

Winslow Church of England Combined School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110449
Local Authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	356745
Inspection dates	29–30 September 2010
Reporting inspector	Jane Neech

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	403
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Anne Hoskins
Headteacher	Mr Simon Rose
Date of previous school inspection	17 January 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. Between them, the inspectors observed 22 lessons and 16 teachers. Eight of these lessons were observed alongside the headteacher and a senior leader. The inspectors held meetings with teachers, senior leaders, a group of pupils, the school council, the Chair of the Governing Body and two governors, and one of the partners who works with the school. The lead inspector met with a group of parents and carers and a team inspector spoke informally to parents and carers during the school parents' evening. The inspectors observed the school's work, checked the school's safeguarding procedures and evaluated a range of school policies, curriculum documentation, teachers' planning, the school self-evaluation, action and improvement plans, data and information about pupils and how the school tracks and monitors progress. They scrutinised 119 questionnaires received from parents and carers, four questionnaires completed by staff and 99 responses from pupils.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following.

- The rate of progress pupils make in writing and mathematics.
- The extent to which teaching challenges the learning needs of different groups of pupils.
- The extent to which actions taken by those responsible for leading and managing school improvement contribute to pupils making accelerated progress in writing and mathematics.

Information about the school

Winslow Church of England Combined School is larger than average and serves Winslow and the surrounding area. The proportion of pupils believed to be entitled to free school meals is below the national average. Most pupils come from White British backgrounds with a small proportion from minority ethnic groups. The overall percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. Pupils are taught in 16 classes. Pupils start in the Nursery class at the age of three. There is a privately run on-site pre-school and after-school provision. The school is in receipt of the Investor in People Award. At the time of the inspection the headteacher had been in post for three weeks.

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

The youngest children enter Winslow School as eager young learners with skills above those typically seen. From this high starting point pupils leave at the end of Key Stage 2 having maintained above average standards and made satisfactory progress. While some pupils achieve well, the progress of all groups is not consistent in writing and mathematics. This is particularly so in Key Stage 2 where groups of pupils fail to achieve the standards they are capable of. Some parents rightly expressed concerns about inconsistencies in the amount of progress their children were making. The use of data collected about pupils' progress to evaluate performance of groups was identified as an area for further work at the last inspection. However, under the purposeful leadership of the new headteacher, the school is already moving forward. He has accurately identified the strengths and weaknesses of the school very quickly. As one parent succinctly remarked about the headteacher, 'You really know where he wants the school to go.'

The school consequently has a satisfactory capacity to improve. ♦ This is due to:

- strong performance at Key Stage 1 with all groups, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, achieving well
- the exceptional visionary leadership of the new headteacher and newly formed senior leadership team
- the high levels of commitment by staff and governors to make changes to accelerate pupils' progress
- the clear understanding of the need to have a robust tracking system in place to accurately monitor pupils' progress
- the harmonious relationships within the school community
- the exemplary behaviour of pupils
- the strong partnership between parents and the school.

Winslow deservedly is much respected in the local community because the school has an open-door policy. Parents are confident of their welcome and the opportunity to be partners in their children's education. Pupils are a credit to the work of the school because they display highly positive attitudes to learning. Pupils were keen to engage with inspectors and offered their well-considered thoughts on how the school could improve the curriculum opportunities offered to them. For example, they felt that their learning could be more exciting in writing if greater use was made of the musical wood and Indian tepee in the school grounds. There are effective links with a range of partners, such as the local church and outside professionals. Pupils enjoy sporting, dance and musical opportunities and these are reflected in the school's award of Active Mark for physical

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education and sport. Parents speak with pride about their children's successes in dance competitions with local schools. However, opportunities for pupils to experience first hand activities of cultural diversity are less well developed.

◆ While there are pockets of outstanding practice, the quality of good teaching is not consistent throughout the school so that it is satisfactory overall. Teachers do not always use assessment opportunities to support their lesson planning and this means that not all groups are suitably challenged. The advice given to pupils does not always provide sufficient detail for them to know what to do to improve their work. The headteacher has quickly identified areas requiring development in teaching, learning and assessment. He has developed robust plans to improve the use of ongoing assessment in lessons. However, not enough time has passed since his very recent appointment to measure the impact of these plans on accelerating pupils' progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment to consistently good by ensuring that:
 - teachers make precise use of assessment and advice on next steps in English and mathematics lessons so that pupils are challenged to achieve the exceptionally high levels they are capable of .
 - the curriculum provides exciting opportunities for all group of pupils to achieve as well as they can .
 - a consistent and sharp analysis of pupils' progress is used by leaders and managers to identify the actions needed to accelerate pupils' progress.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Pupils' thorough enjoyment of school is reflected in their above average attendance.

