

Bicton CofE Primary School and Nursery

Bicton Lane, Bicton, Shrewsbury, Shropshire SY3 8EH

Inspection dates

5–6 December 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Some teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are too low. Expectations of presentation are also not high enough and basic errors in grammar, punctuation and spelling are not corrected. Consequently, some pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable in writing.
- Pupils are not consistently set work which is matched well enough to their learning needs. This is especially so for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities and the most able pupils. This slows their progress, especially in writing and mathematics.
- Some teachers do not provide pupils with enough opportunities to develop their writing skills in longer pieces of writing. Additionally, opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematical skills in problem-solving and reasoning are limited. This means that some pupils do not achieve as well as they should.
- While leaders undertake regular monitoring of teaching and learning, the current systems are not identifying the main weaknesses sufficiently. As a result, some weak teaching persists and pupils continue to underachieve.
- Appraisal systems are in place and set clear targets for teachers. However, these systems do not yet hold teachers fully to account.
- The provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is not helping them to make the progress they should.
- As a result of considerable changes since the last inspection, leaders are not yet fully effective in their roles. Nevertheless, their skills are developing.
- Governors understand the school's strengths and weaknesses well. However, over time they have not held leaders fully to account for the school's performance.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils speak very highly of their school and the staff. Their love of school is reflected in the high attendance rates and excellent behaviour.
- Pupils enjoy learning about a range of different subjects. A wide range of extra-curricular opportunities meet pupils' different interests.
- The early years provision is very effective. Children get a great start to school life.
- Pupils' personal development is supported very well. They feel very safe in school. Pupils have many opportunities to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural learning.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in writing and mathematics by ensuring that teachers:
 - raise expectations and the level of challenge for all groups of pupils
 - plan work which is matched to the learning needs of all groups of pupils, especially pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and the most able pupils
 - provide pupils with more opportunities to write at length, and in a range of different styles, to enable them to develop their writing skills
 - provide more opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematical skills in problem-solving and reasoning
 - address basic misconceptions in grammar, punctuation and spelling so mistakes are not repeated
 - insist that pupils present work to the best of their ability.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management, including governance by:
 - monitoring pupils' progress in their English and mathematics books with greater care and attention, especially pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and the most able pupils
 - further developing the systems to manage the performance of teachers
 - providing support and training to develop and extend leaders' skills at all levels
- Improve the provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities by:
 - developing the leadership of special educational needs provision
 - monitoring the provision and outcomes for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities more closely
 - providing training and support to staff to develop their understanding of the needs of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, and how to plan to meet these needs.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The school has experienced some significant changes since the last inspection. This includes the appointment of a new leadership team and a considerable number of changes to the teaching staff. The headteacher was in an 'acting' role for a sustained period of time, before being made the substantive headteacher in September 2015. Despite this, the headteacher and governors have tried hard to minimise the disruption to the school.
- Nevertheless, these changes have resulted in a decline in the quality of teaching and learning, and especially the outcomes at the end of key stage 2. Leaders are not using appraisal systems well enough to address some existing weak teaching, resulting in current pupils not making the progress they should.
- Leaders monitor the quality of teaching and learning regularly. However, this monitoring is not focused sharply enough on the evidence of from pupils' books, especially evidence of their progress in writing and mathematics. The monitoring has not spotted that pupils are falling behind where they should be, especially pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and the most able pupils. Consequently, some pupils do not achieve the standards of which they are capable.
- The provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is not effective. Some pupils' learning needs are not identified and, therefore, teachers do not know how plan to meet them. Leaders' monitoring of the provision and the interventions does not identify where the strengths and areas for improvement are, so weaknesses are not addressed. The additional funding received to support these pupils is not used to the greatest effect.
- A number of middle leaders are relatively new to their roles. They demonstrate some understanding of their roles and responsibilities and are beginning to take action to drive improvements in their subject areas. However, the leaders at all levels are yet to receive further support and training that is needed to enable them to be fully effective in their roles, especially in monitoring pupils' progress.
- The headteacher is ambitious and committed to driving school improvements. She has a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. The right priorities are identified in the school improvement plan. The headteacher recognises where more rapid improvements need to be made, and is working with the local authority to make sure that the necessary steps are taken to accelerate the rate of improvement. The local authority provides effective support to the school.
- The curriculum is both broad and balanced. Pupils have many opportunities to learn about a wide range of different subjects. Specialist teachers further support the rich curriculum. For example, a music teacher provides brass lessons, and pupils learn to play the recorder. In the pupil questionnaire, a very high proportion of pupils said that they enjoy their learning 'in every lesson'.
- The curriculum is supplemented by a wide range of trips and visits which pupils particularly enjoy. In addition to this, extra-curricular clubs are plentiful and varied,

