

St Bartholomew's CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114538
Local Authority	Brighton and Hove
Inspection number	289957
Inspection dates	16–17 January 2007
Reporting inspector	David Collard

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 on roll	
School	187
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jonathan Dodson
Headteacher	Amanda L Healey
Date of previous school inspection	24 July 2002
School address	Ann Street Brighton BN1 4GP
Telephone number	01273 692463
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

St Bartholomew's is a smaller than average sized primary school serving Brighton city centre. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is above average. A small number of these pupils are supported through the Special Facility for Specific Learning difficulties based at the school. The local area includes a major redevelopment of housing and retail outlets. As a result, many pupils change schools and come from outside the catchment area. The number of pupils with English as an additional language is increasing rapidly and is twice the national average. This is partly due to the school's involvement in the Home Office gateway Protection re-settlement programme which provides for education for refugees identified by the UNHCR as in need of protection from all parts of the world.'

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

The school's overall effectiveness is inadequate. While pupils' personal development is satisfactory, achievement is unsatisfactory because the overall quality of teaching and learning is inadequate. Nevertheless, there are signs of an improvement particularly in the quality of teaching and learning in some lessons. The national test results in Year 6 have risen since 2003 but are still too low in Year 2 and the behaviour of pupils has improved significantly. This demonstrates that the school has a satisfactory capacity to address the issues it faces. Nevertheless, in accordance with section 13(3) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to the standards and achievement of the pupils and the quality of teaching particularly in the Foundation Stage.

Children enter the Reception class with standards in line with those expected for their age. Satisfactory provision means that they make adequate progress although the expectations of teachers are not high enough. These children enter Year 1 with standards at the expected level. In Years 2 and 6, standards in national tests have been very low. Assessment data show that the high levels of external support are beginning to have some effect, particularly in Years 5 and 6. However, there is still a legacy of underachievement. Pupils learning English as an additional language are provided with good support. They are integrated into the school well, gain access to the full curriculum quickly and make satisfactory progress. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities also make satisfactory progress.

In the past there were significant behavioural issues and attendance levels were well below the national average. With a more consistent approach to managing behaviour this is being remedied and attendance is starting to improve. While there are still some isolated instances, pupils generally have suitable attitudes to school because of satisfactory care, welfare and support systems. For instance, pupils in Year 6 said that they felt that the school was calmer now and that they enjoyed most of their lessons.

Leadership and management are satisfactory and the newly restructured management team shows a determination to address the school's weaknesses. High quality expertise from the local authority and better professional development are improving teachers' ability to assess pupils' capability. This is bringing about improvements that are focused appropriately on the basic skills of English and mathematics. However, assessment is not always adapted well enough to pupils' ability and does not provide them with the opportunity to think for themselves. The sound curriculum now makes real connections between subjects so that pupils can see the relevance of what they are learning. These improvements have made a significant difference to the everyday running of the school. While the school's self-evaluation is satisfactory it is overgenerous in its judgements about the outcomes for pupils and future improvements in standards.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise the achievement of all pupils, particularly in the Foundation Stage, by making sure that teaching provides an appropriate level of challenge and makes pupils think more for themselves.

- Ensure assessment information is used more effectively to focus the learning of all groups and individuals.
- Raise attendance levels further by following up cases of persistent absence.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

The very low standards have come about because of previous weaknesses in teaching. Consequently, overall achievement is still inadequate. Pupils make sound progress in the Reception class and start Year 1 at the levels expected for their age. However, because teachers' expectations here are too low, pupils are not fully prepared for more formal work within the National Curriculum. As a result, through Years 1 and 2, they do not develop the full range of basic skills that will enable them to gain the standards expected. National tests at the end of Year 2 have shown consistently low standards although pupils presently in Year 2 are making better progress because of improved teaching. Through Years 3 to 6, progress is inconsistent. The generally satisfactory teaching has not been strong enough to catch up the ground lost when they were younger. Where the school has focused on a subject, such as science, then achievement is better. Other improvements can also be seen in the new targets for English and mathematics which are now more realistic and challenging.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Personal development is satisfactory. Most but not all pupils behave well and enjoy school. They are generally polite, considerate and know how to make sure they stay safe. Attendance has improved this year but remains well below the national average although only slightly below the local authority's target for the school. The school is working hard with other agencies but some families attach less importance to regular school attendance. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is satisfactory, reflecting the close links with the neighbouring church and some innovative developments. As one older pupil said, 'When you do philosophy you learn better because you get to think things in your own way.' Pupils from different cultures build good relationships and the multiplicity of languages is increasingly celebrated. Pupils show their good understanding about healthy lifestyles, for instance by asking for fresh fruit desserts and by attending the very popular 'healthy cookery club'. School councillors take their job seriously but feel that their views are not always acted upon. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility, for example by serving meals and by working with others in the local community. However, limited opportunities to make decisions and weak basic skills in literacy and numeracy limit their foundation for the world of work.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 4

