

Cholsey Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123081
Local Authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	359360
Inspection dates	21–22 March 2011
Reporting inspector	Jill Bavin

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

Type of school	All-through
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	231
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tony Bellis
Headteacher	Heather Haigh
Date of previous school inspection	10 March 2008
School address	Church Road Cholsey Wallingford OX10 9PP
Telephone number	01491651862
Fax number	01491 651649
Email address	office.2596@cholsey.oxon.sch.uk

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M2 7LA

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors, who observed nine teachers, visited 14 lessons and two phonics sessions. They also made five extra visits to classes to focus on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and work about communities and cultures. Additionally the team met with pupils, staff and members of the governing body and looked at pupils' work in books and teachers' marking. They scrutinised a variety of documentation, including policies and documents related to safeguarding, data about pupils' progress, monitoring and evaluation records and school development plans. Responses from staff, pupils and 121 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.

- How effective the school's strategies are for raising attainment in mathematics, especially for girls and for the most-able pupils.
- The effectiveness of curriculum planning in engaging all groups of pupils in all year groups.
- The impact of colleagues monitoring and evaluating each other's effectiveness through 'snapshot days'.

Information about the school

This is an average-sized primary school in a village location. School expansion is expected because of the planned development of new housing on the outskirts of the village. Most children join the Reception class following pre-school experiences with various providers. Approximately 50% have attended the pre-school provision that shares the school site, but this is not managed by the governing body and did not form part of this inspection. The school provides a breakfast and after-school club which were included in the inspection. Typically the proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is lower than the national average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is usually slightly above the national average. Most pupils are White British. The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic groups is much lower than is usually found, and very few pupils speak English as an additional language.

The school gained Healthy School status in 2008 and the Activemark award in 2009 in recognition of its work to promote healthy lifestyles and physical education. It received the Eco Silver award in 2009, reflecting the pupils' involvement in conservation.

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

This is a good school. Good leadership and management have produced considerable improvement since the previous inspection. Attainment is rising, and girls and boys of different abilities, including the most-able pupils, make good progress in mathematics and English. Systems for checking how well each pupil is achieving are now more detailed and used more rigorously. Teaching and learning are good because teachers make better use of their greater understanding of pupils' needs. While there are instances of outstanding teaching and none is inadequate, the quality of teaching varies and expectations are sometimes not high enough to accelerate pupils' progress.

The curriculum is now good. Topic work motivates boys and girls throughout the school and a greater emphasis is now placed upon developing key skills within topics. This contributes to girls' and boys' similar rates of progress and improved achievement. Procedures for assessing the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage have improved and they are used well to meet varying needs. As a result, children in the Reception class make good progress.

Several parents and carers commend the headteacher's and staff levels of care. Comments such as, 'They provide very good support', 'I can't thank them enough' and 'The staff and headteacher genuinely care' represent the views of many. Pupils also value the support they receive. They feel safe in school and confident that they can turn to an adult for help. These strengths contribute to pupils' positive attitudes and enjoyment of school and are reflected in their above average attendance rates.

Pupils behave well in lessons and around school, developing a good sense of right and wrong. They are sensitive to those classmates who face challenging circumstances. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of communities, faiths and cultures that differ from their own are limited. While addressing other priorities, the school has not implemented its plans to address pupils' limited experience of other communities, and has missed opportunities to incorporate this knowledge and understanding into curriculum topics. ♦ ♦

The headteacher, deputy and governing body are an effective team. They share an accurate view of the school's strengths and determine well-chosen priorities for further development. The governing body supports and challenges the school well. The monitoring of teaching and learning is regular, accurate and playing a significant part in sharing good practice and driving school improvement. Nevertheless, the arising feedback and discussion tend to focus more on detail about teaching strategies than what different groups of pupils have learned during the lesson. Staff embrace their increased accountability and involvement in school improvement through the effective use of 'snapshot days'. This approach has successfully increased teachers' ambition for pupils and

