



Blewbury Endowed CofE Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 123167
LEA Oxfordshire LEA
Inspection number 281417
Inspection dates 24 January 2006 to 25 January 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	Westbrook Street
School category	Voluntary controlled		Blewbury
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Didcot OX11 9QB
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01235 850411
Number on roll	149	Fax number	01235 851976
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs Jill Willison
Date of previous inspection	8 February 2000	Headteacher	Ms M Mills

Age group 4 to 11	Inspection dates 24 January 2006 - 25 January 2006	Inspection number 281417
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Smaller than most, this school serves the immediate locality and also admits pupils from surrounding villages. It has an International Schools Award, and participates in the Healthy Schools Scheme as well as holding an Eco award. A below average proportion of pupils are eligible for free school meals. Attainment on admission varies from year-to-year but is generally average. Most children benefit from pre-school educational provision. The school has a below average percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. Almost all pupils have White British heritage and none is at an early stage of learning English. There has been high staff turnover in the last two years.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Inspectors agree with the school's accurate evaluation that it provides a sound quality of education and satisfactory value for money. Pupils are well cared for. Their behaviour, relationships and attitudes are mostly good. Children in the Foundation Stage benefit from the good provision in the reception class and make good progress. In the rest of the school, pupils' achievement is satisfactory. At the end of Years 2 and 6, pupils' attainment in national tests is average in English and mathematics. However more able pupils should do better, especially in writing. The rate of pupils' progress fluctuates because of variations in the quality of teaching. Some lessons lack pace and are not challenging enough for the more able. Pupils in Years 2 and 6 learn effectively because the teaching is well planned and enlivened through hands-on experiences. In the Year 3 and 4 class, pupils' progress is slow because the work is not well matched to pupils' abilities. Staff and governors know the school's strengths and weaknesses and have identified the correct courses of action to build on recent improvements. Following a period of decline, standards are rising. Good extra curricular activities enrich the curriculum. A fresh approach to planning, linking the development of knowledge and skills to curricular themes is proving successful. The school has the capacity to build on these developments. More remains to be done to ensure consistent teaching and to develop the ways the school measures its performance.

What the school should do to improve further

* Improve pupils' writing focusing especially on setting challenging work for the more able* Sharpen up the way the school measures the success of its initiatives and its progress in meeting targets and improving teaching* Improve some important aspects of teaching, focussing on improving pace and challenge, and matching work more accurately to pupils' needs.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement is satisfactory overall and good in the Foundation Stage. By the end of the reception year, most children are close to attaining the expected goals for their age in the areas of learning. In Years 2 and 6, staff set suitably challenging targets which are largely achieved. Recent initiatives in writing are having a positive impact by broadening the range of opportunities for pupils to use English skills in other subjects. However, more able pupils should do better. The decline in results up to 2004 has been halted and standards are now average in English and mathematics by the end of Years 2 and 6. Pupils in Year 6 were very successful in science in 2005 because of effective teaching. There are pockets of good progress. Pupils in Years 2 and 6 make effective gains in their learning. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress. Several parents praised the school's work with these pupils and cited examples of significant gains in their children's learning. However, progress in the Year 3 and 4 class, particularly in English, is often unsatisfactory because of

weaknesses in teaching. Slight variations in the performance of boys and girls are due to the relatively small numbers of pupils taking the tests.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Vibrant opportunities to learn about other cultures and languages enhance learning, promote positive attitudes and prepare pupils well for life in a diverse society. Pupils are well motivated and this is reflected by their good attendance. Behaviour is satisfactory. Pupils are polite, well mannered and kind. Although some parents expressed concern about bullying pupils say, and inspectors found, that incidents have decreased significantly, are now rare and are dealt with effectively. Pupils work and play together safely. They enjoy working in teams and participate eagerly in investigations such as exploring the effect of different heat sources on ice-pops in Year 2. Boys and girls have a good understanding of how exercise and diet affect their health. They engage successfully in a good range of sporting opportunities. Pupils listen to each other and value different opinions. They enjoy participating in decision-making through the school council. They take part regularly in village life in activities such as harvest festival and have a good understanding of the wider world through their international links. Pupils acquire skills in language and mathematics which prepare them adequately for the next stage of their education and help them to develop a satisfactory awareness of economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

