

Charsfield Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	124725
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	395750
Inspection dates	10–11 July 2012
Lead inspector	John Mitcheson HMI

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	55
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Charles Morriston
Headteacher	Valerie Jones
Date of previous school inspection	23 October 2008
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Age group	4–11
Inspection date(s)	10–11 July 2012
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Introduction

Inspection team

John Mitcheson

Her Majesty's Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector observed six part-lessons taught by four teachers. He met with the headteacher, middle leaders, three members of the governing body, a group of Year 6 pupils and a representative from the local authority. He also held a telephone conversation with the Chair of the Governing Body in absentia. The inspector took account of the responses to the on-line survey (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation including 43 questionnaires from parents and carers, 12 from staff and 42 from pupils.

Information about the school

This is a much smaller than average-sized primary school serving the village of Charsfield and its surrounding area. All pupils are White British. The proportion of them known to be eligible for free school meals is well below the national average. The percentage of disabled pupils and those that have special educational needs, including those supported at school action plus and with a statement of special educational needs, is below the national average. The school has three mixed-age classes: Reception and Years 1 and 2, Years 3 and 4, and Years 5 and 6. The school meets the government's floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for attainment and progress. The school has a formal collaboration with another small, local primary school. The headteacher leads both of them. A new senior teacher has been appointed for September 2012 following the retirement of the current postholder at the end of this term.

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 of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	3

Key findings

- The school is satisfactory. Its small size and caring ethos provides pupils with a safe, stimulating environment in which to learn. Pupils' enjoyment is shown in their good attendance and behaviour. The school is not good because achievement is uneven, there is not enough good teaching and leadership and management are satisfactory. Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before the next section 5 inspection.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make satisfactory progress but have limited opportunities to play by themselves. Standards in Key Stage 1 are broadly average. No pupils achieved above average standards in writing. In Key Stage 2, all Year 6 pupils met or exceeded national expectations. Most read with confidence and 'Big Writing' activities are improving writing.
- Good relationships between teachers and pupils promote positive attitudes. Planning usually enables pupils of different ages and abilities to learn independently but at times they spend too long doing the same tasks. Some good teaching of writing is not fully shared. Not all teachers set timescales or provide challenge for the most able. Low expectations are reflected in the poor presentation of pupils' work.
- Daily assemblies set the tone for learning and contribute well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. Pupils show consideration and respect for one another. They work and play harmoniously and know how to keep safe.
- Monitoring procedures have improved but are not firmly embedded. The performance of teachers is managed satisfactorily by the headteacher. Links between both partner schools, such as the sharing of responsibility for managing subjects, are not exploited fully. The governing body meets its statutory duties and monitors the work of the school effectively. Most parents and carers support the school but would like better communication with staff.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Remove the unevenness in pupils' achievement by:
 - embedding newly introduced procedures to monitor the progress of individual pupils throughout all key stages
 - sharing best practice to improve pupils' writing across the school
 - extending 'Big Writing' into Key Stage 1 to enable more pupils to attain the higher Level 3
 - ensuring that the teaching of phonics is carried out systematically across the school and monitoring the impact this has on pupils' literacy skills.

- Improve the quality of teaching by:
 - providing tasks matched to pupils' different ages and abilities throughout all lessons
 - raising teacher's expectations of all pupils, especially the most able, setting clear timescales for completing work and establishing clear rules for presenting work neatly
 - providing children in the Early Years Foundation Stage with discrete opportunities for child-initiated learning and play.

- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - giving subject leaders full responsibility for raising achievement, and forging stronger links between the school and its partner school to share subject leader roles and responsibilities
 - generating more good quality teaching, including in the Early Years Foundation Stage, by enabling the best teachers to share their practice
 - improving the communication between school and parents and carers.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

The headteacher, and the large majority of parents and carers, feel that children make good progress, but close inspection of assessment data and observation of pupils in lessons did not confirm this. Most pupils make expected or better progress in all key stages but overall, it is satisfactory. Children in Reception blend together with older pupils in the same class which promotes their personal, social and emotional development well. However, they are often taught as a whole class which restricts opportunities for them to find out for themselves and engage in imaginative play.