◆ Pupils' needs are analysed and focused interventions put in place, such as the work related to pupils' developing knowledge of the sounds that letters make. These are having a positive impact on the achievement of pupils in writing and reading. However, the school recognises that a significant number of pupils in Key Stage 2, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are underachieving. Inspection observations of learning in lessons shows that groups of pupils are not always moving forward in their learning at a rate related to their abilities. As a result, overall achievement is satisfactory.

A testament to the positive relationships in school is how pupils use their well-developed social skills to engage with one another in lessons. During the inspection older pupils were observed adeptly sharing compliments as part of team work in a music lesson. Pupils are confident about talking to adults if they have a worry or concern and the 'Grins and Grumbles' boxes which are in some classes are popular. The respected school council members are perceptive and articulate and parents and carers report that they are pleased with the confidence and skills that pupils demonstrate, preparing them well for the next stages in their education. Incidents of bullying are very rare. The 'Golden Lives' scheme is popular with pupils who feel it is fair and encourages them to be responsible for their own actions. Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay healthy and this is recognised in the school's award of Healthy School's status. The school is aware that to

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develop this work further more work is needed in giving pupils the opportunity to be health ambassadors for others.

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	2
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	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	1
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?

Members of staff work successfully to provide good quality care. The positive atmosphere created in each class ensures that learners feel safe. This element of mutual respect permeates all aspects of the school community. For example, inspectors observed a Year 1 pupil showing real concern for a teacher who was stretching up to write at the top of a whiteboard.

Teachers use their subject knowledge to plan learning activities for pupils satisfactorily. At its most effective there is challenge for higher ability pupils, such as in a Year 6 English lesson focusing on developing the key features of journalistic writing. As a result, written work in this lesson was of high quality. However, too many lessons rely on teacher-led, whole-class teaching based around questions and answers. While behaviour in such lessons is exemplary the teaching fails to inspire the high levels of achievement some pupils are capable of. In these lessons subsequent activities are not always matched to pupils' abilities to enable them to routinely make consistently good progress. For example, younger pupils were asked to use adjectives in their writing but the teacher missed the opportunity to provide the 'exciting' words for pupils to explore.

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There are some good examples of marking which advises pupils of next steps. Nevertheless, observation of lessons and scrutiny of pupils' English and mathematics work show that this practice is not routinely embedded across the school. Teachers do not consistently use sharply focused assessment steps during lessons and consequently pupils do not always understand how to make progress in their learning. ♦♦

♦ The curriculum provides a balanced experience of learning that ensures above average standards are maintained. Art and music are particular favourites and this is reflected in the award of Arts Mark Gold. Visits out such as to the Roahl Dahl museum enhance pupils' experiences. The school library provides a valuable resource. Guidance offered on the selection of reading material is much appreciated by parents. There are pockets of very good practice, such as innovations to the English curriculum, but these have not yet been effectively introduced across the school. The lack of consistency across the curriculum in active and imaginative opportunities for learning means that not all pupils progress at the rate expected of them. Partnerships exist such as the links with other schools which provide enjoyable opportunities, for example in science. Pupils and parents appreciate the range of extra-curricular activities and the take up is high.

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?

In their strong desire to ensure all pupils achieve exceptionally well, the governors and the newly formed leadership team are quite rightly focusing on the school motto, 'Enabling the Best for All'. The governors are a strong asset in the strategic development of the school because they possess an in-depth knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They have gone through a rigorous selection procedure in the appointment of the new headteacher, involving the whole school community in the process. The headteacher has engaged the commitment of staff through a development day based on school self-evaluation. Leaders and managers display an ambitious vision for the future of Winslow School. As one member of staff put it, 'The new head is a very motivating and visionary leader and I very much look forward to working with him.'

