

Frieth Church of England Combined School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110461
Local Authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	356750
Inspection dates	9–10 June 2011
Reporting inspector	Barbara Atcheson

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 under pilot arrangements; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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	120
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Steve Taylor
Headteacher	Lindsay Phillips
Date of previous school inspection	18–19 March 2008
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 13 lessons taught by seven teachers. They also held meetings with members of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at school policies, including those relating to safeguarding, minutes of governing body meetings, planning documents, pupils' work and questionnaires returned from 105 pupils, six staff and 72 parents and carers.

Information about the school

This is a smaller than average sized primary school situated in a rural area. Most of the pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is similar to that found nationally. Their needs mainly relate to social or language and communication difficulties. There is a high turnover of pupils joining and leaving the school at different times in Years 3 to 6. There are four mixed age range classes and one discrete Year 6. Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage in a mixed Reception and Year 1 class. The school has met the government's floor targets for academic performance in each of the last three years.

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	3
Achievement	3
Teaching	3
Leadership and management	3
Behaviour and safety	2
Does the school adequately promote the pupils' well-being?	Yes
Does the school adequately promote community cohesion?	Yes
Does the school provide value for money?	Yes

Key findings

- This is a satisfactory school. It has a warm, welcoming and stimulating environment where pupils feel cared for, secure and are ready to learn. As a result, pupils behave well, have good relationships with adults and other pupils and respect each other's achievements. Procedures for safeguarding are good and ensure that all pupils feel safe and that their emotional and social needs are met. Parents and carers appreciate this and are overwhelmingly supportive.
- The resolve and determination of the headteacher, ably assisted by her senior leaders and members of the governing body, have ensured a concerted approach to school improvement. Self-evaluation is broadly accurate but the school's monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of improvements, although satisfactory, is not carried out as often as it could be to ensure consistency. However, the school has taken successful actions to address deficiencies and these have ensured continuing improvements in pupils' progress and enjoyment of learning. These improvements confirm the school's satisfactory capacity to continue improving.
- Children start school with skills and capabilities expected for their age. They make satisfactory progress to reach the expected levels by the time they enter Year 1. Pupils in Years 1 to 6 make satisfactory progress from their starting points to reach average levels of attainment at the end of Year 6. The weakest subject is mathematics, particularly using and applying mathematics and calculations. Although underachievement in mathematics is identified, interventions are not always quick enough to address problems in the early stages. Where pupils work in a practical way and use resources to strengthen their learning, they make good progress.
- Teaching is satisfactory. Much is better than this, for example when the pace of learning is brisk and expectations are high and pupils' progress is good. However, this quality is not consistent across the school. In a few lessons, the

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pace of learning drops, progress slows and more-able pupils are not sufficiently challenged. Sometimes teachers talk for too long and pupils do not have sufficient time to do their own work, or discuss their ideas with their partners.

Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory, and where leadership and management is no better than satisfactory, may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By April 2012, improve pupils' achievement in mathematics by ensuring that:
 - teachers have training to improve their skills and confidence in teaching calculation and using and applying mathematics
 - underachievement is quickly addressed with appropriate interventions at an early stage
 - there are more opportunities for pupils to work in a practical way and use resources to strengthen their learning.
- By April 2012, improve the overall quality of teaching and learning to be at least good by ensuring that:
 - teachers' expectations of what pupils can do are raised, so that all groups, particularly the more able, are suitably challenged
 - the pace of learning is brisk and that teachers do not talk for too long so that pupils have sufficient opportunities for independent learning
 - pupils are given more opportunities for practical investigation and to discuss their thoughts and ideas with talk partners.
- Ensure that senior leaders monitor and evaluate the implementation, impact and effectiveness of all initiatives.

Main Report

Senior leaders are motivated to seek further improvement and are effective in focusing the school's efforts on priorities. Assessment is now accurate and so the school has a true picture of pupil progress and new tracking procedures are identifying underachievement more quickly. Clear guidelines have helped parents and carers to understand the importance of regular attendance, particularly during national tests, and this has had a positive impact on the school's results in relation to their challenging targets. Opportunities for pupils to consider the wider spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects of life are shared with parents and carers and ensure that school is a happy and positive community where many pupils develop confidence and achieve increasingly well.

