indicates that at times it is outstanding. The planning of

activities has improved because teachers are making better use of information from checks on pupils' progress to provide challenge for those with different capabilities. This approach works well in English but has not yet been fully implemented in other subjects.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. There is an appropriate emphasis on the development of literacy and numeracy. The school has improved its information and communication technology resources but pupils still need more opportunities to develop computer skills. The school has developed useful links with the feeder infant school, which enable pupils to make a contribution to the wider community. The curriculum for subjects other than English and mathematics has been improved recently, with blocks of time allocated to teaching such subjects in greater depth. The school has also begun to promote experimental and investigative skills but recent work shows an over-reliance on materials that do little to interest pupils or to develop their ability to solve problems independently.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The care, guidance and support of pupils are satisfactory overall. There are strengths in pastoral care. Support staff play a valuable role in this work, particularly those working with pupils with learning difficulties. The warmth shown in some of these relationships is revealed when one assistant describes the pupil she supports as 'just lovely'. The school has worked with resolve in the last year to extend the ways in which it checks and tracks the progress pupils make. This is now effective in reading and writing. Similar arrangements have been introduced this term in mathematics but such information is not yet used consistently to provide the highest level of challenge. Procedures are still at an early stage in most other subjects.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Since her appointment, headteacher has successfully moved the school forward. She has continued the valuable work started by the previous acting head by introducing systems to systematically evaluate the work of the school. This work is effective because it clearly identifies to everyone what needs to be done. Consequently, the rate of school improvement has increased and is now satisfactory, because recent changes to staffing, school organisation, planning and teaching have begun to have a beneficial effect on learning. Nevertheless, there is still work to be done on strengthening the monitoring role of governors and subject leaders and on working closely with parents, so that they are all more involved in evaluating the effectiveness of the school.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The behaviour of learners	3
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

14 September 2006 Dear Pupils Bakewell Methodist Junior School, Stoney Close, Bakewell, Derbyshire, DE45 1FR Firstly thank you very much for looking after me when I visited your school recently. I enjoyed speaking to several of you in lessons, at lunchtime, in the playground and in group discussions. I was very interested to hear what you enjoy doing, and it amused me that when I asked you what you liked best at school, nearly all of you said playtime. These are the things that I found are best about your school - - The people in charge know what they need to do to make the school better for you - You enjoy coming to school and most of you get on well together - The staff take good care of you and give you extra help if you need it. - You attain good standards by the age of eleven. These are the things that I think could be even better - - When teachers go to watch other lessons or look at your work, they need to find ways to help you make more even progress. - Teachers should make better use of the information they have about your progress to make sure you have work that is not too hard or too easy. - The staff and governors could work more closely with your parents so that parents understand what the school is doing to improve and can help play their part in this. Thank you again for being so helpful and friendly when I came to see you. Remember that you can do a lot to help your school improve by behaving well and trying really hard all the time. Yours sincerely Sue Hall Lead inspector