

St Philip's C of E Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109152
Local Authority	Bath and North East Somerset
Inspection number	309900
Inspection dates	15–16 July 2008
Reporting inspector	Tony Shield

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	277
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governors	Rev John Coe
Headteacher	Mr Andy Joy
Date of previous school inspection	20–23 June 2005
School address	Bloomfield Rise Bath BA2 2BN
Telephone number	01225 837946
Fax number	01225 835815

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

St Philip's C of E Primary School is larger than average and situated in the south-west outskirts of Bath. Most pupils are from a White British background, with small numbers from other ethnic heritages. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

St Philip's C of E Primary School is a satisfactory and improving school. There are some considerable strengths. The caring ethos, which is firmly based on Christian principles, means pupils feel valued and safe and encourages their good personal development. Pupils are friendly and take part in school activities with enthusiasm. Their cheerful countenance is a mark of the trust and confidence they have in all adults in school. Pupils are considerate and thoughtful of others and their behaviour is good. Good relationships contribute to a strong sense of belonging. Pupils' good awareness of healthy lifestyles is recognised by the school's recent award of Healthy School's status and its more long-standing ActiveMark award.

Given their attainment on entry, which is just below typical expectations, pupils' achievement by the time they leave school is satisfactory. Standards, particularly at Key Stage 2, have been improving, and although there is further to go, the school has good strategies in place to bring about further improvement. Standards in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6 are just below average, but there is scope for the further development of pupils' writing and numeracy skills. Given the progress already made, the school has a satisfactory capacity to improve.

Standards are improving because teaching is becoming more consistently effective. More remains to be done to share good practice, but the school has made a good start in doing so. Typically, classrooms are purposeful and well managed. Pupils respond well and are keen to do their best, particularly when tasks engage them in practical activity. Although teachers plan work carefully, expectations are not always high enough, and planning does not consistently build on what pupils already know. While better use is being made of performance data to plan work and set pupils challenging targets, this remains patchy, and not all pupils know how well they are doing and what they should do next to improve.

The satisfactory curriculum offers an appropriate emphasis on literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT), and provides good opportunities for pupils to enjoy school. In this respect, the good opportunities for enrichment through visits and visitors make a distinctive contribution. Pupils' personal maturity and sense of responsibility are encouraged and supported by a well-planned programme for personal, social and health education. This is a school in which the care of individuals is central to its beliefs, and the welfare of all pupils is given a high priority. The school's close relationship with the church provides a firm foundation for its inclusive philosophy and this key principle results in good quality pastoral care that is much appreciated by parents.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher has inspired a strong sense of teamwork and staff have responded enthusiastically to the drive for improvement. Self-evaluation is accurate. However, there is more to be done in ensuring all teachers use performance data confidently to set challenging targets both at a whole-school and personal level for pupils. Recent initiatives to secure greater consistency in the quality of provision are beginning to have an impact. However, school improvement planning is neither strategic enough nor focused sharply enough on the main priorities that will make a difference. Governors are increasingly effective in their role of supporting and challenging the school, because

their knowledge of the school is developing well. Parents are keen supporters of the school.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children enter the Reception class with skills just below typically expected levels. Many children's social skills and language development are particularly weak at this stage. They settle quickly into school routines and are happy and confident. Children make good progress overall and reach skills which are broadly in line with typical expectations by the time they enter Year 1. However, relative weaknesses in language, number and children's emotional development remain. Good progress is the result of skilled teaching which provides the children with a good range of activities, both indoors and outdoors, to excite and stimulate their interest and help them to develop their skills as inquisitive and independent learners. Children behave well, are friendly, and work collaboratively, showing good concentration and speaking skills. They engage well in games and physical activities. Adults are sensitive to children's needs and support their personal development in many ways. They work carefully in tracking children's progress, providing intervention and support when needed. Good links with parents encourage children to enjoy school and feel safe. The Foundation Stage is led and managed well.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and improve achievement in writing and mathematics.
- Ensure that all planning reflects high expectations of pupils and builds effectively on their prior learning.
- Build the capacity of all staff to use assessment data confidently to set challenging targets, both at whole-school and at a personal level for individual pupils.
- Refine school improvement planning to ensure it is clearly focused on key whole-school priorities.

A small proportion of the 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

By the time pupils leave school in Year 6, their attainment in English, mathematics and science is just below average. This reflects their attainment profile on entry to the Reception class and represents satisfactory achievement. Children are well prepared for learning in the Foundation Stage, and they get off to a secure start in Years 1 and 2 and make satisfactory progress. In 2008, realistic assessments reflecting these gains indicate that pupils reach broadly average standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2.