meeting a wide range of tastes. For example, there is a range of sports clubs, craft, scientific and artistic opportunities, as well as a religious education club.

- The additional funding received to support disadvantaged pupils is used effectively. Due to the small numbers, leaders make sure that bespoke provision is in place to support the individual needs of each pupil. Physical education and sport premium for primary schools funding is also used well to develop the skills and expertise of teachers. Specialist coaches work with the school, providing professional development for teachers and additional sporting opportunities for pupils.
- Pupils have many opportunities to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. This is a strength of the school. They take part in community events and also contribute to local charities, such as the Shrewsbury Food Bank. A visit to this charity raised pupils' awareness of the importance of volunteering to enable charities such as this to operate.
- Pupils also understand the importance of fundamental British values. For example, pupils say that everyone is 'free to speak' and that everyone is equal. Pupils show that they respect one another's views and frequently engage in healthy debate in a considered way.

Governance of the school

- Governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They work with leaders to develop the school improvement plan and check that the priorities identified are being addressed. Frequent visits to school mean that they receive regular updates on the progress being made. However, over time governors have not held leaders fully to account for the school's performance. Governors are now far more challenging but the full impact of this challenge is yet to be seen.
- Governors have a range of skills which help them to review all aspects of the school's performance. They understand their roles and responsibilities, especially with regard to safeguarding. Governors know how the additional funding received for sport premium and pupil premium is used, and check that it is improving pupils' outcomes.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- All staff are vigilant and have safeguarding as their highest priority. Safeguarding training is updated regularly and leaders check carefully that all staff understand and follow the policies and procedures. Every class has a 'welfare' book where any concerns about pupils are recorded. All concerns are reported to the headteacher, who follows them up quickly. Leaders work closely with external agencies to ensure that pupils and families receive the right help and support where necessary.
- Leaders make careful safeguarding checks on all staff and volunteers in school. When new staff are appointed, leaders make sure that the correct policies and procedures are followed. Risk assessments are carried out where necessary. Leaders take all steps possible to minimise any potential risks to pupils.

- Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe. E-safety is taught in the curriculum and pupils know how to use computers safely. E-safety information is also shared with parents.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Some teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are too low. When this happens, the activities given to pupils do not challenge their thinking or take their learning forward. When pupils show that they can complete a task with ease, some teachers do not respond quickly enough, which means that pupils are left waiting for others to catch up.
- Some teachers do not use what they know about what pupils can do to plan work which will take their learning forward. There are too many examples in books where pupils of all abilities are given the same work to complete. This results in the work being too easy for some, and too challenging for others, particularly in writing and mathematics. Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and the most able pupils are particularly disadvantaged by this, with some books showing that their learning is regressing.
- There are not enough opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills in more sustained pieces of writing, or by practising different writing styles. Pupils frequently complete simple exercises which require short sentences to be written. In some cases, pupils are unable to write more than a short paragraph because there is not enough room on the paper provided to fit their writing in.
- In addition to this, some teachers do not address basic mistakes in grammar, punctuation and spelling. Mistakes are repeated multiple times, which significantly limits pupils' progress. Teachers' expectations of presentation are also too low. There are too many examples of pupils' handwriting and presentation deteriorating over time.
- Opportunities for pupils to develop their mathematical skills in problem-solving and reasoning activities are also limited. Activities focus on developing basic number and calculation skills. This means that pupils do not make as much progress as they should in mathematics.
- Phonics teaching is effective. Teachers and teaching assistants model sounds correctly and pupils are given opportunities to apply these sounds in their reading and writing. This helps pupils to make good progress in their phonics learning, and they achieve well in the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1.
- Where teaching is stronger, effective modelling of mathematics helps pupils to understand the concepts quickly and moves their learning on at pace. Activities are closely matched to pupils' learning needs and pupils are challenged very well. These pupils are making better progress in mathematics.
- Some teachers ensure that pupils know where they are in their learning and what they need to do to improve. Pupils review their work and identify carefully what their next steps should be. These pupils are developing into confident and independent learners, who both relish and respond to a challenge.
- There are some examples of very effective teaching of writing. Pupils are given opportunities to apply writing skills not only in longer pieces of writing, but also in

