

Checkendon Church of England (A) Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123200
Local Authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	359390
Inspection dates	12–13 May 2011
Reporting inspector	Angela Kirk

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	90
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Fiona Broadbent
Headteacher	Mary Bather
Date of previous school inspection	6 May 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Eight lessons were observed, taught by four teachers. Meetings were held with staff, groups of pupils and a representative of the governing body. Inspectors observed the school's work, and scrutinised pupils' books, monitoring and assessment information, the minutes of meetings, policies, safeguarding documents and teachers' planning. Inspectors analysed questionnaires from staff and pupils as well as 58 questionnaires from parents and carers. The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The attainment and progress of pupils taking account of the impact of pupils joining and leaving the school at different times, given the small cohorts year on year.
- The achievement of more able pupils, especially in Years 3?6.
- The pace of learning and the involvement of pupils in lessons.
- The achievement of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage given the recent changes in provision.

Information about the school

Checkendon CE is a much smaller than average primary school serving Checkendon and the surrounding villages. Most pupils are White British, with about 12% from other ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average as is the proportion known to be eligible for free school meals. The headteacher is also head of another local school, Stoke Row Church of England Primary School. This arrangement has recently become permanent. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in a Reception class. More pupils than average join or leave the school at different times. The school has achieved Healthy School status, the silver Eco-Silver Award and the Bronze status for extended services.

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. Pupils' attainment by the end of Year 6 is above average and the school focuses well on the individual needs of pupils. Improvements since the last inspection in the Early Years Foundation Stage, particularly in the class organisation of Reception children, in whole-school planning, teaching and the learning environment means that progress is now good across the school, resulting in good achievement overall.

Teaching is good, with particular strengths in teachers' use of questioning to challenge pupils' thinking and in the effective feedback given to pupils to help them to understand how to improve their work. However, in some lessons there are too few opportunities for pupils to play an active role, especially during the main teaching session or when an adult leads or supports group work, resulting in some passive learning. Not all teachers adequately challenge more able pupils in the work given to them. As a result, too few pupils attain the higher levels at the end of Year 6 in writing and mathematics.

Interventions to support pupils who require additional academic support are evaluated carefully to ensure that pupils on these programmes make at least good progress. The curriculum is broad and well balanced. Much enjoyment for pupils is gained from the special activities used to launch new topics, which include school trips and talks or demonstrations from visitors. Care at the school is good, particularly for vulnerable pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. As a result, pupils feel safe and secure and their personal development is good. Pupils' ability to adopt healthy lifestyles is outstanding as a result of an excellent health and physical education curriculum and varied extra-curricular sports provision such as judo and football for all ages. Although pupils' spiritual and moral development is strong, their awareness of other cultures is limited because they have had too few opportunities to meet and mix with pupils from different religious, ethnic and culturally diverse backgrounds.

Monitoring by senior leaders and members of the governing body is rigorous. All contribute to the evaluation of the school's work, which is largely accurate. The good leadership and management, driven by the headteacher are central to the improvements taking place in this school. For instance the improvements to boys' writing in the Early Years Foundation Stage, as a result of focused changes to the curriculum and to teaching. Regular pupil progress meetings ensure that the needs of each pupil are met and staff agree that these are effective in holding them to account for their pupils' achievements. The governing body supports the school well and recent improvements have meant that it challenges the school effectively in a range of areas including the achievement of pupils. All are ambitious for the future and this underpins the school's good capacity to improve.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the attainment of more able pupils by ensuring that all teachers regularly set work which challenges them.
- Ensure that all pupils take a more active role in lessons, especially during the main teaching session or in group work when being supported by an adult.
- Develop pupils' awareness of other cultures by providing them with more opportunities to meet and mix with pupils from different religious, ethnic and culturally diverse backgrounds.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils' positive attitudes to learning, good behaviour and hard work support their good progress. Taking into account the small cohorts each year coupled with the impact of pupils who start or leave the school at various times, attainment overall is above average. Nearly all pupils achieve nationally expected levels by the time they leave the school. Where the level of challenge in lessons is well judged, pupils excel. For example, in a science lesson, pupils were asked to evaluate the effectiveness of their experiment to test how to change the pitch of a stringed instrument. Pupils tackled the task with tenacity and maturity. Achievement is good and pupils enjoy their learning because teachers ensure that learning is fun and relevant. For example, in order to write a section of a mystery story, pupils in Years 3 and 4 visited the local graveyard to gain the inspiration for their written descriptions. As a result of carefully planned additional support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, these pupils make similar good progress to their peers.

