

# Bishop Alexander Primary and Nursery School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	122592
<b>Local Authority</b>	Nottinghamshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	314338
<b>Inspection dates</b>	2–3 October 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Martyn Skinner

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	257
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	56
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Sid Paver
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Clive Richardson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	8 November 2004
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Wolsey Road Newark Nottinghamshire NG24 2BQ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01636 680040

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	2–3 October 2008
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**Fax number**

01636 680041

**Age group** 3-11

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**Inspection dates** 2-3 October 2008

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Bishop Alexander is a larger than average school, mainly serving the Winthorpe Road housing estate in the Bridge Ward of Newark. The number of pupils entitled to claim free school meals is above the national average. There are very few pupils who do not have White British backgrounds. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is higher than in most schools, although currently there are no pupils with statements of special educational need. Children start in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) in the term after their third birthday. Currently, children in the EYFS are grouped in two classes; one with a mixture of Nursery and Reception aged children, the other with Reception and Year 1 children.

There is onsite childcare provision in the form of a breakfast club that is managed by the governing body. This can cater for a maximum of 20 children.

The school has been awarded Gold Healthy Schools status and the Sport England Activemark.

## 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 its pupils with an effective education. Staff at every level are determined to make a difference to the futures of the pupils at this school. A key strength is the high level of care and personal support offered to pupils and their families. Pastoral and academic guidance are equally strong, with pupils responding well to high expectations of both their behaviour and their approach to learning. The overwhelming majority of parents express confidence in the education and care provided. The following comment from a parent is typical of many received: 'I am very impressed with this school and confident that my child is getting the best start in life.'

Although standards in English, mathematics and science are below average at the end of Year 6, the progress made from when pupils start school is good. Pupils who need extra support with their learning, and those at an early stage of learning English, make good progress in line with the large majority of pupils. The progress of pupils is good because the teaching is of good quality. Lessons are interesting and teachers are skilled at establishing motivational relationships with pupils. Assessments are carried out regularly so that teachers can track pupils' progress. However, teachers do not always use assessment information well enough to challenge all pupils to do as well as they can. All adults in the school promote very positive attitudes towards learning.

Pupils' personal development is good. They enjoy school and consequently behave well. Pupils relate well to others and show respect for peoples' differing beliefs and cultures. The curriculum is satisfactory and an area which the school is very keen to develop. Leaders have a clear understanding of how to improve progress in all subjects and the school has recently introduced a skills-based approach to making learning more meaningful across the curriculum. This is innovative, but not yet fully embedded and the impact on pupils is still to be measured.

The effective leadership is conscious of an imbalance in the nature of the provision for the children in the two EYFS classes. The children in the class shared with Year 1 children experience a more restricted curriculum that gives them less freedom to make their own choices.

The progress which pupils are now making reflects the hard work and clear vision of the headteacher and senior leadership team. Governors, too, are sharply focused on the need to further raise standards and they work effectively to challenge and support the school. Staff and resources are now well deployed and the school gives good value for money.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Children achieve well in the EYFS. They make good progress from their very low starting points, although attainment is still below and sometimes well below average when they move into Year 1. Adults welcome children warmly and help them to settle in quickly by getting to know them well. This helps children to feel safe and secure and to grow in confidence and independence so that they are ready to learn. Staff effectively care for children's physical, social and emotional needs; for example, by encouraging them in routines of hygiene, healthy eating and working in cooperation with others. Adults are positive role models for children, such as demonstrating how to be good listeners. They model when and how to ask important questions, how to concentrate and how to see tasks through. Children experience an appropriate balance of adult led and child initiated activities. Staff carefully assess children's needs and check the progress

they are making. This information is used effectively, so that children are challenged to work hard, even though they may not always realise it because they are having fun 'playing'.

An exciting new outdoor area is close to completion. At present, the outdoor setting is restricted because of building work. Plans are in place to ensure that children receive the appropriate balance of the curriculum outside. The staff team are looking forward to further enriching the environment to make sure that every opportunity is taken to extend children's learning in all areas, for example through stimulating displays and a range of imaginative role play areas. Adults work very closely and effectively as a team within the mixed nursery and Reception classes, being very clear about their responsibilities and making sure there is a seamless transition from one activity to the next so that no time is lost to learning. Activities do not fully meet the needs of the EYFS children in the mixed Year 1 and Reception class.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Develop the new skills-based curriculum to ensure that the progress children make in all subjects is as good as their progress in English and mathematics.
- Ensure that teaching throughout the school consistently challenges pupils to succeed.
- Ensure that all children in the Early Years Foundation Stage receive an equal entitlement to high quality provision.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Children have particularly poor skills in communication, language and in recognising and using numbers when they enter the EYFS. Good teaching results in good progress in the EYFS. Children continue to make good progress throughout the school, although there are some variations, with the best progress over the last academic year made in Years 1, 2 and 6. In Year 2, most pupils reach below average standards. By the end of Year 6, standards are below average, but the gap with the national test standards has narrowed. A minority of pupils reach national standards. Pupils with learning difficulties receive good support and make similar progress to other pupils. There is no significant variation in the performance of different groups of learners. Leaders are not complacent about improving standards. They are aware of the need for even better progress so that more pupils can meet and exceed average standards by the end of Year 6.

