



St Mary and All Saints Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 110002
Local Authority Reading
Inspection number 278338
Inspection date 10 October 2006
Reporting inspector Christopher Parker

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Wensley Road
School category	Voluntary aided		Coley Park
Age range of pupils	3–11		Reading RG1 6DU
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0118 9015545
Number on roll (school)	345	Fax number	0118 9015546
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr John Symonds
		Headteacher	Mr R Howell
Date of previous school inspection	27 November 2000		

Age group	Inspection date	Inspection number
3–11	10 October 2006	278338

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The school is larger than average. The number of pupils has increased in the last two years as a result of the closure of a neighbouring school and enlargement of St Mary and All Saints. The two adjacent sites have been redeveloped; much of the building is new and there was considerable disruption to the accommodation and to staffing during this the period. The enlarged school serves an area of owner occupied and social housing. More pupils than usual take free school meals. One third of the pupils come from minority ethnic groups. One in six speaks English as an additional language. A small but increasing number of pupils are at an early stage of learning English. A quarter of the pupils have learning difficulties. A new headteacher took up the post in September 2006. The school now has a full complement of permanent teachers.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Following a period of considerable disruption the school is providing a satisfactory education for the pupils. The school has emerged from a very unsettled time with an impressive new building, a transformed identity and the secure foundations for rapid improvement. The new headteacher has very quickly established high expectations of what the pupils can achieve and given a very clear direction to the school's work.

A new code of conduct, with respect as a central value, has been recently introduced and is having a positive impact on the pupils' attitudes. Respect is promoted in lessons, in collective worship and through prominent displays around the school. The pupils have responded positively and know it is important to show respect for others. Behaviour is satisfactory overall. Most pupils behave well in lessons but a few have to be reminded to listen carefully to their teacher.

The children make a good start in the Foundation Stage, where the accommodation and resources are excellent. The lively teaching helps the youngest children to make good progress.

Achievement is satisfactory so that, by the end of Year 6, pupils reach broadly average standards except in writing where they are not as high. The school has already taken some steps to improve the teaching of writing. The pupils are told the purpose of each activity. They are given helpful checklists so they know what is expected. At the end of each lesson the pupils assess their own progress. However, they are not given sufficient opportunities to write in other subjects and, when they do, expectations of the quality of writing are not high enough. Marking of the pupils' work is conscientious but too few comments help the pupils to improve their next piece of work.

The school provides good support for the most vulnerable pupils. Pupils with learning difficulties have clear targets and are well supported in lessons. The school provides a broad range of well attended after-school clubs which the pupils thoroughly enjoy.

The senior management team has a strong and shared determination to provide the pupils with the opportunities they need to make consistently good progress and reach higher standards. Along with the governors they have been successful in bringing the two schools and communities together. The senior management team has an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Monitoring of the quality of teaching and very comprehensive tracking of each pupil's progress provide a clear insight into the school's performance. Governors are steering the work of the school but are not fully involved in self-evaluation.

The appointment of a new headteacher has opened a new chapter for the school. He has quickly raised expectations of behaviour, improved communication with parents and given subject leaders more opportunities to make the changes necessary to raise standards. The school is well placed to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing by providing pupils with more opportunities to write to a high standard in a range of subjects.
- Improve marking so that it helps pupils to make their next piece of work better than the last.
- Increase the involvement of governors in school self-evaluation.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement is satisfactory. Standards are broadly average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6.

From a low starting point the children make good progress in the nursery and Reception classes. Fewer children than usual reach the goals set for the end of the Reception year, particularly in communication, language and literacy. At the end of Year 2 results have been broadly average for the past few years. In 2005 they dipped as a direct result of the disruption caused by extensive building work and the large number of pupils joining the school. Standards recovered in 2006 to be almost in line with the national average.

The merger and disruption to staffing had a more pronounced impact on results of national tests at the end of Year 6. For a number of years results were above the national average. They dipped in 2005 and continued to fall in 2006. Some of the pupils who joined the school brought a legacy of underachievement. The school's comprehensive tracking shows how much the achievement of some of these pupils has improved. Despite the fall in overall standards some pupils have made good progress and almost all have made at least the expected progress. Pupils with learning difficulties make satisfactory progress.

Detailed analysis of the school's data shows that girls fare better than boys in writing but, overall, standards in writing are not high enough. Those pupils who speak English as an additional language do better than other groups.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' personal development and well-being are satisfactory. Some children start with fewer personal and social skills than usual but make good progress in the Foundation Stage.