Pupils report no bullying and trust the adults to deal with any that might occur. Pupils get on very well together and make a good contribution to school life by taking on a wide range of responsibilities, for example, setting up playground games and acting as buddies for Reception children. Pupils' contribution to the community is also good, with pupils in Year 3 and 4 working to produce a special three-dimensional piece of artwork for the day room of a local hospice. Pupils' excellent understanding of how to stay healthy is evident in the good uptake of extra-curricular sports and in pupils' ability to discuss the impact of a balanced diet and the harmful effects of smoking and drugs on the body. Attendance is above average, which, together with above average attainment in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology, means that pupils are prepared well for their future lives. Pupils have a good understanding of right and wrong and show respect for themselves and others, supported by the school's focus on its Christian 'values education'. Their understanding of the beliefs and values of different cultures nationally and internationally is limited.

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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	2
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	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	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?

Interesting lessons with plenty of variety and supported by visits and projects motivate pupils to want to succeed. Teachers have good subject knowledge, undertake careful planning and ensure lessons proceed at a good pace. Teachers use questioning techniques well to challenge pupils' thinking and to check learning. In turn, oral work is often an effective focus in lessons to extend pupils' spoken language skills. For example in a Year 1 and 2 lesson, less able Year 1 pupils undertook much good oral work with the teacher before collating and writing their best questions to ask a witch. Occasionally, pupils are too passive in their learning. For example, group work activities are sometimes overly teacher-led, with pupils having insufficient opportunities to handle equipment or interact with the teacher or the learning during the main teaching session. In a few lessons, the activity is not well matched to the learning intention of the lesson, and this results in slower progress. Generally, assessment to support learning is a strength and a range of techniques are used well by teachers, including good self-assessment opportunities allowing pupils to evaluate their own learning.

The curriculum provides many good opportunities for pupils to develop their interests, such as learning to sing or to play a musical instrument. Writing, mathematics and information and communication technology are well developed throughout the theme-based curriculum. Environmental issues are included in lessons, this and other environmental initiatives resulted in the school's Silver Eco-Award. Clubs are wide ranging,

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attended well and much appreciated by pupils of all ages. Good working relationships between adults and pupils ensure that all pupils grow in confidence and self-esteem, fully aware that they are each valued as individuals. Potentially vulnerable pupils are identified early and provided with the support that they need through the effective use of other professionals and agencies and always involving parents and carers.

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 has high expectations, which are communicated effectively to staff. In turn, staff work hard to achieve the best outcomes for pupils and are well motivated to continue to improve. Senior leaders rigorously monitor the quality of teaching and of other provision and good systems are in place to track pupils' progress and to identify areas of strength and weakness. The school is successfully tackling areas requiring improvement. Regular monitoring and support to improve the quality of teaching has ensured that teaching is good overall and robust data is used to evaluate areas of school development. Variations in the performance of different groups of pupils are being regularly monitored and tackled by the school. As a result of effective leadership and management, most aspects of the school are good. The governing body is influential in determining the strategic direction of the school and, as a result, recent work with a neighbouring school has been successful in securing the future of two small schools under one headteacher. The school adopts good practice across all areas of its safeguarding and the headteacher is an accredited child protection trainer. Governors are appropriately involved in the monitoring of safeguarding and have contributed well to health and safety work such as the school's good quality risk assessments. They are now beginning to undertake more effective monitoring visits in school. Good links with the local authority have supported improvements, particularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The school's bronze award for extended services was the result of good partnership work with seven other local schools. Local people have benefited from this provision, for example in the weekly adult computer classes offered at the school.