Numbers are small and, consequently, attainment varies from year to year. Based on their starting points, most make satisfactory progress during Key Stage 1. This year, more pupils met expectations in reading than in writing and mathematics. Observations of lessons showed pupils struggling to produce good quality writing

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because they were not given sufficient guidance on how to plan their work and could not read much of the vocabulary given to them to include in their writing. The teaching of phonics (the sounds letters make) is not systematic. Some lessons do not enable pupils to practise sounds already learnt, reinforce their understanding of similar words before moving to the next stage, or to decode basic words when reading or encode to spell words correctly.

Standards achieved by the end of Key Stage 2 have fluctuated from below to above average in the past two years. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are known well and receive good care and support to help them integrate fully into school life. Some pupils with a statement of special educational need were not entered for national tests last year because teachers felt that they would not meet national expectations, consequently overall results were well below national averages. This year, all Year 6 pupils attained Level 4 in English and mathematics in national tests, and more than half exceeded these expectations. Based on their above average starting points, this represents satisfactory progress. Progress data illustrates that pupils make slow progress in some years, but accelerated progress in others. Data is not rigorously analysed to explain this unevenness. Pupils told the inspector that they feel they could have been pushed harder to achieve more in mathematics.

Quality of teaching

The headteacher's monitoring and the views of the large majority of parents and carers suggest pupils are taught well. Observations of lessons, half of them carried out jointly between the headteacher and inspector, found the overall quality of teaching to be satisfactory. Teaching in Key Stage 1 was no better than satisfactory. Planning is detailed but does not make explicit what activities children in Reception will learn. The teaching of reading is satisfactory. The quality of phonics teaching lacks precision. Teachers listen to pupils read regularly, but some more able readers would benefit from more guidance when choosing their reading books.

All teachers foster good relationships with pupils. They plan different tasks matched to pupils' ages and abilities, and facilitate group-work well so that pupils have extended periods of time to work together. In one good lesson, the teacher's modelling of the key features of quality writing, and opportunities for pupils to evaluate others' work enabled them to refine and improve the quality of their own writing. Talking partners and interactive group work were often used to engage all pupils and accelerated their progress. A scrutiny of pupils' books showed a number of common spelling errors and some poor-quality presentation. In Years 5 and 6, pupils read with confidence and fluency, and several examples of good quality extended writing tasks were observed. However, some tasks lacked real challenge for the most able.

Most teachers use interactive whiteboards with confidence and vary their questioning to engage most learners. Themes such as the Olympic values are used to promote pupils' interest in wider moral and cultural issues and photographs and video are

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used well to capture pupils' interest. Regular assessments inform the systematic collection of data. This is discussed in detail between class teachers and the headteacher to monitor individual pupils' progress and target additional support towards those who need it. These procedures are contributing to raising achievement but are new and not fully embedded.

Some common weaknesses remain. Different tasks are introduced after lengthy introductions, so pupils spend too long being inactive or end up doing the same work which restricts their progress. In mathematics, some of the more able pupils were not challenged enough. Timescales are not set to complete work quickly and accurately. The teaching of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is satisfactory. Pupils with a statement of special educational needs receive intensive support from classroom assistants in literacy and numeracy lessons. Pupils with other specific needs have individual plans to identify what their needs are and what can be done to help them achieve their targets, but these are not referred to regularly enough in lessons.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Throughout the inspection, pupils behaved exceptionally well. The inspector agreed with one parent who commented, 'The school has a lovely, friendly atmosphere where everyone knows each other and looks after one another, and the children are polite and respectful'. Pupils say it is a safe, friendly place to be and that behaviour is good. Pupils of all ages mix together well at playtimes and thoroughly enjoy themselves. The vast majority of parents and carers praised the behaviour of pupils, but a small minority of them expressed concerns about bullying. This was investigated thoroughly. Pupils said that a few incidents had occurred recently, but this was unusual and had been resolved promptly by teachers. In lessons, pupils display positive attitudes, even when some teaching fails to capture their interest, but when this happens some become passive learners.