A few parents expressed concerns about unacceptable behaviour but, overall it is satisfactory. This is reflected in the number of exclusions, which have fallen sharply this year. Most pupils behave well in lessons. A few have to be reminded to listen carefully to their teacher. Discussions with pupils reveal that bullying is rare but when it does happen they know to tell an adult immediately and they say that it is dealt with effectively.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils know right from wrong and are keen to get rewards for behaving well and working hard. Attendance is average but a few pupils have poor attendance and punctuality despite the school's best efforts.

Pupils show care and respect for others and are able to take on responsibilities within the school community. The school council ensures that pupils' views are heard and acted upon. One of its aims is to, 'make the school a better place.'

Pupils have a satisfactory understanding of the need for safe and healthy living and some say that, as a result of their work in school, they have changed what they bring for lunch. Pupils acquire sound basic skills and learn to work in teams preparing them satisfactorily for the next stage in their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The teaching is satisfactory and has many good facets. The teaching of the youngest children is lively and engaging.

Across the school, lessons are well planned. By setting out what pupils must, should and could achieve the teachers give pupils the right amount of challenge in English lessons. However, expectations of the quality and standard of writing are not as high in other subjects. The teachers make good use of the new building and have created purposeful conditions to help the pupils to learn. Wall displays provide many useful prompts to aid the pupils in their work.

The pupils' English work is conscientiously marked with many positive and encouraging comments. Some teachers provide prompts and reminders of what pupils need to do to improve their next piece of work. This practice is not consistent. The quality of marking varies from class to class and subject to subject.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. It provides the pupils with a range of activities that ensure they achieve satisfactorily. However, it provides too few opportunities for pupils to use and develop their writing skills to a high standard or to engage them, particularly boys, in writing in different contexts.

The school makes good use of after school groups to give the pupils a 'boost' in their English and mathematics. The wide range of after-school clubs extend the curriculum and provide considerable enjoyment for many of the pupils. They talk excitably about the gymnastics, art and football clubs. The pupils say they are, 'really good!'

Discussions with pupils reveal a broad curriculum, supported by interesting activities, visitors and visits. The recent residential visit to Bude provided many interesting and exciting additional opportunities for the pupils in Year 6.

The Foundation Stage curriculum gives the youngest children a wide range of opportunities to develop their skills in the classroom and in the very well resourced outdoor area.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. Adults have a high level of concern for the pupils' well-being. As a result they feel safe. Procedures for safeguarding them and ensuring their health and safety are well understood. Good and effective support for the most vulnerable pupils is provided by the Children's Fund. Teaching assistants provide well focussed support for those with learning difficulties. Pupils feel confident that there is someone to turn to if they need help. This has a positive impact on their progress.

Academic guidance is developing through better assessment and comprehensive tracking of the pupils' progress. The school is currently exploring approaches to personalised learning. However, comments on the pupils' work do not consistently guide them to higher standards.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The new headteacher has quickly generated a momentum for improvement. His timely appointment has created a golden opportunity to consign the recent disruption to the past. He has the clear vision to realise the school's considerable potential. The strong management team and well informed subject leaders have made good use of the analysis and evaluation of the school's recent performance. They have well developed plans to improve areas of weakness, notably in English. Recent improvements have not had time to make a significant impact on standards.

Governors have played an important role in managing the enlargement of the school and steering it through a difficult period but are not yet sufficiently involved in evaluating the school's performance.

The school has made satisfactory improvements since the last inspection. Pupils have made at least satisfactory progress, in spite of the extensive disruption. The level of challenge provided in lessons, the support for pupils with learning difficulties and partnerships between home and school have all improved. The accommodation is now excellent.

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The behaviour of learners	3
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

This letter is to tell you about the findings of the recent inspection and to thank you for taking the time to talk to me. Your school has gone through many changes in the last two years. It is providing a satisfactory education and is well placed to get better and better. You told me that you liked the new building and are proud of it. You particularly like being able to learn in attractive and well organised classrooms. You feel safe and know it is important to respect others. The members of the School Council represent your views so that everyone has a say in making the school a better place.

Most of you listen carefully and concentrate on your work. Some of you told me you enjoyed mathematics, science and art. I had a look at how well you are doing in writing and think you can do even better. I have asked the teachers to help you to become really good writers so that you get better results in English. The teachers make lessons interesting and lively for you. However, you could be given more opportunities to do some good writing in other subjects. I have also asked them to give you more tips on how to improve your writing when they mark your work. The governors do a lot of important work and I have asked them to get more involved in checking how well the school is doing.

I enjoyed being in your school and hope that in the future it is even more successful in helping you to do as well as you possibly can.

Yours sincerely

Christopher Parker

(Lead inspector)