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has recently extended to involving pupils who are, therefore, taking greater responsibility for their learning. The extent of shared ambition, combined with the good track record of school improvement, underpins the school's good position for further improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the consistency of good teaching and learning, and the proportion of outstanding lessons, by:
 - ensuring that the work set in lessons is always at a level that challenges all groups of pupils to aim high
 - giving teachers more precise feedback on pupils' learning in lessons.
- Improve the promotion of community cohesion and develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of the diversity of communities in the United Kingdom by:
 - giving pupils more direct experience of communities with different faiths
 - ensuring that curriculum topics routinely increase pupils' understanding of different communities.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Most pupils join the school with key literacy and numeracy skills that are below the levels expected for their age. Very few children join with greater levels of skills than expected. Both girls and boys, including the few who are known to be eligible for free school meals, the few minority ethnic pupils, the very few who speak English as an additional language, the most able and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good progress as they move through the school. In 2009 and 2010, attainment for pupils in Year 6 was above average in English, with more pupils reaching the higher Level 5 than is typical nationally. Attainment in mathematics was broadly average, with slightly fewer higher Level 5s than the national average. Lesson observations conducted during the inspection, confirmed by school data, show that most pupils in most year groups make good progress. Pupils in Year 6 are currently working above expected levels in English and the proportion of pupils working at the higher Level 5 in mathematics has increased.

Different groups of pupils are equally well motivated. They respond well to opportunities to explain their ideas. For example, younger pupils make good use of their reading skills to scan for evidence that characters are 'mean', and older pupils deepen their understanding of mathematics by expressing calculations as word problems. Pupils respond with maturity when work is extremely challenging. For example, older pupils use sophisticated language both verbally and on paper to develop moral arguments about global warming. On occasion, when opportunities to extend the pace of learning and level of challenge are missed, pupils are less enthusiastic and behaviour slips to satisfactory.

Pupils largely apply their good understanding of healthy lifestyles to themselves, especially through their participation in sport, reflecting the school's awards in these areas. They willingly accept responsibilities and respond sensibly to opportunities to contribute to their learning, as exemplified by the school council's 'question for the week' during the inspection: 'How can we make sure all pupils know their targets?' Older pupils debate local community issues surrounding the development of new housing on the outskirts of the village with balanced views. They demonstrate a good sense of responsibility for the

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planet through their understanding of conservation issues, reflecting the school's Eco award. They appreciate the value of the non-material world in their science and artwork. Their ability to empathise is evident in their drama and writing, such as when exploring the feelings of the archaeologists who discovered the tomb of Tutankhamun. They are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
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	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
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	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

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?

Teachers have good relationships with pupils, so behaviour management is subtle and lessons proceed smoothly. Teachers mostly plan well to meet varying needs within their class, and this is a major factor in the good progress pupils make. On occasion teachers plan to recap and consolidate work for longer than necessary before extending pupils' knowledge and understanding. This constrains learning and pupils' interest. The strongest teaching maintains a high level of challenge throughout the lesson, often with skilfully adjusted questions to suit pupils' different needs as they emerge. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning, especially for those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

A particular strength of the curriculum lies in its interest to boys and girls in all year groups. Activities such as drawing large dinosaurs on the playground to be measured in mathematics appeal to younger pupils. Topics such as 'Extremes' provide good opportunities for older pupils to harness technical, scientific, geographical, literacy and

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numeracy skills. The curriculum successfully fosters an interest in different customs and parts of the world, often through special events or religious education. However, it does not sufficiently develop pupils' awareness of cultural diversity in their own country. The school has a variety of resources available to ensure that special programmes for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are well suited to particular needs.

The breakfast and after-school clubs provide warm and nurturing environments which reflect the school's good pastoral care. They extend the school's values of ensuring that pupils feel safe and valued, and provide opportunities for them to exercise choice and know their voice is heard. One parent wrote, 'The children's voice is definitely listened to', a view shared by pupils. A key strength in the school is pupils' enjoyment, which underpins their sense of security and results in their readiness to learn. The school liaises successfully with other professionals to provide the support required for those pupils facing particular challenges. This helps these pupils to overcome potential barriers to their learning and to make good progress from their various starting points.

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	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher provides encouraging leadership. She is well supported by the deputy headteacher, by the governing body and by staff. Senior staff have an accurate view of teaching and learning but do not make the most of opportunities to focus fully on pupils' learning in their feedback to teachers. The 'snapshot days' inform staff and empower them in monitoring and evaluating their own work and that of the school as a whole. These days make a significant contribution to a shared sense of purpose and ambition. They also help promote equality of opportunity for pupils, because they supplement other meetings to enable staff to increase their understanding of the differing needs of different groups of pupils. Since the previous inspection the school has successfully closed the gap in achievement between pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and other pupils. A close analysis of the progress of boys and girls and different groups of pupils enables the school to adjust its curriculum effectively, contributes to a good level of equality of opportunity and helps to eliminate discrimination.