The school's positive relationships with parents and carers and its good links with a range of partners contribute significantly to improvements in pupils' achievements and well-being. The views of parents and carers are regularly sought and changes made to practice where necessary. Staff and governors have a satisfactory plan in place to improve community cohesion with initial links having been made with schools in Reading, France and South Africa. However, this work to date has only had a limited impact on the knowledge and understanding that pupils have of those from different backgrounds to their own.

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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	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

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and knowledge typical for their age. They settle in well and relationships between children and between adults and children are good. Considerable work has been undertaken to address the areas for improvement outlined in the last inspection report, the result being that outcomes for children are now good. Assessment of individual children and the records associated with their progress ensure that individual needs are met well. Children make good progress from their varied starting points as a result of careful planning. The leader of the Early Years Foundation Stage ensures that outcomes are monitored through regular checks. Learning is particularly focused on those areas where most progress needs to be made, which are currently reading, writing and calculation and, as a result, improved progress in these areas is evident in this year's class.

There is a good balance between adult-led and child-initiated activities and the newly built unit has good access to the outdoor area, enabling free-flow sessions to be smoothly conducted. Staff make accurate and careful assessments across all areas of children's learning and planning takes good account of their strengths and areas for improvement. Teaching ensures good progress overall, but at times activities may not be matched sharply enough to the range of abilities in the class. In addition, teaching does not always involve children more actively in their learning by providing more hands-on opportunities in the main teaching session and in adult-led group work. Teachers work hard to ensure that activities are enjoyable. For example, children learnt quickly and enjoyed working out and then checking 'one more' in a numeracy lesson by the teacher, adding 'one more' to toys hidden under a blanket. Staff work well with parents and carers who say that they are very happy with the care that their children receive.

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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

A much higher than average number of parents and carers responded to the Ofsted questionnaire and their views of the school are overwhelmingly positive. All parents and carers who responded felt that their children enjoyed school and almost all were happy overall with their child's experience of the school. One summed up the views of many, 'We think the school is excellent. Our child is thriving. She enjoys going to school and is very positive about learning.' There were no written concerns in any area raised by more than one parent or carer. The inspectors judge the school to be diligent in dealing with parental concerns.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Checkendon Church of England 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 58 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 90 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	35	60	23	40	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	36	62	21	36	1	2	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	24	41	27	47	4	7	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	30	52	26	45	2	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	38	66	18	31	1	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	24	41	29	50	3	5	1	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	24	41	33	57	1	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)	20	34	23	40	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	31	53	24	41	1	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	23	40	26	45	7	12	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	22	38	27	47	3	5	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	33	57	23	40	0	0	1	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	39	67	18	31	1	2	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	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 2010 to 31 December 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 2010/11 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.



16 May 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Checkendon Church of England Primary School, Reading, RG8 0SR

Thank you for making us very welcome and answering our questions when we visited you recently. We were impressed with your good attitudes and behaviour and by how well you all get on with each other. You told us that the staff take good care of you and that you feel safe in school, happy in the knowledge that staff listen to any concerns you have.

We judge that Checkendon is a good school. You make good progress and your attainment is above average. The teaching is good. Your teachers are particularly good at using questions effectively to challenge you and at using assessment, such as the useful feedback they give you when they mark your work. Your understanding of how to stay healthy is outstanding. This is not only because of the sports that most of you take part in such as judo and football, but also in your understanding of how to keep your body healthy through a good diet and avoiding things that harm you. You contribute well to the school in many ways, for example by taking on the responsibility for organising the playground games or acting as buddies for the Reception children.

In order to improve further, we have asked your school to:

- make sure that those of you who are more able are given more challenging work so that you reach higher standards
- let you take a more active role in lessons by for example, making more use of individual whiteboards
- develop your awareness of other cultures by providing you with more opportunities to meet and mix with pupils from different religious, ethnic and culturally diverse backgrounds.

You can help by keeping up your positive approach to learning. It was a pleasure meeting you.

Yours sincerely

Angela Kirk

Lead inspector

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