Now that assessment is accurate at the end of Year 2, it is clear that most pupils, including children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, make at least satisfactory progress and some make good progress from their starting points. However, over one third of the pupils in the current Year 6 have not been at the school all the way through. Some of these pupils entered the school at low starting points. Good

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support from their teachers and teaching assistants has ensured that most have made good progress to narrow the gap between their performance and all pupils nationally so that they are, in common with their peers, reaching average standards at the end of Year 6.

In a Year 6 mathematics lesson on decimals, pupils made good progress because the teacher used her own good knowledge to help them to use and apply accurately what they knew. Following a quick-fire mental starter to the lesson, the teacher asked pupils for methods of working. When there was no immediate response, she modified the question and gave an example. From this, pupils were able to suggest three different methods. Pupils said that they found the lesson a challenge, enjoying the way the teacher led them step by step to make their own calculations. However, observations in lessons and scrutiny of work in books show that pupils are not always as confident when applying their number skills to solve problems. Pupils' progress in mathematics also slows when opportunities to use resources to strengthen their learning are limited and pupils are not suitably challenged.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are very settled in the safe, secure and caring learning environment. There is an appropriate range of activities and experiences to meet the children's needs in and out of doors to ensure that they make satisfactory progress. They make choices confidently and enjoy being pirates aboard the ship that they are making outside and planting beans. However, sometimes adult-led groups are too large to ensure all are fully involved. There is no difference between the performance of boys and girls. Pupils with special education needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress as a result of the support that they receive from their teachers and teaching assistants. The early introduction of letters and sounds in the Early Years Foundation Stage gives children a good start to reading. A group of more-able children enjoyed the success of working with a group of Year 1 pupils in a session of short well-planned activities which were also linked to writing. By the time pupils are six, they are reading confidently. They know that they can spell out, break up words and look at the pictures to help them when they come to an unfamiliar word, but do not always use the strategies. By the end of Year 6, most pupils reach average standards in reading and some more-able pupils reach the higher level (Level 5). Year 6 pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of the text and can empathise with the feelings of the main character and make inferences based on the text. They all say they enjoy reading and talk knowledgeably about their favourite authors.

Pupils say they feel very safe. They say, 'It doesn't cross your mind because you know you are.' Parents and carers wholeheartedly endorse this. Pupils have a good knowledge of all of the different types of bullying that can occur and, because anti-bullying weeks, understand and how to manage it if it occurs. They say that there is very little bullying and that the school deals with it very well. Pupils have 'absolute faith' that adults will help them. Consequently, the school is a very happy community. New pupils settle quickly because they feel safe, secure and ready to learn. Playtimes are harmonious, with pupils playing in groups that span the age ranges. In class, pupils have a positive attitude to learning because teachers have

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high expectations and all adults provide good role models. Pupils with behavioural difficulties respond well to the school's code of behaviour and as a result there are seldom any disruptive incidents. Good behaviour is encouraged through interesting opportunities such as 'Money Week', when pupils earned money instead of house points for good deeds, manners and behaviour. They learned how to save and make decisions about money, deciding to give 10% of their earnings to Christian Aid and the rest to be spent on something for each class. Pupils take pleasure in doing jobs that help with the smooth running of the school. They also enjoy taking ownership of their own learning by taking responsibility for working out their own next steps in learning, known as 'Now I Will' which has helped them to understand what they must do to improve.

The school plans good opportunities to widen pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. As a church school, termly themes such as 'responsibility' and 'truth and honesty' are taken from the school's core Christian values and explored in school worship and class time. Pupils benefit from opportunities to be thoughtful in prayer, to reflect on their work and to express their creative impulses. 'Praise in the Park' and visits to the National Gallery's 'Take One Picture' are just two examples of activities which have provide pupils with the chance to explore their feelings and appreciate the intangible. The thrill of having a 'Big Top' erected on the school field and the opportunities to learn exciting new skills not only added to pupils' love of learning it offered a significant opportunity to enhance pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Senior leaders and staff have discussed and agreed what good teaching looks like and visits to observe examples of outstanding practice are already having a positive impact on raising the quality of teaching and learning. Teachers plan their lessons carefully and the creative curriculum engages pupils' interest. Teaching assistants are used effectively to support the learning of all groups of pupils. Where teaching is good, pupils are motivated and the work provides a good level of challenge for all pupils. In a Year 4/5 mathematics lesson to recognise the relationship between degrees and right angles, the teacher used her own good knowledge and understanding well to address pupils' misunderstanding that all angles face the same way. She had high expectations with regard to pupils' accuracy and the correct use of specific vocabulary and, as a result, all of the pupils had a very positive attitude. They wanted to achieve well and endeavoured to reach the challenge. However, this is not always the case. Pupils are not always sufficiently challenged and there are occasions when teachers talk for too long and pupils do not get enough opportunity to take an active part in the lesson or to discuss points with their partners.

