



Wantage Church of England Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 123165
Local Authority Oxfordshire
Inspection number 281415
Inspection date 6 December 2006
Reporting inspector Keith Williams

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Newbury Street
School category	Voluntary controlled		Wantage
Age range of pupils	3–11		OX12 8DJ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01235 762396
Number on roll (school)	429	Fax number	01235 769462
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr R Peters
		Headteacher	Mr P Hibbs
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This large primary school was formed six years ago. It was previously inspected as an infant school but, at the time, also had pupils in Year 3. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds and very few are at an early stage of learning English. A below average proportion of pupils has been identified with learning difficulties. The school has Investors in People status and the Basic Skills Quality Mark.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school in which pupils make good progress. The school is successful because it is well led and managed, teaching and learning are good and pupils are very eager to learn.

The headteacher, well supported by staff and governors, is clearly focused on raising standards. Senior staff keep a close check on teaching and learning. Very careful assessments are made to track pupils' progress in the core subjects. The school leaders are very effective at analysing this information and other test data, the results of which they use particularly well to highlight potential areas of underachievement, group pupils according to their ability and ensure that work is well matched to their needs. The school recognises the need to extend assessment arrangements beyond the core subjects, so that a closer check can be kept on pupils' progress in those subjects.

Pupils' personal development is good and there are some outstanding features. Their excellent enjoyment of school stems from their very positive attitudes, determination to succeed and eagerness to please. They particularly enjoy the practical aspects of the curriculum, a key factor in their success in science, and the much improved facilities for information and communication technology (ICT). Many take part in the very good range of activities offered outside lessons. Pupils make an excellent contribution to their school and the wider community. Children in the Foundation Stage get off to a good start because the good provision meets their social and learning needs. Across the school, a high priority is given to pupils' health, safety and welfare. Pupils appreciate this and say that they feel safe and able to talk to an adult if they are worried.

Given their starting points, pupils achieve well to reach well above average standards. They make excellent progress in science, where standards are exceptionally high. This success is reflected in the national test results for Year 6 pupils in 2005, which were exceptionally high in mathematics and science. The results in English, whilst being significantly above average, represented a satisfactory level of achievement for that group of pupils. The school has rightly identified the need to raise standards in English, particularly in writing, so that the pupils match the brisk progress they make in mathematics and science.

The school leaders' track record of identifying and tackling weaknesses and their very clear view of what needs to be done means that they have excellent capacity for improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing.
- Extend assessment arrangements to include foundation subjects.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' attainment when they first join the school varies from year-to-year but, overall, it is broadly average. Children in the Nursery and Reception make good progress because they are well taught and most reach the goals expected of them as they enter Year 1. Good progress continues in Years 1 and 2 and standards are above average. This is reflected in the national tests for seven year olds, which are above average in writing and mathematics and significantly so in reading. Pupils' progress accelerates in Years 3 to 6, most noticeably in science. Progress is also very brisk in mathematics but is slower in English, particularly in writing. National test results for eleven year olds show varying levels of achievement in English from year-to-year. Strategies, including the setting of pupils by ability to ensure a closer match of work to pupils' needs, are beginning to deal with this. Pupils' progress in ICT has improved and is now good. There is no significant difference in the progress of pupils of different ability.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Their very positive attitudes and high levels of enjoyment have a significant impact on their progress and are reflected in above average attendance rates. Pupils are proud of their school and make an excellent contribution to its smooth running by taking on wide-ranging extra responsibilities. This is a considerable improvement since the last inspection. They enjoy participating in the very influential school council and are particularly pleased with their role in improving playground facilities. Beyond the school, pupils take part widely in local events such as the Mayor's Concert and they take very seriously their contribution to charities. Good links with the local church enhance the school's strong Christian ethos. Pupils' knowledge of cultures other than their own is limited, but good progress in their basic skills means that, otherwise, they are well prepared for their future lives. Behaviour is good overall. It is exemplary in lessons, which contributes to the calm, productive atmosphere. Occasional unacceptable playground behaviour is closely monitored by the school. Pupils have a clear understanding of how to stay safe. They choose healthy food and take regular exercise.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Good teaching ensures good learning and there are some significant strengths. Detailed planning takes very good account of different levels of ability, so that those who need extra help or harder work get it. Teachers pose challenging questions, which helps them to keep a check on pupils' understanding. Marking is carried out conscientiously.