other subjects. For example, Years 5 and 6 pupils wrote a detailed newspaper report about the discovery of Tutankhamun's tomb by Howard Carter. This helped them to understand this style of writing in a meaningful way.

- Some teachers use questioning skills very effectively to take pupils' learning forward. They direct questions at individual pupils, and then adjust their teaching quickly based on pupils' responses. This helps pupils to make good progress in their learning.
- Pupils say that their homework supports their learning at home. They say that it is 'about right', and make sure that it is completed on time.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils at Bicton Primary School are very well cared for. Positive relationships exist between all pupils and staff. Pupils' achievements, however small, are celebrated and valued. As a result, pupils grow into confident individuals who are keen to share their work with all visitors.
- The school prides itself on its exceptionally strong community spirit, and rightly so. There are many opportunities for the school community to work together. For example, a series of 'gardening days' was organised where parents, staff and pupils joined together to develop the school grounds. The school community, especially the pupils, were also involved in developing the school's motto: 'Learning for a lifetime'. There is a high focus on inclusivity in the school.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves healthy. They know the importance of a healthy diet and exercise. Older pupils encourage younger pupils to eat healthily at school, for example by explaining to the younger pupils why it is important to eat their broccoli.
- Pupils are given opportunities to reflect on questions such as, 'What are the qualities of being a good friend?' Pupils are able to think deeply and share their views with confidence. They listen to one another, showing respect and kindness towards different viewpoints, even if they do not agree with them.
- Pupils say that they feel very safe in school and that all adults look after them. They are confident that there would always be someone they could talk to if they had a worry. Pupils know what bullying is, but they say that they do not have bullying at school, just 'friendship issues', which are sorted out quickly.
- Residential trips provide opportunities for pupils to develop their confidence when staying away from home. The outward-bound visit helps pupils to build teamwork and trust in one another. The school council gives pupils the opportunity to develop their responsibility and the school council members take their duties very seriously.
- The before and after school club provides good care and support for pupils. Healthy snacks are provided, together with a range of stimulating activities. This gives pupils a positive start and end to their school day.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Conduct around the school is consistently calm and orderly. For example, in the dining hall pupils talk quietly, collect their lunches sensibly and show very good manners when eating. Very little, if any, intervention from staff is required. On the playground, all pupils are involved in positive activities, and older pupils socialise very well with the younger ones. It is very evident that pupils want to look after one another.
- Pupils understand the school's rewards and sanctions. Teachers reward pupils for following instructions and for behaving well. Leaders keep behaviour logs to ensure that any incidences of poor behaviour are recorded. However, at the time of the inspection, there was virtually nothing to report. There have been no exclusions for a number of years.
- Attendance rates are above the national average. This is so for all groups of pupils, with no pupils disadvantaged by poor attendance. Leaders work with an education welfare officer to intervene quickly should a pupil's attendance begin to dip.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Outcomes at the end of key stage 2 showed a decline in 2016. Pupils' progress in reading was below the national average, and progress in writing and mathematics was significantly below the national average. However, in 2017 pupils' progress in reading and mathematics improved and was broadly in line with the national average. Progress in writing remained significantly below the national average, and was in the lowest 10% of all schools.
- Outcomes at the end of key stage one in 2017 also improved. The proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics was above the national average. The proportion of pupils working at a greater depth in reading and writing was also above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils achieving the required standard in the phonics screening check has been consistently above the national average for the last three years. The vast majority of pupils achieve the required standard at the end of Year 1. Currently, pupils are well on track to maintain these standards.
- There are low numbers of disadvantaged pupils in each year group. Therefore specific reporting on these pupils' outcomes is withheld in the interests of confidentiality. However, additional funding is used effectively to support their progress, both academically and pastorally.
- Similarly, specific reporting on the outcomes of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is also not appropriate due to the relatively low numbers. However, the current provision is less effective at helping these pupils to achieve their potential.
- The school's own assessment information shows that pupils currently in key stage 2 have not made the progress they should in writing and mathematics. A considerable number of pupils have not continued to develop their skills and abilities in line with those achieved at the end of key stage 1. In some cases, pupils' attainment has

regressed. This is because some teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve and do not plan work which is matched closely to their needs.

