

Burley St Matthias' Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108001
Local Authority	Leeds
Inspection number	309565
Inspection dates	19–20 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Andrew Clark

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	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	142
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dr M Winter
Headteacher	Ms Kate Cameron
Date of previous school inspection	1 December 2003
School address	Burley Road Leeds West Yorkshire LS4 2HY
Telephone number	0113 2144523
Fax number	0113 2744733

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The school is smaller than average. Pupils come from a diverse range of socio-economic backgrounds. The percentage of pupils eligible for a free school meal is above average. Over half the pupils are of Pakistani, Indian and Afro-Caribbean heritage. The remainder are from White British families, except for a small percentage from continental Europe. A high proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language. A quarter of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, which is higher than normal: these include visual and physical disabilities.

The headteacher and deputy headteacher were appointed in September 2007.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Burley St Matthias is a good school. Parents and pupils appreciate the welcoming and inclusive ethos that celebrates the many nationalities and cultures it serves. Pupils enjoy lessons because of the good quality teaching and levels of care. The headteacher, well supported by senior staff, provides a very clear sense of direction for future development and the school's capacity to improve is good.

Standards are broadly average by time pupils leave school. They achieve well from their starting point in Reception. The school identified a weakness in writing standards in both key stages two years ago. A wide range of strategies were introduced including guided writing and handwriting sessions and these have raised achievement throughout the school. Management have introduced further improvements to help a similar situation in reading and mathematics in Key Stage 1. This is beginning to show improvement, although there is still some way to go to bring standards up to that of writing. Pupils make good progress in science because of the good opportunities provided for them to carry out experiments and investigations. The school sets pupils targets based on their past achievement that are particularly challenging and they have good success in meeting them by Year 6.

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Pupils are well behaved and considerate towards each other. They learn to appreciate the wonder and beauty in their everyday life and have a good understanding of their own and others' faiths and cultures. Attendance has improved significantly since the last inspection. Pupils know well the principles of living healthily and this is recognised in the Healthy School's Award. They make a positive commitment to improving their own community through the effective school council.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Lessons have a clear purpose which is effectively shared with pupils. In many lessons, the very good use of time and sharply focused questions lead to rapid progress. Some lessons lack this urgency and pupils do not achieve as well as they should. The curriculum is satisfactory. There are many good features, for example, the promotion of pupils' personal development and provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. However, there is some imbalance between the time devoted to different subjects and pupils spend too long on similar activities. There is a good range of out-of-school activities: a breakfast club, poetry clubs and visits to places of interest. Foundation Stage provision is good. The care and guidance pupils receive is good. Pastoral care is very strong and the tracking of pupils' learning is rigorous, which contributes well to their achievement in many areas. Marking has improved significantly since the last inspection, especially in English.

The new headteacher is building well on the positive school ethos, through a thorough analysis of all aspects of achievement and provision. She is supported well by senior management. There is strong evidence that initiatives taken to raise achievement, such as promoting pupils' speaking and listening skills, are proving successful. The governing body provide good support and challenge to help the school develop. The school knows its strengths and weaknesses well, although it is sometimes too modest in the judgements made in its self-evaluation. Finances are managed well and the school gives good value for money.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The Foundation Stage is well led and managed. Effective record keeping and assessment procedures ensure work is targeted well to children's most important needs. In particular, staff place special emphasis on improving children's language, communication skills and their knowledge and understanding of the world. This is because many children start with low levels of achievement in these aspects. Staff also provide good support to those who speak little English. Achievement is good, although standards are still lower than average when they leave the Reception class. The quality of teaching is good. The classroom is very stimulating with exciting displays of children's work, imaginative role-play areas and well planned activities to encourage independence. Early reading and writing are well taught. A considerable strength is the outdoor area, where children build giant bridges with wooden blocks, play on the pirate ship and plant and study their own garden. As a result, children learn to observe carefully, show curiosity and develop well physically.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in reading and mathematics in Years 1 and 2.
- Ensure the school day is planned effectively to provide an appropriate breadth of experiences.
- Make sure that in all lessons teaching is good or better.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils, many of whom speak English as an additional language, make good progress from low starting points. They achieve well, so that by time they leave school standards are broadly average in English, mathematics and science. There has been a good trend of improving achievement in these subjects in Years 3 to 6. Pupils' achievement is less consistent at in Years 1 and 2. It is good in writing but only satisfactory in reading and mathematics. Pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress as do those with learning difficulties/and or disabilities.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils of all nationalities and backgrounds get on very well together in lessons and around school. They show care and tolerance towards each other. Their behaviour is good and most pupils show very good self-control. Behaviour in assemblies, especially from the older pupils, is exemplary. Very occasionally, when the pace of teaching is too slow, a small proportion of pupils chatters and fusses too much. The school council makes good use of suggestions from pupils to influence the life of the school. These include helping to select new staff, including the headteacher, and deciding on colour schemes. Pupils take on the role of monitors around the school well, although they do not consistently take enough responsibility for their own learning. Pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development is very good. They join in well, discussing important issues such as bringing peace to the world or understanding the similarities between different faiths.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

