



Inspection Report

**Better
education
and care**

Unique Reference Number 123179
LEA Oxfordshire LEA
Inspection number 281423
Inspection dates 11 January 2006 to 12 January 2006
Reporting inspector Caroline Bolton HMI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Overthorpe Road
School category	Voluntary controlled		Banbury
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		OX16 4SB
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01295 262507
Number on roll	449	Fax number	01295 275849
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Miss L Edmonds
Date of previous inspection	29 March 2000	Headteacher	Mrs S Godden and Mrs L Alcorn

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

St Leonard's Church of England Primary school is much larger than average and is oversubscribed. The headship of the school is shared between two headteachers. Most of the pupils are white British, while about a third are from minority ethnic backgrounds. Many of the pupils are learners of English as an additional language. The proportion of the pupils identified as having learning difficulties or disabilities is higher than the national figure. The pupils come from a range of socio-economic backgrounds and the percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is similar to the national figure. Few pupils transfer in and out of school other than at the usual times of admission and leaving. The school has not found it difficult in recent years to recruit and retain appropriately qualified staff. This inspection coincided with the Muslim festival of Eid and many of the pupils were not therefore in school.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

The school evaluates its effectiveness as satisfactory, rightly judging the commitment of the staff, the quality of care for the pupils, their relationships with adults in school and their personal development as strengths. However, this evaluation gives too little weight to the fact that the pupils' progress over Key Stage 2 is inadequate. Pupils do well in the Foundation Stage and at least satisfactorily in Key Stage 1 but during Key Stage 2 most do not make the overall progress which could be expected of them. The measures taken by the school to raise attainment have had some impact. However, the school's overall effectiveness is inadequate because the standards reached by the pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 are not high enough in relation to their capabilities and earlier attainment. For this reason, the school provides inadequate value for money. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. It is good in the Foundation Stage and in a number of classes in Key Stages 1 and 2. There is, however, not enough good or outstanding teaching overall. There is a lack of precision in setting targets for the pupils and in monitoring their progress towards them. The school has been successful in raising levels of attendance but the poor attendance of a minority of pupils has a negative impact upon their progress. The school works with a broad range of external partners. The views of parents and carers are regularly sought and most of those who responded to the inspection questionnaire had positive views of the school. Care, guidance and support for the pupils are good in most aspects although their progress towards their targets is not monitored carefully enough. The pupils' personal development, attitudes and behaviour are good and most enjoy coming to school. Leadership and management are satisfactory. While much remains to be done to improve standards, particularly in writing, the school has had some success since the last inspection in promoting better links with parents, raising attendance and improving attainment in reading and mathematics and developing the pupils' ability to learn independently. The school has a satisfactory capacity to improve. In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to the pupils' achievement and standards.

What the school should do to improve further

* Improve the pupils' achievement and progress, particularly in Key Stage 2. * Improve the quality of teaching and learning so that all of it is at least satisfactory and a higher proportion is good or outstanding. * Improve the system for setting individual targets for pupils and for monitoring their progress towards them.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

From a low starting point, children in the Foundation Stage classes make good progress, particularly in acquiring personal and social skills and in developing their knowledge and understanding of the world. However, by the time they transfer to Year 1, most are still not achieving the standards expected nationally for their age group. In Years 1 and 2, pupils make satisfactory progress, but the standards of their work remain well below average. As they move from Year 3 to Year 6, most pupils, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities and those for whom English is an additional language, do not make enough progress. This underachievement is the consequence of low expectations in the past, particularly in Years 3 and 4, inadequate checks on their progress in meeting their academic targets, and the poor attendance of a small number of pupils. Pupils of Pakistani heritage are not performing as well as pupils from other ethnic backgrounds. The results of the national tests at the end of Year 6 show that standards have been significantly below the national average in English for a number of years. In all year groups, too many pupils are unable to write with any degree of fluency. They are generally able to sound out unfamiliar words, but sometimes do not understand what they are reading. The management team has identified these key weaknesses and is taking action to remedy the situation. Standards are rising in reading and results in the 2005 national tests at Key Stage 2 showed some improvement in mathematics and science.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The personal development of pupils is a significant strength of the school. They have a good start in the Foundation Stage, where the skilled efforts of staff ensure that children settle in quickly and happily, learning and following routines well. Children enjoy the appointment of a 'pupil of the day' and praise each other for their personal qualities. They soon develop good levels of independence, which continue to improve over time. In each Key Stage the pupils enjoy school, collaborate well and have good relationships with each other and with adults. They work conscientiously and take a pride in their work. They develop into confident young people; they are friendly, polite and most behave well in class and in the playground. Pupils generally reported that incidents of bullying are dealt with well, although this was not consistently the case. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe and healthy and participate enthusiastically in after-school sports clubs. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They are able to reflect on moral issues and are thoughtful in discussing them. They take their responsibilities seriously and try hard to fulfil them, taking a full part in the community, particularly through the school council. They know about life in different lands, and in different communities in this country, and show understanding and respect for others' beliefs. Attendance has improved since the last inspection, and is above average overall. However, there remains a small minority of pupils with poor attendance, whose achievement is consequently very poor.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

