

St Bartholomew's CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114538
Local Authority	Brighton and Hove
Inspection number	311638
Inspection dates	12–13 February 2008
Reporting inspector	Sheila Browning

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	181
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Brian Cooper
Headteacher	Amanda L Healey
Date of previous school inspection	16 January 2007
School address	Ann Street Brighton BN1 4GP
Telephone number	01273 692463
Fax 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. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is much higher than nationally, as is the proportion of pupils with complex learning needs. A small number of pupils are supported through the Local Authority's Special Facility for Specific Learning Difficulties based at the school. The number of pupils with English as an additional language is increasing rapidly and is twice the national average. The school has experienced significant changes in staffing including at senior management level. When the school was inspected in January 2007, it was found to be in need of significant improvement and given a Notice to Improve. The school is part of a local authority programme of support to raise standards. In recognition of its work the school holds a Healthy Schools Award and Basic Skills and Active Marks.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

In accordance with section 3 (5) of the Education Act, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

St Bartholomew's is a satisfactory and improving school despite facing some significant challenges. The school is successfully putting into place measures to overcome barriers to learning caused by high pupil mobility, and high numbers of pupils having complex learning needs and pupils learning English as an additional language. The main priority is raising standards and achievement. The headteacher, staff and governors, supported well by the local authority, have secured some important improvements. The standards reached and the progress made by pupils, particularly the more able, have been weak in recent years but have improved significantly of late. Despite these advances, more able pupils do not always make the progress of which they are capable. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Standards are average and improving though writing skills remain a relative weakness. Good systems are in place to check on pupils' progress and senior leaders use this data effectively to identify those at risk of underachievement and additional support is put in place where needed. As a result, pupils with complex learning needs and those learning English as an additional language make at least satisfactory progress though this is not always measurable against standardised outcomes. Good systems for assessment have been introduced. When used well the level of challenge and work is suitably matched to pupils' learning needs. However, this is not sufficiently well established throughout the school to ensure the more able pupils are challenged. Teaching and learning is much improved. Regular and robust monitoring has identified weaknesses that are being tackled but teaching quality is not yet consistently good. The marking of pupils' work is variable across classes. Constructive comments help move pupils to the next stage of learning but in a few classes, teachers' expectations are not high enough and some work is left unmarked.

The strong Christian ethos underpins much of the school's work. This is evident in the good care and support for pupils. The school has worked hard to improve behaviour and pupils have a good attitude to work and say they 'enjoy everything'. They show a good awareness of leading safe, healthy lifestyles and have consideration for others. Pupils' involvement in the community and range of responsibilities in school support their good personal development. The many enrichment opportunities are a strength of the curriculum. There is strong support for pupils with complex learning needs and for those with English as an additional language and this is mirrored in the strong partnership with parents, the local authority and other agencies which is so beneficial. Good leadership and management and the initiatives of the senior management team are having a positive effect on most pupils' achievement and other areas of the school's work. This is supported strongly by the governing body. All staff are committed to improving the school, but many improvements are too recent to have had a visible impact at this stage. The roles of subject co-ordinators, other than in English and mathematics, are not fully developed. The school has made good progress since it was last inspected and, given the improvements, it shows a sound capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Most children join Reception with lower than expected skill levels for their age and make satisfactory progress. So, by the start of Year 1, most are on track to meet national expectations except in spoken language, writing and emotional development. Good support from the local

authority has improved teaching expertise, planning and provision. A significant change is that the school now has secure data for children's starting points and is using this well to check that all are making sufficient progress. Close multi-agency links and additional support are directed well to assist the significant numbers speaking English as an additional language and those with complex learning needs. Children have a satisfactory balance and range of activities to help their independent learning. Behaviour is good and children play well with each other.

What the school should do to improve further

- Sharpen teaching so that it is consistently good and raises the achievement of all pupils, especially the more able.
- Ensure assessment information is used more effectively to challenge pupils, particularly the more able so that they reach their full potential.
- Develop the skills of all subject co-ordinators in monitoring the quality of provision in their subjects to help identify where the achievements of all pupils can be improved.

A small proportion of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards rose significantly in the 2007 national tests compared to the previous year, though relatively few pupils reached the highest levels. By the end of Year 2, standards are average in reading and mathematics though below in writing. By the end of Year 6, standards are average in English, mathematics and science. Writing remains a comparative weakness but this is being tackled well. The school has worked closely with the local authority. Inspection evidence confirms that this has resulted in significant improvements in pupils' achievement, teaching and learning, curriculum and in most aspects of checking on pupils' progress. This has led to increased pupil engagement in learning and resulted in satisfactory achievement, which accelerates in Year 6. The school has focused on the achievement of average and below average ability groups and this has been successful. However, the more able pupils do not always do as well as they could. A high proportion of pupils has complex learning needs or speaks English as an additional language, and many of these are newly arrived. They are well supported but as yet this has not had a measurable effect on their progress. Children make sound progress in the Reception class. By Year 1 most are at the levels expected for their age except in spoken language, writing and emotional development. The school is working to lift these skills through additional focused support.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils say they enjoy school especially breakfast club and sporting activities. A few admit that they find it difficult to behave and say the 'Golden Values' help them remember to behave. The school's focus on reducing the high rate of fixed term exclusions has been successful. Pupils behave well in lessons and out of class. They have a good understanding of healthy living and at lunchtime older pupils enjoy serving food to younger ones. In this culturally diverse school incidents of racism are rare. Pupils feel safe and say 'Any problem with bullying is taken seriously; we can talk about it easily; that's why we have bubble-time', and they enjoyed taking part in 'Road Safety Week'. The school has worked closely with families and external agencies