Pupils' progress through Years 3 to 6 has, in the recent past, varied and has not always been satisfactory. Some pupils have underachieved. However, improvements to teaching and more stability in the teaching workforce have ensured that pupils are now making at least satisfactory progress. Results in national tests in 2007 showed an improvement on the previous year, and further improvement is indicated in the unvalidated results for 2008. There have been some encouraging signs of improvement in mathematics, but standards in writing remain a relative weakness. Pupils with learning difficulties and those with disabilities make satisfactory progress because of well targeted and effective support from teaching assistants.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The school's attention to pupils' care and well-being contributes much to their good personal development. Pupils develop good personal skills through opportunities to contribute, such as through the buddy system. Assemblies are happy and joyous occasions and ensure a positive start to the day. Pupils' enjoyment of school is clear in their enthusiastic approach to lessons, particularly when it involves them actively and in practical work. Parents comment on how much their children enjoy school. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, contributing much to the harmonious atmosphere. Pupils understand right from wrong and are keen to help others through their charity work and community involvement. The school's links with a school in India develop pupils' understanding of other cultures and they are excited about communicating through email and webcams. In lessons, behaviour is good, while around the school, pupils are polite and orderly. They feel safe in school and are confident that their teachers deal successfully with any bullying issues. Whilst the school council meets to discuss school issues, some expressed concerns that their views are not listened to. Attendance is satisfactory and improving. Pupils are developing satisfactory skills for later life, especially through the personal and social education programme.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching is improving as the initiatives introduced to improve achievement begin to take effect. The school is working successfully to improve classroom practice. Much is already good, though the quality across the school is not consistent. Classrooms are well managed and orderly, and class routines are well established. This good climate for learning encourages an exciting buzz in classrooms, as well-motivated pupils work hard to do their best. Good behaviour management strategies lead to the good attitudes and behaviour of pupils, with high levels of enjoyment being evident. Pupils respond well to incentives to do well, such as house points and the headteacher's award. Many teachers are successful in making lessons fun and pupils particularly appreciate their attempts at humour! Good use is made of interactive whiteboards to present ideas in an interesting way. Vulnerable pupils and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported by teaching assistants. However, this good practice is not consistent and high levels of challenge and expectation are not always applied, and this slows pupils' progress. Ongoing feedback, including marking, is not regular enough to ensure all pupils always know their personal learning targets and what they should do next to improve. Teachers

use different ways of setting personal learning targets, and these are not always followed through. As a result, planning does not always build on what pupils already know, understand and can do.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The satisfactory curriculum meets statutory requirements and the needs and interests of pupils. The breadth and balance of the curriculum provides pupils with an interesting range of subjects, such as Italian and keyboard skills for ICT. Provision for ICT has improved significantly since the last inspection. Pupils speak enthusiastically of the wide range of extra-curricular and enrichment opportunities on offer. Tag rugby, the five-day residential visit to Kilve Court, the blues band and guitar club are all particularly popular. Themed weeks enhance pupils' learning experience, making the learning more relevant and meaningful. Gifted and talented pupils take part in a range of enrichment activities, but overall, provision for these pupils is underdeveloped.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

This is an inclusive school with an ethos of care and respect. Staff work well together to nurture an atmosphere in which pupils feel well cared for and confident to talk about any problems. The school draws well on outside agencies to give extra support when needed and to provide real learning experiences for pupils. For example, health, police and fire service professionals teach pupils elements of the personal, social and health education programme. The focus on rewards and the house system has been successful in bringing about positive attitudes to learning. Pupils with behavioural and emotional difficulties and those with disabilities are supported well. Health and safety procedures are thorough and safeguarding procedures are robust. Child protection procedures meet statutory requirements.

Systems for tracking pupils' academic progress are satisfactory and have improved recently. The increasingly effective use of data is starting to make a difference to pupils' progress. However, not all staff are confident enough in their use of data to set suitably challenging targets for pupils. Whilst some pupils are very clear about their individual targets and what they need to do next, others are not.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher has created a strong team committed to further improvement. He has introduced strategies and initiatives which are beginning to make a difference. In this, he is well supported by his leadership team and subject leaders. There is now a realistic assessment of the school's strengths and weaknesses. In this respect, the work of the whole school community, including governors, has been effective. Governors' links with subject leaders, alongside their regular meetings and visits, have ensured they are in a position to offer both support and challenge. However, the school's capacity to interpret and analyse data, to identify trends and patterns and to set priorities for improvement is not well developed. The draft school improvement plan is a detailed document, but lacks a strategic view and a sharp focus on what really matters, and on what will make a difference to pupils' achievements.

More comprehensive and better use of performance data enables all teachers and managers to track pupils' progress carefully and plan intervention strategies for pupils at risk of underachievement. However, there is a need to ensure that targets for both the whole school and for individual pupils are challenging and raise expectations. Monitoring by the headteacher, senior staff and governors is regular and supportive. Nevertheless, it has not ironed out inconsistent approaches to, for example, marking and target-setting.

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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
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 effectiveness of boarding provision	
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 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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	4
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	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



17 July 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Philip's C of E Primary School, Bath, BA2 2BN

Thank you very much for being so welcoming when we recently visited your school. We enjoyed meeting you and were impressed by the friendly and cheerful way in which you greeted us. You obviously enjoy school. We agree with what you told us. St Philip's is a friendly school and overall is providing you with a satisfactory education. There are many good points:

- You are friendly, polite and thoughtful; you are growing up into sensible young people.
- Everybody at school gets on well together and takes pride in attending it.
- Most of you make satisfactory progress.
- You try hard to please and do your best in lessons.
- Behaviour through the school is good; you are kind and thoughtful to others.
- While teaching is satisfactory, your teachers are working hard to make it even more interesting for you.
- The school takes good care of you, ensuring you feel safe and well looked after.
- The headteacher and all the teachers are working hard to make your school even better.

We have asked the teachers to do the following in order to make things even better.

- Make sure that you make better progress, particularly in mathematics and writing, by setting work which builds on what you already know.
- Ensure that teachers use information about how well you are doing to set you personal targets which make you think hard and do as well as you can!
- In planning for future improvements, decide what is really important to the school's future.

You can certainly help the teachers with these things. Thank you once again for your help during our visit, and good luck with your work in the future!

Yours sincerely

Tony Shield
Lead Inspector