In the great majority of lessons, teaching and learning are at least satisfactory. The quality of provision in the Foundation Stage is good and there are other examples of effective practice in Key Stages 1 and 2 but across the school, there is not enough good and outstanding teaching. In the best lessons, teachers provide activities which are matched to the pupils' differing needs. The most able are given challenging tasks and teaching assistants provide well focused support where necessary. Resources, including information and communication technology, are well used in effective lessons to engage the pupils and to provide them with an interesting range of learning activities. There are weaknesses in the teaching, including some in lessons which are satisfactory overall. Activities are sometimes continued for too long so that pupils begin to lose interest and concentration. There are times when pupils of different abilities are required to complete similar tasks even though they are too difficult for the lower attainers and not challenging enough for the higher attainers. In one lesson in Key Stage 2, the more able pupils were required to complete more work than the other pupils rather than being set inherently more demanding tasks. The school has clear policies for assessment and the marking of pupils' work. Assessment information is analysed in detail to compare the progress of different groups of pupils and to identify those at risk of underachieving. The staff do not, however, monitor closely enough the pupils' progress towards their individual targets. The best marking provides guidance to enable pupils to improve their work but the overall quality of marking is inconsistent.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school judges its curriculum to be good, and in some respects the inspection team agrees. However, taken as a whole, the school's provision is satisfactory. There is a wide range of activities for the pupils. Teachers try hard to make links between subjects, and this helps to make learning more interesting. For instance, pupils studying the Tudor period in history have made biscuits to a period recipe in their design and technology lessons. The school is also successful in making learning more relevant, by reflecting pupils' experiences. An exercise in which pupils in Year 6 calculated costs in euros by using currency conversion rates interested them because they were able to relate this to their experiences of foreign holidays. However, the school is not placing enough emphasis on developing pupils' skills as writers. For example, some teachers are too inflexible in their interpretation of the national strategy for teaching literacy and miss opportunities to improve pupils' skills in structuring and punctuating sentences. The school has a good level of support staff for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. Pupils with special educational needs have clear targets and their progress towards them is checked regularly. They make good progress when

their work is matched to their individual needs but this is not consistently the case in lessons.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school provides high quality care for pupils. Good links are made with parents, and with outside agencies and the community, particularly via the local East Street Centre, to support this work. There is an effective programme for personal, social, health and citizenship education which develops the pupils' understanding well. Good provision is made for pupils to learn about healthy lifestyles and the school has achieved the Healthy Schools award. The school has well-informed and committed bilingual teaching assistants who work with pupils for whom English is an additional language. Arrangements for child protection are thorough and a good level of attention is paid to keeping pupils safe. The school is particularly adept at looking after vulnerable pupils, carefully monitoring their needs and providing sensitive support. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to this work. Pupils are given good guidance on moral and social issues, and this contributes to the harmony and order of the school community. However, there are weaknesses in the academic guidance given to pupils which adversely affects their achievement. Pupils do not always know what their individual targets are or what they need to do in order to reach them. The use of targets and self assessment is not yet having enough impact upon their progress in Key Stage 2.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The school has identified clear priorities for its future development, with an appropriate focus upon raising achievement and the quality of the provision. The school's leaders systematically monitor the teaching and learning and they have a generally accurate view of their quality and of what needs to be done to bring about improvement. Governors meet regularly and visit the school to inform themselves of the progress it is making. However, both the senior staff and the governors take too generous a view of the school's overall effectiveness. The staff work with a good range of external partners, including professionals providing care and support for pupils' needs, members of the local community and colleagues in other schools. The school seeks the views of parents and carers, the great majority of whom reported positive views of the school in their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire. The school has a stable and committed staff. The school's leaders are aware of the need to raise levels of achievement and have taken a number of measures to bring this about. Standards of achievement are too low, however, particularly in writing. There have been some improvements in the pupils' attainment in reading, science and mathematics, as well as in overall attendance figures. At the last inspection, the school was required to improve the pupils' skills in independent learning and these are now developing satisfactorily. The staff have worked hard to improve links with parents and to encourage them to take a more

active part in supporting their children's progress. The school has a satisfactory capacity to improve.

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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?	4	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	3	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?	4	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	4	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	3	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?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3	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

After our visit to inspect your school, we would like to tell you about our findings. We would also like to thank you for welcoming us and talking to us about your work and the other things which you do in school. We believe that there are some things that your school does well but also some things which need to be improved.

* The teachers and the teaching assistants look after you well and help you to learn how to stay safe and healthy* you get on well with the adults in your school * most of you behave well and enjoy coming to school* most of your parents and carers who wrote to us think well of your school * you are keen to take part in activities outside lessons and to take responsibility, for example by taking part in the school council* more of you now have good attendance* the youngest children in the school are doing well in their work and most of you in Years 1 and 2 are also making satisfactory or good progress.

We have asked the school to improve some things. * Your progress needs to be better in Key Stage 2* we saw some good lessons but more of the teaching and learning needs to be good or even better* you have targets for your work but you need more help in knowing how to reach your own targets* there are still a few children who take too much time off school and need to improve their attendance. Thank you again for welcoming us to your school.