to improve the attendance and punctuality of a significant minority. Extended visits to pupils' country of origin account for much of this absence. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. As Year 6 pupils say, 'We share our experiences of different faiths, festivals and cultures.' The school has strong links with the local church; one pupil said, 'It's is a real privilege serving in the church.' Pupils engage in community activities, for instance they raise funds for a local refuge, hospitals and a school in Johannesburg. Their basic skills are developing satisfactorily so that they are prepared satisfactorily for their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Higher standards have been sought over the past year through working on improving teaching. Weak teaching has been challenged and tackled effectively. Lessons generally have a clear focus based on consistent planning. This has been developed through recently improved assessment procedures that track progress and give teachers detailed information about pupils' individual learning. Targets are set but in some classes tracking data are not fully used to determine what pupils know and what they need to do next to improve. The needs of most pupils are met satisfactorily. Support for the significant proportion of pupils with complex learning needs and for those with English as an additional language is a strong feature of the school. The challenge for the more able on the other hand is not consistent and they do not always reach their full potential. Relationships in all classes are good because teachers manage pupils well. Marking is not used well enough to develop pupils' learning and to give them clear guidance on what they need to do to improve their work. Praise and encouragement are used well to raise pupils' self-esteem and achievement.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The close liaison with external agencies has strengthened provision for pupils with complex learning needs and for those with English as an additional language. This ensures that their learning needs are met. Bilingual assistants, small group work and individually tailored programmes support pupils well. Consequently, pupils are quickly integrated, which is a strong feature of this inclusive school. Developing pupils' basic skills in literacy, numeracy and in information and communication technology (ICT) has been a prime focus and this has accelerated pupils' achievement. Improved resources, including interactive whiteboards, have considerably increased pupils' enjoyment and involvement in their learning. French is taught in Years 3 to 6. The use of 'thinking skills' as starter activities in lessons has also helped to encourage pupils to think more for themselves. There are several popular clubs, enrichment activities, and visits and visitors. The variety is interesting; from board games to a Victorian workshop, robot building and theatre visits to visits from elderly residents who share their memories of the seaside. Personal, social and health education contributes well to pupils' personal development and has been used successfully to explore issues such as bullying and healthy eating.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Pupils feel safe and secure and the support for their emotional and physical needs is particularly good. Support for pupils with complex learning needs or with English as an additional language

is strong because the quality of individual support and their specific learning programmes help them move on quickly. Safeguarding procedures, including child protection and health and safety requirements, are secure. Recently introduced procedures to track pupils' progress are used to identify those who are falling behind and so need greater support. At present these are inconsistently applied. Although the systems introduced are well devised, information gathered is not always used effectively to take pupils' learning forward, particularly for the more able.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher and senior leaders provide a determined and focused leadership steer which has remained strong in the face of challenging circumstances. They are well supported by a strong governing body which has monitored and challenged the team to improve. Self-evaluation is satisfactory and the school has effective methods to check the quality of teaching and learning and provision, though much of the development is recent. The weaknesses that contributed to inadequate teaching identified in the previous inspection have been remedied. There is a strong culture of optimism in the school. Staff have responded well to opportunities offered for professional development, which have improved planning and assessment. The adoption of a robust behaviour policy means that behaviour is now good. The support of the local authority has been an important factor in developing teachers' skills and helped the rapid introduction of many new initiatives. In particular, it has helped to develop the provision for those pupils who do not speak English as their first language. Effective leadership of those pupils with complex learning needs helps them achieve their targets. The leadership team has a clear view of what they need to do to improve the school. This responsibility has not been devolved to those with subject responsibilities other than in English and mathematics. The school considers its effectiveness is satisfactory and this is confirmed by the improvements made, particularly in the quality of teaching and learning. The school is set fair for future development. The partnership with parents is strong and they are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and its work.

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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?	3
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	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
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?	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	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.

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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	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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

13 February 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Bartholomew's Primary School, Brighton and Hove BN1 4GP

Thank you for helping us when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed talking with you, looking at your work and seeing you in lessons. You and many of your parents told us how much you enjoy school. We think that St Bartholomew's is a satisfactory and improving school where the teaching is satisfactory.

- Here are some other important things about your school.
- Your behaviour and attitudes are really good.
- You told us that you know how to lead safe, healthy lives and that you like being school councillors and play buddies, and that older children like to help the younger ones.
- The way the school looks after you is good.
- You told us you really enjoy all the visits, visitors and after school clubs and especially like breakfast club and sports.
- You know a lot about people from different cultural backgrounds and appreciate their differences.
- Everyone at St Bartholomew's is working hard to make it even better than it is now.
- Here are some things the school has been asked to improve.
- To make sure that teaching is consistently good so that all of you and especially those of you who find work easy can really do your very best.
- To make sure assessment information is used well so that the work you do is set at the right level for you.
- To help all those who are subject co-ordinators to check on the work classes are doing, so that they know all pupils are doing as well as they can.

You can do your bit by continuing to work hard and telling your teachers if the work you do is too easy or too hard for you. Also you can help your teachers in checking how well you are doing.

Sheila Browning Lead inspector

13 February 2008

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Lead inspector