♦ The staff team is committed to ensuring that equal opportunities are promoted and discrimination in any form is tackled. Safeguarding procedures are good. Parents of younger children speak warmly of the specific support that vulnerable pupils receive. While there are strengths in the leadership of some subjects, the lack of a sharp assessment analysis of pupils' needs restricts the school's ability to fully enact key policies such as inclusion. As a result, support is inconsistent through the school. The school

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gathers the views of parents through surveys and questionnaires. Results show that parents are consistently happy with their children's education. Careful thought is given to the deployment of resources. Prudent financial management has enabled the school to update its information and communication technology provision. This strategic planning has been confirmed by the award of the Financial Management Standard in Schools. The school promotes community cohesion well within the local community, but leaders acknowledge that work related to developing pupils' understanding of cultural diversity is in early stages.

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	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
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

The youngest children in the Nursery relish the opportunities to explore and investigate. Inspectors observed children's delight when watching recently hatched snails. Teaching in the Reception class promotes children's good use of language. For example, one teacher introduced the word 'accurately' when talking to the children about looking for objects that float. Good quality questioning similarly led on to an in-depth conversation about making a boat. In this way adults plan and support learning opportunities that are opened-ended and fun. Adults know the children well and pay particular attention to their needs, which creates a sense of harmony. As a result, children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

There is a good balance of adult-led and child-initiated opportunities for learning. During the inspection two children were observed displaying well-developed fine motor skills while amiably chatting together when completing a self-selected bead threading activity. The smooth induction into school for the youngest children is a testament to the induction arrangements and the partnerships with pre-school settings. The well-being of all children is high priority for staff and regular risk assessments are undertaken for all activities. The

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use of the outside areas was identified as an area for improvement in the last inspection. While activities planned are enjoyed by children, the quality of resources is not exciting.

The leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are satisfactory. The team makes effective use of home/school learning diaries to track children's development. These are appreciated by parents and create a sound partnership between home and school. However, the use of entry assessment in the Reception class is not rigorously carried out at the beginning of the school year. Consistent systems for tracking and the analysis of children's progress have yet to be established. ♦

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
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	3

Views of parents and carers

A very large majority of parents and carers are happy with all aspects of their children's experience at school. Some parents expressed the view that they were unsure how much progress their children were making at school and would like more information. Some parents felt that the quality of extra support for pupils' learning was inconsistent throughout the school. During this inspection inspectors found evidence to support these views. A very few individuals felt that learning was interrupted by individuals displaying poor behaviour. However, inspectors observed highly positive behaviour and attitudes from pupils in lessons, during play times and lunchtimes.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Winslow Church of England Combined 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 inspection team received 119 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 403 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	71	60	38	32	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	70	59	36	30	1	1	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	50	42	55	46	2	2	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	42	35	52	44	12	10	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	55	46	50	42	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	50	42	51	43	3	2	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	45	38	58	49	3	2	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)	34	28	53	45	0	0	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	47	39	49	41	10	8	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	41	34	51	43	9	8	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	40	48	57	48	4	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	43	36	58	49	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	58	49	46	39	4	3	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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 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. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

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.



1 October 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Winslow Church of England Combined School, Winslow MK18 3EN

Thank you for welcoming the inspection team to your school on our recent visit. We enjoyed our time with you. We liked the way many of you gave us your views about your school. We were extremely impressed by your behaviour and how keen you are to learn. This is a credit to you all. Your views have helped us to make our judgements about how well your school is helping you to learn.

Your school looks after you well and you enjoy happy relationships with the staff. You have opportunities to try new things and your families help you with your learning well. You know how to be healthy and how to keep yourselves safe. There are opportunities for you to take part in local sporting, musical and dance events and these you enjoy. Your library is a good resource and your parents and carers appreciate the advice given to you when choosing a book. Those of you who have just started school play extremely well together. The standards you achieve in your work are above average. You come into school as confident young learners but over all the time you spend at Winslow, you do not always make the progress that you are all capable of. I know that your new headteacher and the staff have plans in place and are working very hard to help all of you learn as well as you can in the future.

I have asked your headteacher, staff and governors to work on some areas to improve your learning and progress further. The first is for your teachers to assess your work in English and mathematics lessons, giving you small steps to work on which will challenge you to achieve high levels. We have asked your teachers to provide you with exciting opportunities across the curriculum, such as using the magic wood and Indian tepee to help you develop your imaginative writing skills so that you achieve as well as you can. We have also asked the leaders and managers of your school to track your progress very carefully and put actions in place so you make faster progress.

I am confident you will do all you can by continuing to have such positive attitudes to your learning and enjoy school.

Yours sincerely

Jane Neech Her Majesty's Inspector

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