

Tiffield Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122031
Local Authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	359153
Inspection dates	26–27 January 2011
Reporting inspector	Usha Devi HMI

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 of pupils on the school roll	21
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Martin Pringuer
Headteacher	Eliza Bolger (Executive)
Date of previous school inspection	18 November 2009
School address	High Street South Tiffield, Towcester NN12 8AB
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's inspectors. The inspector observed four lessons taught by four different teachers. In addition to lesson observations the inspector looked at the Reception learning environment and made short visits to the two mixed-age classes to look at learning and progress in writing, mathematics and topic work with the headteacher. The inspector spoke to some parents and met with pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body, the interim headteacher and two local authority representatives. The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a range of documents, including the school improvement plan, minutes from governing body meetings, assessment information and teachers' planning. Questionnaires from pupils and from 20 parents and carers were also analysed.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The rates of progress for pupils of different abilities in reading, writing and mathematics.
- How well teachers use assessment information to plan activities which meet the needs of children of different abilities.
- The extent to which the curriculum provides pupils with the opportunities to extend and apply their English and mathematical skills across different subjects.
- How effectively leaders and managers at all levels use information from monitoring and evaluation to improve the performance of all groups of pupils.

Information about the school

Tiffield is a smaller-than-average primary school. All pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average. The school has achieved Healthy School Status. Reception aged children and pupils in Years 1 and 2 are taught in one of two mixed-age classes. Pupils in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 are taught in the second mixed-age class. There is a privately run after school club on the school site. This was separately inspected.

At its last inspection in November 2009, the school was given a notice to improve because it was performing less well than could be reasonably expected. Significant improvements were required in relation to the school's leadership and management, including governance. One of Her Majesty's inspectors monitored the school's progress in July 2010. The school was judged to be making satisfactory progress in addressing the issues for improvement and in raising the pupils' achievement. Since the previous inspection changes have taken place at leadership level. An executive headteacher started working at the school in January 2011, following a recent partnership agreement with Whittlebury CofE Primary School and Stoke Bruerne CofE Primary School. Last year, the school was led by an interim headteacher who worked at the school for three days per week.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement. Tiffield is a satisfactory school. Some aspects of its work are good.

Strengths include:

- pupils' good behaviour and the care and consideration they show each other and the adults they work with
- the school's strong links with a range of partners which give pupils the opportunity to participate in a good range of musical and sporting activities
- pupils' high levels of attendance
- the good progress that children make in the Reception class.

Between 2009 and 2010 the school experienced a period of difficulty as a result of communication issues within the school. During this time, some parents became dissatisfied with the school and a few removed their children. The majority of parents who met with the inspector and responded to the current inspection questionnaire were positive about the school. They were complimentary about the changes introduced by the interim headteacher and her emphasis on creating a more harmonious school environment. 'The past year has been unsettling, but the staff managed the situation effectively,' 'the school is much better,' were just some of the comments made by parents. Staff now work well as a team and morale is high.

Small cohort sizes mean standards vary considerably from year to year, with attainment fluctuating from above to below average. Generally, standards are broadly average by the end of Year 6. Inspection evidence shows that pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress in reading, writing and mathematics. They occasionally make good progress. In order to accelerate progress, teachers are beginning to provide creative and interesting opportunities for pupils to develop their English and mathematical skills across the curriculum. For example, following a history visit to the Black Country museum pupils produced leaflets to advertise the museum. This gave them the opportunity to apply and extend their writing skills in a different context. However, this cross-curricular approach to applying English and mathematical skills in other subjects is not a routine occurrence.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory. In some lessons, teachers make effective use of assessment information to plan activities which provide pupils of all abilities with a suitable level of challenge. When this happens, pupils make good progress. 'This is really making me think!' said one child in response to a mathematical problem solving activity. In most lessons pupils make satisfactory rather than good progress because teachers do not make

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effective use of assessment information to match work to the needs of pupils of different abilities. Occasionally the rate of progress slows because there is too much adult direction at the expense of time for pupils to be actively engaged in their learning.