Teaching is unsatisfactory overall because, although it can be good in some individual lessons, it is inconsistent.. Planning follows national initiatives but, because assessments are not used well enough, it is not always tailored well to the ability of different groups. For instance, in some there is little opportunity for extended work; in others, the work is too hard so that pupils do not fully understand what is expected of them. In addition, many pupils do not have the basic skills to move on because of missed opportunities in the past. Too few pupils are given

tasks that will really make them think and so develop better independence. This is much better in the upper juniors where pupils excitedly talk about the challenges they tackle in class or at home and how they have to enlist the help of others. Nevertheless, the lack of this type of learning, low expectations of pupils' capability and unsatisfactory use of teaching assistants have, until recently, been the root causes of the poor progress made

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory although it is not always adapted well for the different ranges of ability. Nevertheless, older pupils are making connections between subjects, for example by using computers for writing, painting and presentations. Good, focused and innovative lunchtime activities have helped improve behaviour outside and learning mentors support those who might disrupt others. Other good activities have been undertaken through the breakfast club and the Excellence in Cities (EiC) project which includes robot building and a 'Challenge Club' for those showing outstanding potential.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school provides good levels of personal care and support and satisfactory academic guidance. Staff are sensitive to the emotional needs of individual pupils, particularly those entering the school at short notice and those at an early stage of learning English. As a result, pupils are supported appropriately in developing social skills, care of each other and self-confidence. This is a view also expressed by parents. Child protection and health and safety procedures are secure and vulnerable children are well supported. Assessments are now beginning to be used to determine the best methods to improve academic progress. Pupils have recently been given clear individual targets but, in some classes, they do not yet understand how to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory and have demonstrated that they have the capability to turn round the weaker elements of the school. The headteacher has dealt effectively with a number of difficult personnel issues and has recently been able to build a senior management team capable of beginning the process of rigorous self-evaluation. The first evidence of its impact can be seen in the improved behaviour since the last inspection and a rise in national test results in Year 6. However, pupils' results and the progress they are making have not been analysed well enough. This is because, until recently, the school's self-evaluation was not sufficiently rigorous. Change is coming about through the school's own analysis and through the very effective support provided by the local authority and other partner organisations. This is beginning to identify priorities for improvement. Action is being taken to tackle these and so pupils' learning is improving. The governing body fulfils its statutory duties and provides a satisfactory level of support for the school. Governors are gaining a better understanding of teaching and learning, achievement and attainment and are now more able to hold the school to account.

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Annex A

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?	4
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4
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	4
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	4

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	4
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.

Annex A

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	4
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	4
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?	Yes

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for looking after us so well during our recent visit. We enjoyed talking to so many of you, particularly during lunchtime, and enjoyed watching you serve the meals so well. As I promised some of you, I have written the main points of the report below.

- Some of you told us how you enjoyed school and that behaviour around the school has improved. We agree and think that behaviour is satisfactory. However, you can all help to improve this even more by making sure that you listen carefully and follow your teacher's instructions.
- You are cared for well though we think that you could be guided better in your work. For instance, we were impressed with the things you know about healthy eating.
- Those of you who are just starting to learn English get good support and have settled in well.
- You had some good ideas about how you think things could improve. Your teachers agree and they will be working hard to try and make sure more of you make the progress that you should.
- The SATs results in Year 6 improved in 2006 although not in Year 2. However, the standards you reach are not high enough and more of you could make better progress.
- We think that your teachers are working hard to plan work that will help you. However, we have said that some teaching still needs improving. This can be done by setting you work that will make you think much harder. Those we talked to were excited about the targets you have been set in your books but we think that these could also be improved by making sure you all understand what you need to do next.
- Your headteacher, along with the other staff, have been right to get as much help as they can to increase your progress. We have asked that some inspectors return in a few months time to check that this is happening.

Finally, we wish you every success in the future. Your school has the potential to improve and you can help this, for instance by making sure you behave well. Also, the attendance rates at your school are not as good as in many other schools. This will improve quickly if you make sure you arrive punctually and attend school every day.