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

### **Grade: 2**

This school places a high priority on meeting the full range of needs of its pupils. This ensures that they are well cared for and nurtured in their personal development. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They enjoy school a good deal and they behave well, relating sensitively to others and showing good levels of understanding of each others' needs. They demonstrate respect for peoples' differing beliefs and cultures. Pupils attend regularly, although rates of unauthorised absence are higher than average and the school is working to tackle this issue. Pupils feel secure, adopt safe practices and choose healthy lifestyles enthusiastically. The school council works well to promote caring relationships, helping all pupils contribute well to the school and wider community. It has been instrumental in introducing new initiatives, such as recycling bins in classrooms. Pupils make satisfactory progress overall in developing the skills that will contribute to their future lives.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teachers clearly demonstrate their commitment to the pastoral ethos in school by forging strong and trusting relationships with pupils and promoting their high self-esteem. Teachers share high expectations with the pupils and successfully motivate them to work hard and behave well. They use their good subject knowledge to plan conscientiously for activities that pupils enjoy. Many children were keen to share their view that 'teachers make learning fun'. Pupils particularly like the increasing number of practical and 'hands on' activities that challenge them to work hard and solve problems for themselves. Consequently, teaching ensures that pupils progress well, particularly in literacy and numeracy skills. Able teaching assistants effectively support those who find learning more difficult so that they too make good progress. Assessments are carried out regularly and in the best lessons, the information collected is used highly effectively to make sure pupils are always given activities that challenge them to succeed. Leaders of the school recognise that this is not yet always the case and acknowledge that this needs to be improved. Similarly, whilst marking is always affirming, it does not consistently help pupils to be clear about the next steps in their learning.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum meets statutory requirements. Staff have quite rightly placed a strong emphasis on the development of pupils' basic skills. Provision for literacy and numeracy has developed well since the last inspection. A range of additional information and communication technology (ICT) resources has been introduced that staff are now beginning to use in exciting ways to support learning in other subjects. As one Year 6 pupil commented, 'ICT is really good now.' A carefully thought out programme of personal, social, health and citizenship education ensures that pupils' personal development is good. Teachers tailor the curriculum to meet the specific needs of all pupils, and work successfully to make sure that everyone is included in all that the school has to offer. This is particularly evident in the range of extra sporting activities on offer, which provide opportunities to participate and enjoy success in sporting competitions at high levels. Pupils enjoy other opportunities to be creative, or to learn a modern foreign language. A suitable range of relevant visits out and visitors to school add further enrichment. At present, not as much is known about how well pupils are doing in other subjects, as in English and mathematics. Teachers have devised a more creative and skills-based curriculum in order to address this. This approach has yet to be consistently applied across the school and its impact on pupils' progress is not yet monitored or evaluated.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 2**

Staff are strongly committed to encouraging pupils' enjoyment of their learning, and in promoting their health, safety and self-esteem. The school's promotion of sport and healthy lifestyles has led to nationally recognised awards. There are effective strategies for ensuring that pupils from all cultures feel respected and valued. A strong emphasis on pastoral care and well-focused emotional support is reflected in the appointment of a member of staff with responsibility in this area. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils are robust and regularly reviewed, and health and safety are carefully managed. Pupils say that the academic guidance

that they receive, including target setting, is useful in helping them to improve their work. There remain, however, some inconsistencies in marking, which is always affirming of good work and effort, but it is not always clear about the next steps for pupils to take.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The school is led well by an enthusiastic and hardworking headteacher. His vision for raising standards is clearly communicated to all connected with the school and there is a great sense of teamwork in the school's aim to provide the best for its pupils. Leaders and managers set increasingly challenging targets to raise standards and reach them. Teachers are held accountable for good pupil progress and are helped to secure this through constructive feedback and training. There are good systems for evaluating the effectiveness of the school's work, so that leaders are aware of the school's strengths and areas to develop. All staff are involved in evaluating the school's work, and governors play their part well, challenging the school to show evidence of progress. Leaders and managers ensure that safeguarding requirements are fully met. Under the purposeful leadership of the headteacher, the school engages well with the local community and, with the excellent facilities now available as a result of the new building, is ready to establish even stronger relationships. Other leaders are also conscious of their roles and plan good opportunities to help pupils develop as responsible citizens, contributing to a more harmonious UK and global community. The school is well aware of the next steps that need to be taken and has shown evidence of a good capacity for further improvement.

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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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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/or disabilities make progress	2

<sup>1</sup>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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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
The extent to which 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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
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**

6 October 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Bishop Alexander Primary and Nursery School, Newark, NG24 2BQ

Thank you very much for the way you helped us with the inspection of your school. You were very friendly and gave us a lot of ideas about what you like about school. We especially enjoyed meeting with the school council and finding out how you share your ideas to make your school even better. We also enjoyed meeting lots of you at lunchtime and hearing you talk enthusiastically about your lessons while you were eating your healthy lunches!

You told us how much you enjoy being at school and we could see that from your smiles! We agree with you that you are at a good school where you are being well looked after. Your headteacher and teachers are doing a good job in helping you make good progress and in introducing some new ideas to make your learning even more enjoyable. So that the school can carry on getting better, we have asked your teachers to:

- continue with the good work they have started to help you enjoy and make good progress in all subjects
- help you do the best you can in each lesson by making sure that all work is at the right level for you
- make sure that the youngest children in your school all share the same opportunities in their learning.

I know that you are proud of your school and looking forward to an exciting future in your brand new building. I hope that you carry on behaving well, enjoying school and helping to make Bishop Alexander School an even better place to be.

Martyn Skinner

Lead inspector