Attendance has been above national averages for the past three years, mainly because pupils enjoy coming to school and parents and carers encourage them to attend regularly. Class assemblies provide pupils with excellent opportunities for prayer, moments for reflection and time to consider the lives of others. This makes an important contribution to the good standard of behaviour and care shown by all pupils.

Leadership and management

Most parents and carers feel that the school is managed well but a small minority expressed concerns about the amount of time the headteacher spends in the partner school. The inspector found that the headteacher manages her time effectively and has the full support of her staff and the governing body. A senior teacher assumes full responsibility for the school when she is in the partner school. This role does not include a discrete responsibility for raising achievement. The headteacher acknowledges that the appointment of a new senior teacher later this year provides

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an ideal opportunity to develop this role further and enable her to continue to maintain her commitments in both schools.

The headteacher has tackled the issues for improvement raised in the last inspection. Teachers are planning different tasks to meet the needs of all learners and procedures for monitoring pupils' progress are more systematic. These monitoring procedures are fairly new and some inconsistencies in the data are not fully explained, suggesting that teachers' understanding of these procedures need strengthening. The headteacher's self-evaluation is thorough but overall judgements of the quality of teaching and leadership and management are too generous. Performance management, the headteacher's management of teaching and regular staff training to develop classroom practice have led to improvements. However, monitoring of the Early Years Foundation Stage is not ensuring that teaching and the progress children make is improving at the same rate as in other classes.

The headteacher ensures that pupils have an equal opportunity to access all aspects of school life, including a broad and balanced curriculum which is enriched well for such a small school. Pupils talked enthusiastically about information and communication technology, drama and art lessons but would like more practical science. They enthused about trips out of school to sports competitions, and annual visits to fun parks and residential outdoor activity centres. This adds significantly to their achievement and enjoyment of school, and to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. A minority of parents and carers expressed concerns about communication with the school. The inspector found that information about the curriculum and the progress children are making is sent home to parents and carers, and this was confirmed by the governing body. However, some want to be better informed about what they can do to help their children to achieve well and about the headteacher's plans to develop the school further.

Capacity to improve is satisfactory. Plans to raise achievement in literacy and numeracy have been implemented by middle leaders but the leadership of foundation subjects is under-developed. Sharing this responsibility across both partner schools in order to build further capacity to improve has been mooted but this has not been progressed further. Governance is satisfactory. Additional training and greater engagement in monitoring the school's work has given the governing body an improved understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They are dedicated to providing the headteacher with the support and challenge needed to enable the school to improve and to grow, and forge stronger links with its partner school. All safeguarding arrangements are in place.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data 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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



12 July 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Charsfield Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School, Woodbridge, IP13 7QB

Earlier this week, I visited your school to meet with you and your teachers. Thank-you for making me feel so welcome, especially pupils in Year 6 who agreed to meet with me. You were excellent ambassadors for your school, so well done to all of you.

Your school provides you with a satisfactory education. Its small size and friendliness make it a lovely place for you to come to learn in. You all behave yourselves and look after one another so well. Pupils in Year 6 have achieved well in their end of year tests, congratulations and have a wonderful time at high school. I have asked your headteacher and governors to make some improvements. These are:

- checking that you progress well throughout all key stages, especially in your writing, reading and spelling
- making sure that all teaching gives you challenging things to do and sets you clear timescales for completing your work quickly and correctly
- having clear rules for presenting your work neatly so that you to take pride in your work
- giving the very youngest children more opportunities to learn and play by themselves
- making more links with your partner school and more regularly telling your parents and carers how well you are doing.

You can help Mrs Jones by letting her know your views on what else needs to be done to improve your school further. Best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

John Mitcheson
Her Majesty's Inspector

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