

Little Missenden Church of England School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110457
Local Authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	356748
Inspection dates	21–22 March 2011
Reporting inspector	Joy Considine

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	31
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dorothy Hilton
Headteacher	Julianna Hall
Date of previous school inspection	7 March 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one additional inspector. During the inspection four lessons taught by two teachers were observed. Discussions were held with staff, the Chair of the Governing Body and pupils. The inspector observed the school's work, and looked at documentation including the school's improvement plan, the tracking of pupils' progress, minutes from governing body meetings and other information relevant to the inspection. In addition, questionnaires returned by 25 parents and carers were analysed.

The inspector reviewed many aspects of the school's work. She looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How well teaching challenges all pupils so that they make the best possible progress in writing and mathematics.
- The impact of school leaders, including governors, on improving outcomes for pupils.
- How effectively provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage meets the needs of children.

Information about the school

The school is much smaller than most schools and is situated in a small rural village community. Most pupils are of White British heritage and very few speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is much lower than average. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in a discrete Reception class. The school has gained a number of awards including Healthy Schools status and the Eco Silver award.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Little Missenden is a good school. The school's values underpin all aspects of its work. Staff provide outstanding care, guidance and support for all pupils who say that they feel extremely safe and secure in school and that adults really care for them. One parent wrote, 'We have been particularly impressed with the way the school treats every child as an individual and seeks to make them feel valued.' This was typical of the views of others. Staff provide a warm welcome for parents and carers and are on hand at the beginning of each day to discuss issues or concerns. Consequently, the school's engagement with partnerships with parents and carers is excellent.

Pupils are happy and they enjoy school and this is reflected in their high attendance. They are friendly, polite and helpful and enjoy working and playing together. Staff have created a delightful learning environment and capitalised on the outdoor area to inspire pupils' imaginations and to provide them with a wide range of experiences. Equipment such as the adventure trail and other playground games encourage them to be active at break times and make a good contribution to their outstanding understanding of what it means to adopt a healthy lifestyle.

Teaching is good and ensures that pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is high by the time they leave the school. Overall pupils make good progress but some particularly those who are more able, do not progress as quickly in writing and mathematics as they do in reading. This is because teachers do not always make enough use of day-to-day assessment information to plan lessons that are well matched to pupils' learning needs. The curriculum is broad and balanced and enriched by a wide range of additional activities. Subjects are linked together under an overall topic or theme but there are not enough opportunities for pupils to practise their literacy and numeracy skills when learning about other subjects.

Since joining the school in 2009, the headteacher has reviewed school policies and created a three year plan for development in consultation with staff and governors. This has given a clear direction to the work of the school and while governors provide some challenge and support to the headteacher, they do not contribute significantly towards shaping the strategic vision and direction of the school. Nevertheless the school has maintained and built on the high standards set at the time of the last inspection. The headteacher, staff and governors have a clear understanding of its strengths and of what more needs to be done. There have been some significant improvements since the last inspection and this indicates the school has good capacity to improve further.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that pupils, particularly those who are more able, make even better progress in writing and mathematics by:
 - making better use of assessment information to plan their lessons
 - raising expectations of what pupils can do
 - providing pupils with more opportunities to practise their literacy and numeracy skills when learning about other subjects.
- Ensure governors adopt a more strategic role in developing the vision and direction for the school.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Relationships between teachers and pupils are excellent and this makes a significant contribution to the good outcomes for pupils. Pupils enjoy school and they behave well in lessons, although occasionally, if they have to sit on the carpet for too long, they become restless and fidgety. They are articulate and speak clearly and confidently in lessons and in the playground. They listen carefully because teachers plan interesting introductions to lessons that capture pupils' imagination. For example, in one lesson, the teacher read a story with such expression that pupils were expectantly silent as they eagerly waited to hear what came next. Attainment in reading, writing and mathematics has remained consistently high for several years. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress from their starting points. This is because the school makes good use of its relationships with external agencies to support those pupils at risk of underachieving. Most pupils make good progress in lessons from just above average starting points although those who are more able could make more progress in reading and mathematics.

Pupils understand the need to make the right choices, particularly in regard to their health and safety. They have an excellent understanding of the need to choose healthy foods and they thoroughly enjoy the wide range of activities that keep them fit and healthy, reflecting the Healthy Schools award.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	1
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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?

Teaching is usually lively and enthusiastic. Teachers plan lessons with an interesting range of experiences and activities to engage pupils. Staff are skilled at asking questions which probe pupils' knowledge and understanding and teaching assistants offer good individual support to pupils. Teachers mark pupils' work well by showing them what they have done well and what they need to do to improve their work but the level of work given to some pupils is occasionally too easy and this slows their progress.

