



Freeland Church of England Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 123138
LEA Oxfordshire LEA
Inspection number 281411
Inspection dates 8 June 2006 to 9 June 2006
Reporting inspector Sean O'Toole AI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Parklands Freeland Witney OX29 8HX
School category	Voluntary controlled	Telephone number	01993 881707
Age range of pupils	4 to 11	Fax number	01993 883159
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Chair of governors	Mr Alex Gild
Number on roll	129	Headteacher	Ms Jenny McGilvray (Acting Headteacher)
Appropriate authority	The governing body		
Date of previous inspection	28 February 2000		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a small school located in an area of socio-economic advantage. Most children start school with levels of skill, knowledge and understanding which are above those expected for their age. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is below average. Almost all have White British heritage. No pupils are eligible for free school meals. There has been substantial recent staff turnover due to illness and retirement. Currently there is an acting headteacher.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Substantial staff changes over the last two years have hampered some aspects of the school's development. Although the school judges its effectiveness as good, it provides a satisfactory quality of education. Staff successfully focus on providing good levels of care. These aspects are praised by parents, one of who said, 'I am proud that my children have attended Freeland.'

Most pupils attend regularly, enjoy school and make good progress in their personal and social skills. The promotion of these attributes starts with the good provision for and progress of children in the Foundation Stage. In the rest of the school, academic achievement is satisfactory. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education through very good links with the local secondary school. They leave with average skills in English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT). However, standards at the end of Years 2 and 6 are not as high as at the time of the previous inspection having dipped in recent years. Inspection evidence shows that the school has halted this decline through improving writing, especially for boys, and tackling weaknesses in number. These improvements show the school's determination and capacity to improve. However, more remains to be done to accelerate pupils' progress and to bring consistency in teaching through rigorous monitoring and evaluation.

Teaching is satisfactory and there are some good features especially in the way staff meet the needs of those with learning difficulties and disabilities. Pupils are encouraged to support each other and work together. As one parent of a child with learning difficulties wrote, 'My daughter is happy and looks forward to school everyday...she is well supported, so never feels out of her depth.' Some lessons have a slow pace and teachers' expectations are not high enough, resulting in occasional distracted behaviour. There is an over-reliance on undemanding worksheets in some subjects. Although marking is accurate it rarely guides pupils on how they might improve.

The good curriculum promotes pupils' personal skills well. Parents expressed much satisfaction with the sensitive teaching about health and personal issues. One parent wrote, 'This course was invaluable in teaching children the facts of life...and the dangers of drugs and alcohol abuse.' Pupils have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles and enjoy extra curricular activities, residential visits and events such as Arts week.