In many lessons, teachers hold pupils' interest well from the start because of sharply focused and challenging questions. They make certain the purpose of the lesson is clear and explain what pupils should achieve by the end. Teachers regularly refer to targets set for individuals and for the class. As a result, pupils are focussed on achieving well and build on their earlier learning. In these, sometimes outstanding lessons, pupils solve problems for themselves and contribute to planning the next stage in their learning. Teachers often make good use of interactive technology, for example, in enabling pupils to solve phonic word puzzles in Year 3 or to annotate a line graph in Year 5. Sometimes, teachers tell, rather than question, pupils. They do not maintain a quick pace nor set tasks that are challenging and varied enough. This inhibits pupils' progress and encourages some silliness. The well prepared and appropriately trained teaching assistants make a good contribution to pupils' learning, both in supporting classes and in group and individual work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Too much of the morning session is given to reading and similar literacy activities and is too repetitive for some pupils. This dissipates the impact of even good teaching within these times. It also means that there is not enough time for other subjects. The school is reviewing the overall curriculum and already making effective links between subjects. However, a strength of the curriculum is the many visits and visitors to the school that help to make learning relevant and improve pupils' depth of knowledge. Provision for pupils' personal and social development is good and effective links between acts of collective worship and lessons reinforce this.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Some families travel from well outside the school's catchment area because of its caring and inclusive reputation. They are fully justified in this because the staff know pupils well and take good care of them. There are good tracking systems in place to support and guide the pupils. These are increasingly effective in raising the achievement of all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Teachers use marking well to guide pupils, although they do not always involve them in assessing their own work. Procedures to safeguard pupils are in place and the learning mentor provides strong support to the most vulnerable children.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher and deputy headteacher have a very clear focus on raising standards. In a short time they have improved the effectiveness of assessment procedures to enable teachers to match work more closely to pupils' needs. There are good procedures to manage teachers' performance that are being extended to help develop the skills of other staff. The governing body is well informed and gives thoughtful support to the school. They manage the finances very well, enabling the school to maintain good provision despite falling rolls and staff changes.

This is now being addressed. The headteacher provides a very good role model in her thorough, analytical approach. The school is held in high regard by parents who appreciate the openness of staff and opportunities to share in supporting their children's education.

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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?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
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?	2

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?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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

Annex B

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for being so friendly when I visited your school earlier this week. I enjoyed talking with you and looking at your work.

Your school is providing you with a good education that I know you enjoy. You play and work very nicely with each other. You are well behaved and you try hard to do what teachers ask of you. Adults look after you well so you feel safe and confident about asking them for help or to talk to them about any worries. The school is good at giving special help to those of you who need it. You know how to keep healthy and you particularly enjoy the good opportunities you have to take part in sport. You choose to eat healthy meals and snacks. There is a good range of interesting activities for you to do before, during and after school. Your new headteacher leads the school well and all her staff give her plenty of support. Your parents love your school and find every body welcoming and caring.

You are making good progress in your learning. That is because the work you do and the teaching you receive are good. Some lessons are especially good and I have asked the school to help make sure that more of your lessons are as good. I have asked your headteacher and staff to help you do even better in reading and mathematics by the end of Year 2. All of you work hard all day, but sometimes the lessons in the morning are too much alike and I have asked the school to look closely at this.

You can help your teachers in their efforts to improve your school by coming to school regularly, working hard and doing your best at everything.

I wish you and your teachers well in the future.