Senior leaders, staff and members of the governing body share the headteacher's vision for the school. They are united in their commitment to embed ambition and drive improvements. However, monitoring and evaluation of the impact and effectiveness of the measures that are taken are sometimes limited. New tracking procedures keep a careful check on pupils' progress and ensure that teachers are accountable for their progress. Accurate assessments have helped teachers to plan more carefully to meet pupils' needs and improvements in marking have helped

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pupils and parents understand the next steps in learning. Staff training in 'Big Writing' has successfully given the teaching of writing a more focused approach, motivated pupils, particularly boys, and made a significant improvement in pupils' achievement in writing. A new creative curriculum has motivated pupils by providing more practical experiences while making sure that there are clear steps to enable pupils to progress. These successful actions have tackled weaknesses recognised in the school's accurate review of its performance and confirm the school's satisfactory capacity to continue improving.

Provision to secure equal opportunities and tackle discrimination is satisfactory. The school's accurate tracking system has recently highlighted the continuing underperformance of a small number of individuals. Consequently, the school recognises that progress is not consistently good across the school and that more-able pupils do not always reach the higher levels of which they are capable.

The governing body is well informed. Its members work hard for the school and are well organised. They have a good knowledge and understanding of the school and are involved in setting appropriate priorities for improvement. Procedures for safeguarding are good and ensure that all pupils feel safe and that their emotional and social needs are met. Checks on the suitability of adults to work with children are thorough and child protection arrangements are secure and updated regularly. Risk assessments are undertaken regularly and records are kept meticulously.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Frieth 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 12 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 72 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 120 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
Q1 My child is happy at school	48	67	21	29	2	3	0	0
Q2 My child feels safe at school	59	82	12	17	0	0	0	0
Q3 The school helps my child to achieve as well as they can	20	28	42	58	6	8	1	1
Q4 The school meets my child's particular needs	21	29	42	58	7	10	0	0
Q5 The school ensures my child is well looked after	45	63	26	36	0	0	0	0
Q6 Teaching at this school is good	29	40	37	51	2	3	0	0
Q7 There is a good standard of behaviour at this school	43	60	25	35	1	1	0	0
Q8 Lessons are not disrupted by bad behaviour	34	47	26	36	8	11	0	0
Q9 The school deals with any cases of bullying well	38	53	24	33	2	3	1	1
Q10 The school helps me to support my child's learning	25	35	40	56	3	4	1	1
Q11 The school responds to my concerns and keeps me well informed	27	38	40	56	2	3	1	1
Q12 The school is well led and managed	41	57	25	35	4	6	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 achievement of all pupils. ■ Behaviour and safety. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The effectiveness of leadership and management. <p>and taking into consideration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ how well the school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
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.



11 June 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Frieth Combined School, Henley-on Thames RG9 6PR

Thank you for being so friendly when we came to your school. We enjoyed visiting your lessons and talking to you. You really helped us with our work. Your school gives you a satisfactory standard of education and there are a lot of things your school does well. You told us that you enjoy school but you do not enjoy sitting on the carpet for too long! We found that everybody in school looks after you very well, especially those of you who have difficulties from time to time. We were impressed with your understanding and knowledge of how to keep safe. We could see that you behave very well, get on well with each other and help the school to run smoothly.

Your headteacher and other staff know that there is still work to be done to make the school even better. We have asked them to do three things.

- They should make sure that your teachers help you to do even better in mathematics by giving you more help to calculate and use and apply what you learn. They should also give you lots of opportunities to work practically and use different resources to help you in your mathematics lessons.
- They should make sure that all teaching is good by helping teachers to ensure those of you who find work easy reach even higher levels. They should make sure that teachers talk for less time so that you have the chance to work on your own. They should make sure that lessons are always brisk and that you have plenty of opportunity to do practical work and talk through ideas with your partners.
- Senior leaders should check that this is done successfully across the school.

We hope that you will all continue to enjoy coming to school and try your hardest so that you are even more successful in the future.

Yours sincerely

Barbara Atcheson
Lead inspector

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