In a relatively short time, the executive headteacher has gained a crystal clear understanding of the school's strengths and priorities for improvement, such as accelerating progress and improving the quality of teaching. The executive headteacher's plan for teachers and governors across the collaboration of schools to work together in order to share and develop their practice is appropriate and provides a secure basis for continuous improvement. As a result of suitable support from the local authority, subject leaders and governors are making a greater contribution to school improvement than previously. They are developing their roles satisfactorily. However, their evaluation of the school's work is over-generous in relation to pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching and learning. This is because they do not focus enough on the progress made by pupils of different abilities when monitoring and evaluating. The school's capacity for sustained improvement is satisfactory because there is more to do to enable subject leaders and members of the governing body to promote good achievement throughout the school.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate the rate of pupils' progress throughout Key Stages 1 and 2 by:
 - ensuring teachers make better use of assessment information to accurately match work to the needs of pupils of different abilities in reading, writing and mathematics
 - providing pupils with more creative and interesting opportunities to develop their English and mathematical skills across the curriculum.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning in Key Stage 1 and 2 by ensuring teachers :
 - give pupils the opportunity to take a more active part in their lessons
 - adapt activities during lessons so that pupils can move more quickly onto the next step in their learning
 - provide pupils with the guidance they need to improve their work.
- Ensure subject leaders and governors more rigorously monitor and evaluate the work of the school, and use this information to identify areas for improvement and promote good achievement throughout the school.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Observations of pupils and reviews of their work show that pupils make satisfactory progress from their broadly average attainment on entry to Year 1, although attainment does vary with each cohort. The progress made by pupils of different abilities differs between lessons. Sometimes, the work for more able pupils is too easy; in others the work for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is too complex. In the best

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lessons, pupils of all abilities complete activities which challenge and motivate them. In one effective example, pupils were given pictures of different colour aliens. They had to investigate how many different combinations they could make from the colours they were given. Pupils made good progress because the activity was suitably adapted for different groups. In this instance, more able pupils were given a greater number of colours to work with and encouraged to choose how to record their findings. This effective practice, of tailoring work to different ability groups, is not widespread throughout the school.

Pupils are courteous and welcoming to visitors. They have a strong understanding of how to stay safe. Pupils told the inspector how important it was to use the internet carefully. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good. Their understanding of cultures other than their own is developing. Pupils' satisfactory achievement coupled with insufficient opportunities to be creative, innovative and take on leadership during lessons means they are adequately prepared for the future. They have a satisfactory understanding of the importance of eating healthily. Pupils talk enthusiastically about their involvement in village life. However, they told the inspector they could do even more in the school and wider community. The inspector agrees.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is satisfactory. Occasionally it is good. Teachers are increasingly using computerised whiteboards to present information through audio and visual clips. This is

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adding to pupils' enjoyment of learning. In the best lessons, the pace of learning is good because pupils are set different tasks which require them to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding in interesting contexts. In contrast, the pace of learning slows when teachers do not move pupils more quickly onto the next step in their learning. Teachers' marking acknowledges strengths in pupils' work. However, it does not always provide pupils with the guidance they need to improve their work.

The English, mathematics and information and communication technology curriculum adequately meets the needs of pupils of different abilities. There are not enough opportunities for pupils to develop their English and mathematical skills in different subjects. Provision for music and sport is good. Pupils say they enjoy working with the football and rugby coaches because they learn new skills. Almost half of the pupils in the school are learning to play a stringed instrument. As part of the recent collaboration with Whittlebury CofE Primary School and Stoke Bruerne CofE Primary School, the executive headteacher is working with staff in all three schools to plan events that will give pupils the opportunity to learn together. Pupils told the inspector they were looking forward to working with children from the other schools.

Pupils are well looked after. 'Our school is like a family,' was just one of the comments made by a pupil when asked to describe Tiffield. One parent said, 'teachers know each child so well.' Effective links with a range of agencies ensure that if targeted support is needed it can be promptly provided. For instance the school has worked effectively with external agencies to encourage regular attendance and punctuality. Transition arrangements are strong. There are good links with the local high school.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The executive headteacher provides strong leadership. She is keen to work with staff and governors to ensure greater equality by helping all pupils to make the progress of which they are capable. The executive headteacher has updated the school improvement plan. It correctly focuses on the actions that need to be taken to improve the quality of learning and teaching. Subject leaders have yet to develop the skills required to rigorously evaluate the quality of teaching and learning in the areas for which they are responsible.