The curriculum is well planned to link subjects together to make learning more interesting for pupils. For example, in one class, pupils were engaged in a topic based on rainforests and the teacher used a story set in Africa to develop links between literacy, geography and art. Nevertheless, opportunities are sometimes missed for pupils to use their skills in writing and mathematics to support their learning in other areas. The curriculum is enriched by visits to local places of interest such as the Henley Rowing Museum as well as to places further afield such as the London museums. The school makes good use of external partners such as the Schools Sports Partnership to provide extra-curricular activities including football and tennis. Parents help to run the eco club in which pupils grow vegetables in the garden. The school has received the award of silver Eco Schools in recognition of its work to develop a sustainable community.

All pupils are highly valued for the unique contribution they make to the school and all staff know every pupil extremely well. This means that they can provide very effective

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individual support to pupils both academically and personally when the need arises. Good relationships with external agencies such as educational psychologists have enabled the school to support those pupils who sometimes find aspects of school difficult. There are very good arrangements in place to ensure that pupils are well supported as they move through the school and on to the next phase in their education.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher works in close cooperation with staff and governors and has established a common sense of purpose based on the ethos and values of the school. She has considerable drive and enthusiasm and has successfully inspired the school community to work closely as a team. Leaders for literacy and numeracy monitor the quality of teaching and have helped to ensure that the teaching remains of good quality. Governors visit the school formally as well as informally. They are provided with high quality information so that they can hold the school to account. The school actively seeks the views of parents and carers in determining their priorities and there are established procedures for communicating with them. One parent wrote, 'I would especially commend the headteacher for welcoming children and their parents into school each day.' Again, this view was not untypical.

The school prides itself on its commitment to equal opportunities and is striving to close any remaining differences in the progress made by pupils, for example in relation to higher attainers in writing and mathematics. It strives at all times to ensure that none of its community suffers from any form of discrimination. The school is a central part of the local community and as such capitalises on opportunities to be involved in local events. Through the curriculum, pupils are developing an understanding of what it means to live in more diverse parts of the United Kingdom. Following an audit of community cohesion, the school has built on this work by developing links with a family and a school in Ghana. The safeguarding of children is of the highest priority to everybody at the school and its procedures and practices are of the highest quality.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
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	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children get off to a good start in the Reception class. They are warmly welcomed into a bright attractive environment which is well resourced both indoors and outside. The reception team works closely together and there are good communications with parents and carers. Children make good progress in developing their skills in all aspects of their development. Staff copiously record children's achievements but they do not always use this information to identify next steps. The outdoor area is being redeveloped to give greater access to children when the ground is wet. Most children are sensible and thoughtful. They get on well together and are able to take turns and to share their games and toys. There is a good balance between activities that are led by adults and those that children select for themselves. For example, a small group of children had chosen to paint jungle animals while another group were planting seeds that were 'going to grow into huge, huge jungle plants'. This balance allows children to develop initiative, resilience and independence. Good attention is given to ensuring that all children are safe and well looked after. The leader has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses and has plans in place to secure further improvement.

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	2

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

Stage	
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Views of parents and carers

A high percentage of parents and carers returned the questionnaires. Most were overwhelmingly positive about all aspects of the school. All agreed or strongly agreed with most statements. Many had written comments in praise of the school and how much their child enjoys school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Little Missenden Church of England 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 25 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 31 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	22	88	2	8	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	24	96	1	4	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	16	64	8	32	1	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	15	60	7	28	1	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	16	64	8	32	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	17	68	8	32	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	19	76	6	24	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)	16	64	8	32	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	17	68	6	24	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	19	76	6	24	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	16	64	9	36	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	22	88	3	12	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	20	80	5	20	0	0	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.



23 March 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Little Missenden Church of England School, Little Missenden HP7 ORA

Thank you very much for making me so welcome when I visited your school. It is a delightful school set in beautiful grounds which give you plenty of outdoor things to do in lessons and at playtimes. I thoroughly enjoyed meeting you all and hearing what you had to say about your school.

Your school is a good school. Adults care for you very much and work hard to make sure you are safe, secure and happy. They find interesting things for you to do both in lessons and after school. Some of you said that you enjoy the trips to places such as Windsor Castle and the Science Museum in London. Your teachers plan lessons well but sometimes they do not make sure that the work is hard enough for some of you. Your school leaders work closely with the governors to plan how to make the school even better but some governors need a little more encouragement to put forward their own ideas about how they would like the school to develop in the future.

I have asked your school to do these things to make your school even better.

- Help some of you to learn even more in your lessons by giving you harder work in writing and in mathematics and to let you practise your writing and number skills when learning about other subjects.
- Encourage all governors to make suggestions about what they would like your school to be like in the future.

You can help your school leaders to make you school even better by asking your teachers for harder work when you find lessons easy. You could also ask the governors what they would like to see in school next time they come to visit.

I wish you all the very best in the future.

Yours sincerely

Joy Considine

Lead inspector

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