- A detailed review of work in pupils' books currently confirms that pupils are not making sufficient progress across key stage 2 in writing and mathematics. The evidence in the books further demonstrates the low expectations of some teachers. This is especially so for the most able pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities.

Early years provision

Good

- The early years leader has a very clear understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement in Reception and Nursery. Following the integration of the Nursery into the main school, detailed work has been undertaken to ensure the consistency of the provision across the two classes, including the appointment of a new Nursery manager in 2017.
- The early years leader has worked well to develop a cohesive staff team and teaching and learning is now consistently good across the early years. The introduction of 'early years team meetings' has further strengthened the drive to ensure consistent practice across the setting.
- Staff use questioning effectively to support children's learning. Staff give children time to express their thoughts and ideas before intervening in the learning. However, they also act swiftly when they see learning stalling. Staff make detailed assessments of what children can do and then use this information well to plan their next steps in learning.
- Bright and interesting learning environments, both inside and out, further support children's learning. Activities are chosen carefully and are based on children's interests. As a result, children maintain their concentration and focus on specific activities for sustained periods of time. This helps them to make good progress in their learning.
- Children enter the early years with skills and abilities in line with those typically expected for their age. Staff place a high focus on developing the prime areas of learning, which supports children to make the progress they should. The proportion of children achieving a good level of development has risen since 2014, and in 2016 and 2017 it was in line with the national average.
- Children's personal, social and emotional development is supported well. Children are confident and happy individuals, who behave very well. For example, when walking to the hall, the Nursery children all followed the line, quietly chanting, 'tip toe, here we go'. There was no jostling, just a calm and orderly march to the hall. Children demonstrate a high level of independence from a very early age because routines are embedded quickly. Children are very well prepared for Year 1.
- Effective transition arrangements are in place. Staff visit all settings where children join the school from to get to know their needs and interests before starting school. Play sessions are organised prior to the starting date to familiarise the children with the learning environments. This helps children to settle quickly into school life.
- There is an 'open door' policy in the early years. Staff work very closely with parents. Parents are able to contribute to the assessments of children's learning through an

online system. This means that staff can use information about their learning at home to support their learning in school.

- Staff work closely with a range of external agencies to help children. Children's needs are identified quickly and then additional support is sought where needed. All safeguarding and welfare requirements are met.

School details

Unique reference number	123461
Local authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	10037869

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	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	155
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Shirley Ansell
Headteacher	Mrs Natalie Johnson
Telephone number	01743 850212
Website	www.bictonschool.org.uk
Email address	admin@bicton.shropshire.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	24–25 January 2013

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- Bicton CofE Primary School and Nursery is a smaller than an average-sized school.
- The nursery became part of the school in 2016.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is below average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well below average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is below the national average. The proportion of pupils who have statements of special educational needs or education, health and care plans is also below the national average.

- The school runs a breakfast and after-school club for the pupils.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics for pupils by the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning in all year groups. Some of the observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher.
- The inspectors met with pupils, heard a selection of pupils read and observed pupils at breaktimes and lunchtimes.
- The inspectors met with the headteacher, the leader of provision for special educational needs, the early years leader and a senior leader with subject responsibility. They met with members of the local governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- A range of pupils' books from all year groups and a range of subjects were looked at.
- A number of documents were considered, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans. The inspector also considered information about pupils' progress, behaviour, attendance and safety.
- The inspectors took account of 56 responses on the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, and a hand-delivered letter. They spoke to parents before school. Thirty-four responses to the online pupil questionnaire were considered.
- The inspectors reviewed 16 responses to an inspection questionnaire returned by staff.

Inspection team

Ann Pritchard, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Jan Baker

Ofsted Inspector

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