There are pockets of good teaching in Years 2 and 6 where pupils benefit from a wide range of practical experiences which make learning fun. In Year 2, following a visit to a pizza restaurant, the teacher used digital images to remind the pupils of their experiences. Consequently, pupils were totally absorbed and made significant improvements in their writing. In Year 6, the brisk and challenging use of mathematical questions promoted a buzz of excitement among pupils as they speedily and accurately solved mental arithmetic problems. Children's self confidence blossoms in the Foundation Stage because practical experiences stimulate language and social skills. Marking is often linked to pupils' targets. Several pupils commented that they found their teachers' guidance very helpful and one said, 'The teacher tells me exactly what I need to do to improve.' Although teaching and learning are satisfactory overall there are some weaknesses, especially in the Year 3 and 4 class, where marking is sometimes too critical and insufficient account is given to the different abilities within the class. The teaching of basic skills is satisfactory but in some classes insufficient attention is given to high quality presentation. In some lessons the pace is slow and not enough is expected of the more able.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. Newly planned programmes of work are contributing to improving standards. The emphasis on developing different styles of writing in history and science, and links, sometimes in cooperation with other schools, between art and English bring learning to life. The school's international dimension is especially good. A group of older pupils, commenting about recent visits from European teachers said, 'School is interesting, everyday is different, and we learn new things'. Pupils' personal development is enhanced through lessons in relationships, teaching about the benefits and potentially damaging effects of drugs and opportunities to discuss their feelings. Support for those with learning difficulties and disabilities is good and enables these pupils to take part fully in the school's curriculum. The curriculum is appropriate for more able pupils although lessons do not always take account of their needs. The Foundation Stage curriculum is good and provides an effective blend of practical, group and individual work.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides good care and support for its pupils. One pupil said, and her friends echoed the view that, 'This is a friendly school.' Recent developments in behavioural management are impacting well on creating an harmonious and purposeful community. Most parents speak positively about the guidance given to their children but responses to questionnaires show that some have concerns about behaviour and insufficient challenge for brighter pupils. Several feel that staff turnover has been unsettling and caused some inconsistencies in the school's provision. The school has tackled most of these concerns satisfactorily. The school has well established systems for child protection and requirements regarding risk assessments are met. Monitoring of pupils' progress is satisfactory and individual target setting is used suitably to guide pupils' academic development. The school works well with outside agencies to ensure children's safety.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The school has a positive ethos and equal opportunities are promoted effectively. The school's plans reflect findings from the analysis of pupils' performance and priorities are well defined. However, systems to check on the school's success in meeting its objectives are underdeveloped. The staff and governors take the views of parents and pupils seriously and, in response to a questionnaire, have improved communication. Regular monitoring and evaluation of teaching have brought improvement but more remains to be done to lift the quality of teaching in providing a better match of work. Improvement since the previous inspection has been hampered by high staff turnover and illness but the school is now making satisfactory headway in raising standards. Senior staff deploy resources well.

Plans based on an accurate evaluation of performance, are already improving the curriculum and pupils' behaviour. Supportive governors and newly established curriculum teams have a clear understanding of what needs to be done next. They are guided effectively by the headteacher who provides vision and shows a good understanding of the school's strengths and shortcomings. A particular success has been the use of specialist teaching in science to raise standards. The school is in a secure position to build upon its recent improvement.

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	3	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	3	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	2	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

Thank you for all the help you gave us when we came to visit your school. We enjoyed working with you, especially talking to you and looking at your work. Overall, we found that your school provides you with a satisfactory quality of education.

There are several things of which you can be proud. The youngest children in the reception class work hard, learn how to get on with each other and quickly start to read and write. You have a good understanding of the world around you and take a keen interest in other cultures and languages. Most of you behave well and are polite to adults and other children. We were pleased that you take a keen interest in sport and know about eating healthily. We can see that you are improving your writing and that the work you do in history and science is helping you to write in different ways. Your teachers have worked hard to develop links between the subjects they teach. Most teachers give you good advice about how to improve your work and you use your targets well to make your work better.

We have asked the school to make some improvements. Teaching could be better in some lessons especially in making sure that everyone is set work at the right level. The headteacher and governors need to check on lessons to make sure that they are as challenging as possible. We would like adults in the school to check regularly on how well it is improving.