Members of the governing body are supportive and participate in a range of events organised by the school. They are increasingly taking a greater role in monitoring and evaluating the work of the school. For example, some governors have met with staff and reported their findings to the Governing Body. The school ensures pupils are kept safe.

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Safeguarding is satisfactory because the systems the Governing Body has in place for recording outcomes of risk assessments are not as meticulous as they could be.

Relationships with parents and carers are positive. There is scope for involving parents and carers more in decisions about whole-school matters. Effective links with a range of partners make a strong contribution to pupils' positive attitudes to learning. One example includes, pupils learning about the history of their village, producing drawings to retell the history and then working with a local tapestry group to produce a tapestry for display. The school knows its local community well. Links with a contrasting community in England have been established and are helping pupils to gain a sound understanding of other cultures. Links with schools abroad are in the early stages of development.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Strong links with parents ensure children have a settled start. As with the rest of the school, small cohorts result in significant variations on the entry levels into Reception. The inspector undertook a review of children's current work, last year's work and the school's assessment information. Inspection evidence shows that in general children enter Reception with skills and knowledge that are broadly similar to those expected for their age and make good progress overall. Last year for instance, the small cohort of children performed particularly well in mathematics and communication, language and literacy and began Year 1 with skills that were above age related expectations in these areas of learning.

In this well led provision, progress is carefully monitored so that activities can be carefully matched to the needs of individuals in this mixed-age class. Staff regularly transform the classroom environment so that children learn through practical activities which encourage them to use their imagination. Examples include a 'Victorian kitchen' that takes children

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back in time and a 'rocket' that can transport children to the moon. Opportunities for children to learn in the outdoor area are limited because it is underdeveloped.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

An above average number of parents and carers responded to the inspection questionnaire. A very large majority hold positive views about the school. For instance, they are pleased that the school keeps their children safe and that their children enjoy school. Responses to the questionnaire included a number of comments acknowledging how much they appreciate the care shown by staff towards their children, the positive changes made by the interim headteacher and their hopes for the collaboration under the leadership of the executive headteacher. A few raised concerns about the progress made by their child and disagreed that the school prepares their child for high school. The inspector has asked the school to ensure pupils in Years 1 to 6 make better progress and to provide pupils with more opportunities to develop the skills that will help them in the future.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Tiffield Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspector received 20 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 21 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	17	85	3	15	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	12	60	8	40	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	8	40	11	55	1	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	4	20	15	75	1	5	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	10	50	9	45	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	9	45	10	50	1	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	7	35	13	65	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	9	45	10	50	1	5	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	9	45	10	50	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	8	40	12	60	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	12	60	8	40	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	10	50	8	40	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	13	65	6	30	1	5	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



28 January 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Tiffield Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School,
Towcester, NN12 8AB**

Thank you for making me so welcome and for talking to me about your school. I really enjoyed visiting your lessons, looking at your work and talking to you about your work. Thank you to the pupils who completed the inspection questionnaire. I was pleased to hear how much you enjoyed designing and making a tapestry about the history of your village. You told me that you enjoy coming to school and you are looking forward to working with children at Whittlebury CofE Primary School and Stoke Bruerne CofE Primary School.

Your school has improved and provides you with a satisfactory education. Here are some of the things I found.

You are well behaved and you look after each other in lessons and around school.

You have a good understanding of how to stay safe and are well cared for in school.

The children in Reception make good progress.

I have asked your headteacher, the staff and governors to help you make even better progress. I have asked your teachers to make sure that they give you activities which challenge you to do your best. I know how much you enjoy learning about topics such as the Victorians. I have asked the teachers to give you more opportunities to learn in this way. I have also asked your teachers to give you more chances to work practically and to let you know what to do to improve when they mark your work. Finally, I have asked managers and governors to carefully check the work of the school and ensure that you make as much progress as possible. You can all help by continuing to work hard.

Thank you being so kind and helpful when I visited your school. It was a pleasure to meet you. I really enjoyed the time I spent with you all and I wish you the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Usha Devi

Her Majesty's Inspector

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