Staff are keen to see the pupils succeed. They are aware of the slow improvement in recent years and the need to be more consistent in their teaching, by making better use of assessment. The acting headteacher is playing an important part in welding the team together and improvements are beginning to take effect. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Following a period of decline, the most important areas for improvement have been identified and appropriate actions are being taken to tackle the issues. Timescales for the completion of these priorities are rather vague and there are underdeveloped systems to measure how well the school is doing. Although governors are supportive they are not sufficiently robust in holding the school to account. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- increase the pace of lessons, raise teacher expectations, especially of the more able, and develop marking to give pupils more feedback on how to improve;
- sharpen the leaders', managers' and governors' understanding of the schools' strengths and weaknesses to ensure that teaching is consistently good and pupils progress is sufficiently rapid.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement is satisfactory overall and good in the Foundation Stage. By the end of the reception year, most children attain the expected goals for their age and are confident learners. Test results at the end of Year 2 have declined since 2003 but the school's initiatives on writing and improvements in teaching mean that standards are average, and rising, in reading, writing and mathematics. Standards at the end of Year 6 have fallen since the previous inspection but are average in English, mathematics and science and there are signs of improvement in pupils' progress. Pupils throughout the school are confident speakers but their written work and mathematics books do not always reflect this and are sometimes marred by untidy presentation. The school is on course to meet its targets this year although most able pupils are capable of achieving more; they attain above average standards in tests, but their work in books is of a similar standard to their peers. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils have a well developed sense of justice and fair play, reflected in their keenness to raise funds to support less fortunate children in other parts of the world. They play safely and use basic equipment competently. They have good knowledge of how to keep healthy. Pupils' attendance is good. They make a positive contribution to the community, enjoy making decisions and take the initiative in fundraising for new books and equipment. They are prepared well for the next stage of their education. Pupils mix amicably; they welcome newcomers from other countries and the older pupils readily support their younger schoolmates. One wrote, 'Everybody is kind and tries to help each other. We all treat each other how we would like to be treated.' Behaviour and relationships are mostly good but some boys find it difficult to concentrate when the pace of lessons is slow. Although incidents of bullying are rare, several pupils said they would like more opportunities to talk through their problems with adults.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory in Years 1 to 6 and good in the Foundation Stage. There is good support for those with learning difficulties and disabilities. There has been recent good improvement to the teaching of writing especially for boys. Skills such as using correct spelling, good presentation and handwriting are not emphasised enough. Teachers plan and prepare lessons making suitable use of inter-active whiteboards in their introductions. They make clear what is to be learned and explain tasks clearly. Most handle any incidents of inattention effectively. In some lessons the pace is too slow and teachers do not expect enough of the pupils. Work does not always challenge the more able because assessment is not used rigorously enough. Pupils' work is not always marked and too often insufficient guidance is given to pupils on how to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is enhanced through a good range of additional activities and special events. Pupils spoke highly of the visits of the Life Education Centre which contributed much to their personal development and understanding of healthy lifestyles. The new facilities and curriculum in the Foundation Stage have a beneficial impact on children's progress. In Years 1 to 6, there has been an increased emphasis on linking work in English to other subjects although the over-reliance on worksheets in some subjects hampers effectiveness. Basic skills in mathematics and ICT are used appropriately to support work in other subjects. A particular strength is the link with the local secondary school which pupils thoroughly enjoy. One girl said, 'They really make learning interesting and lots of fun.'

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils are well cared for in a safe environment where everyone is included. Parents expressed much confidence in the support provided by staff especially to those pupils with learning needs. Several praised the approachable staff who they see, 'as being concerned for every individual.' There are good procedures for child protection and when appointing staff there are appropriate checks. Liaison with outside agencies helps to keep the staff up-to-date on health and safety matters. Staff assess the pupils' academic and social progress but do not make sufficient use of the information when planning some lessons.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The school is rather generous in its self-evaluation although its plans reflect the correct areas for development. There has been recent improvement in developing pupils' writing skills, extending the provision for those with learning difficulties and disabilities and a focus on raising standards in mathematics. These initiatives have met with success and the school is in a secure position to build on them.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The school takes account of the views of parents and pupils and in response has improved the provision for extra curricular activities. Teachers work together well although their impact as subject leaders has been hampered by frequent staff changes. Nonetheless, there have been improvements to the standards in ICT and writing. The acting headteacher has guided the school through a difficult time of change and linked targets for teachers to the pupils' performance. Initiatives have started but there are inconsistencies in how successfully they are carried out in each year group. There is a lack of rigour in evaluating the impact of teaching and this leads to some inconsistencies in pupils' progress. Governors are supportive and keen for the school to do well but they do not have sufficiently robust ways of checking on the school's progress.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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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	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Children

I would like to thank you for the way in which you welcomed me. I particularly enjoyed my conversations with you. Clearly, you have strong opinions about your school. It was a pleasure to see how well you got on with each other and the contribution you make to school life. Your school has been through a lot of staff changes and some of you have found this unsettling but most of you are very pleased with the way you are taught and the opportunities you have to take part in extra curricular activities. I think that you are given a sound education which prepares you for the next stage of your learning.

It is clear that you are well looked after and cared for. Most of you behave well, listen carefully in lessons and work hard. Some of you need to make more effort in presenting your work and ensuring that you use correct spelling and your best handwriting. I have asked your teachers to focus on helping you to get better in these aspects through making the work more challenging and giving you clearer guidance on how to improve.

I think that most of your work is as good as it should be, although I feel that some of you could do even better. Your headteacher, teachers and governors are going to find ways of checking on how well the school is doing and of making sure that everyone is as successful as possible. I wish you every success in the future.

Yours truly,

Sean O'Toole

Lead inspector