The governing body makes a positive contribution to school development based upon a good understanding of its strengths and challenges. It is fully involved in strategic planning for improved provision and outcomes as well as the anticipated expansion of the school. The governing body contributes to good safeguarding procedures, and the particular strengths in checking health and safety issues exceed requirements. It acknowledges that plans to extend the school's wider community links have not been

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implemented. Meanwhile, it contributes to the school's active promotion of positive, tolerant and anti-discriminatory attitudes among pupils. The governing body contributes to the school's good links with the local community. Much work had been undertaken to help pupils understand local community issues and develop a wider sense of responsibility through conservation work. ♦

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	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
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	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Since the previous inspection good leadership and management have led to improved provision and outcomes, which are now good. The Early Years Foundation Stage leader has a good understanding of how children of this age learn best. She has an accurate view of what works well in the provision and how to improve it further. Staff training has contributed to adults becoming more skilful in framing questions such as, 'What are you planning?' to extend children's learning without over-directing them, although on occasion adults direct children more than necessary and so constrain their independence and their learning. Improved procedures for observing and recording children's interests and achievements give staff more relevant information about children's needs on a daily basis. The results are used to promote children's key skills and often to adjust work for small groups of children at different ability levels. For example, during the inspection a group of more confident children made good gains in using their understanding of number to begin to estimate quantity. ♦

Staff are beginning to record 'next steps' alongside their observations but these are not always focused on children's learning. Although topics are still selected by adults, children make greater choices within this broad framework than previously. Adults make greater use of information to engage children's interest and provide a more stimulating breadth of

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activities. During the inspection children made good gains in exploring ideas about weight and gravity as they manipulated guttering in an activity of their choosing. Children enjoy the Forest School activities and extend their repertoire of problem solving and creative and social skills well by, for example, sawing branches and building 'magic bridges' across muddy ditches. Children are secure because of the care taken to provide them with warm, nurturing and alert support in a safe environment. Adults, and the Year 6 pupil helpers, set a consistently good example to children of how to behave and relate to each other.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	2
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

The proportion of parents and carers who returned questionnaires was above the national average for primary schools. Most were highly appreciative of the school's work, especially the caring approach of the headteacher and staff. The inspectors investigated the individual concerns raised by a small minority of parents and carers while preserving anonymity. These included concerns about the school's response to safety issues, the way it takes account of their views, and their child's progress. During this inspection, the inspectors judged safeguarding procedures to be good, and found that pupils' progress and links with parents and carers are also good.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Cholsey 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 inspection team received 121 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 231 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	74	61	39	32	7	6	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	72	60	38	31	8	7	1	1
My school informs me about my child's progress	42	35	71	59	4	3	3	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	42	35	53	44	17	14	3	2
The teaching is good at this school	44	36	54	45	11	9	2	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	51	42	52	43	12	10	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	49	40	66	55	5	4	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)	41	34	61	50	6	5	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	45	37	58	48	12	10	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	26	21	69	57	11	9	6	5
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	33	27	62	51	17	14	3	2
The school is led and managed effectively	35	29	60	50	7	6	11	9
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	56	46	50	41	10	8	2	2

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 Cholsey Primary School, Wallingford, OX10 9PP

Thank you for being so friendly and welcoming when we visited your school recently. A special thank you to those pupils who met with me, showed me your work, and shared your ideas about the school. We agree with you that you go to a good school. Here are some of the best things we found.

- You make good progress and in Year 6 you reach higher standards in literacy than most children of your age.
- Your attendance is better than in most primary schools.
- You feel safe because you know that staff care about you and take good care of you.
- You behave well in lessons and around school and you are welcoming to children new to the school.
- You have a good understanding of how to keep yourselves healthy and safe and how to take care of the environment.
- You enjoy your interesting activities, such as measuring giant dinosaurs in the playground, or researching topics such as 'Extremes'.
- The governing body and all adults in the school work well together to keep making the school even better.

We have asked teachers to prioritise making sure that you are always challenged as much as possible in lessons. You can help by sensibly asking for harder work if you need it. We have asked the senior staff to make sure they always discuss how much you have learned when they are giving teachers feedback. We have also asked them to give you more opportunities to make links with people from communities in the United Kingdom whose faith and culture differ from your own, and to give you more opportunities to learn about different cultures in your topics.

You can help the school to get even better by continuing to attend and behave so well. We wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Jill Bavin Lead inspector

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