Whilst there are good examples of teachers providing clear feedback on how pupils can improve, this is not consistent. Good teaching and imaginative use of the excellent facilities in the Foundation Stage contribute to the good start made by these children. Across the school, teaching assistants and other support staff make a good contribution to pupils' progress, including those with learning difficulties. Teachers make good use of the much improved ICT facilities.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school provides a good curriculum that successfully promotes pupils' all-round development and their enjoyment of school. Pupils particularly value the practical nature of some subjects, one reflecting, for example, that 'science in Year 6 is exciting'. Staff work hard to improve what the school offers. Improvements in the provision for ICT have ensured that pupils now make good progress. The school has rightly identified the need to review and extend opportunities for writing and using computers in other subjects. Planning for pupils' personal, social and health education has improved since the last inspection and is now good. Pupils benefit from a very good range of extra-curricular activities and sporting activities are particularly popular. Visits out of school and regular visitors to lessons and assemblies enrich pupils' learning. Children in the Foundation Stage benefit from good planning that gives them regular access to all areas of learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school looks after its pupils well and takes every step to ensure their health and safety. Child protection procedures are very thorough and risk assessments are of a very good quality. Support for pupils' welfare is strong and the moral and social guidance they are given, rooted in the Christian ethos, contributes to their progress. Pupils identified as vulnerable and those with learning difficulties are supported well and good links with outside agencies contribute to this. Assessment procedures in the core subjects are very thorough and the school has rightly identified the need to extend this provision to all subjects. Assessment information is used very well to identify those at risk of underachieving and to match work to pupils' differing needs. Pupils are set targets, but their understanding of their next steps in learning is sometimes limited.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher, senior staff and governors have successfully galvanised the staff of the two previous schools so that there is a shared commitment to maintaining strengths and raising standards. The school leaders have an accurate view of the school's effectiveness, based on careful monitoring and a very thorough analysis of test and other data. They know what needs to be done and any weaknesses are tackled determinedly. This has a positive impact on pupils' progress and well-being. Most

parents are supportive of the school, one reflecting the views of many in commenting, 'I have nothing but praise for the ethos of the school and the considerable commitment of its teachers and support staff'. A few parents are concerned about playground behaviour. The school is aware of these concerns and is reviewing its approaches. Governors are supportive, well informed and have a very good understanding of their strategic role, which they carry out very effectively.

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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?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

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

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?	2
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	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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

I am writing to thank you for the very friendly way that you welcomed me to your school and to tell you about what I found out. I enjoyed talking to you and what you told me has given me a lot of helpful information.

Many of you told me how much you enjoy school and how well you think you are doing. I agree with you that yours is a good school and you are right to be proud of it. Your headteacher and teachers do a good job and you play your part by enjoying school so much and being so keen to learn. Your work is better than I see in many schools and you are doing very well in mathematics and exceptionally well in science. Your work in English is good, too, but your teachers are determined that your writing will become just as good as your work in mathematics and science. I agree with them and I know that you will do everything you can to help them. Your teachers keep a close check on how you are doing in these subjects. They are also going to keep a closer check on how you are doing in subjects like art, geography and music.

The staff want you to do your best and be happy and safe. You help them because your behaviour is good around the school and on the playground. I was very pleased to see that your behaviour is excellent in lessons. This means that your teachers can get on with teaching you new and interesting things and you told me how much you enjoy science experiments. I was pleased to see so many of you taking exercise and making healthy choices at lunchtime. I enjoyed your school council meeting. You make a real difference to your school and lots of children who are not on the council told me what a good job you do. Congratulations. I must also say 'very well done' to those of you who have extra jobs, like being 'playground leaders'.

I know that you will continue to work hard and I am sure that you will help your teachers to make your school even better. I wish you good luck for the future.

Yours sincerely

Keith Williams

Lead inspector