



St Michael's Figcheldean Church of England Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 126325
LEA Wiltshire
Inspection number 282095
Inspection dates 13 July 2006 to 13 July 2006
Reporting inspector Stephen Lake AI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Figcheldean
School category	Voluntary controlled		Salisbury
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Wiltshire SP4 8JT
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01980 670268
Number on roll	92	Fax number	01980 670268
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs V Oldrey
Date of previous inspection	11 October 1999	Headteacher	Mrs Jill Adams

Age group 4 to 11	Inspection dates 13 July 2006 - 13 July 2006	Inspection number 282095
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a small village school near to Salisbury Plain. A large number of pupils come from service families resulting in a significant number entering or leaving school at different times during their school career. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is broadly average but the proportion with learning difficulties or disabilities is above average. Few pupils have English as an additional language. Children's attainment on entry to Reception varies from year to year because of the small cohort but it is broadly average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

St Michael's Figheldean Church of England Primary School is a satisfactory school with a couple outstanding features. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. The standards and quality of the Foundation Stage are satisfactory. Pupils achieve well in Years 1 and 2, generally attaining above average standards by the end of Year 2. They build on this adequately and, by the end of Year 6, standards remain above average. The school has identified weaknesses in writing that were holding down attainment in English at age 11 and is tackling these well, so that standards in English have risen significantly this year.

Pupils' personal development is good. Their outstanding spiritual and moral development is reflected in the way they show concern for others. Pupils are polite, well behaved and articulate and make an outstanding contribution to the community.

This is a happy school where pupils enjoy their education because of the outstanding range of opportunities provided to enrich the otherwise satisfactory curriculum. The school works hard to look after pupils and help them settle in, especially when they move in from other schools. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities make good progress because of the good support they receive. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and good in some classes. However, marking does not always show pupils what they need to do to improve. Teachers do not make enough use of the wealth of assessment information to plan lessons that challenge and extend all groups of pupils. This is limiting achievement in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 2, as well as affecting the otherwise satisfactory quality of education offered.

The new headteacher provides good leadership and has an accurate understanding of the school's effectiveness. Working closely with governors and staff, she has used this information to good effect to draw up a school improvement plan aimed at raising standards further and improving the teaching environment. The school gives satisfactory value for money. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory and the recent improvement in standards indicates that the school is well placed to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Use the information from pupils' assessments to plan lessons that challenge all groups of pupils.
- Improve the way in which marking provides guidance to pupils on how well they have done and what they need to do to improve.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement and standards are satisfactory. The small number of pupils in each year causes some disproportionate variations in standards from year to year. In a typical year, children start Reception and Year 1 with broadly average standards. Achievement in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Pupils build well on their skills in Key Stage 1

and, by the end of Year 2, standards are above average. A large number of pupils move in and out of the school during Key Stage 2 but all achieve satisfactorily and, by the end of Year 6, standards are above average. Progress at Key Stage 2 is slightly better in Years 5 and 6, where the quality of marking is better and lessons present a greater challenge to pupils.

Challenging targets are set for pupils at the end of Year 6 and this year pupils exceeded them, especially in English, where standards are significantly better than in 2005. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities achieve well as a result of the good support they receive.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupil's personal development and well-being are good. The youngest children settle in quickly and are very well looked after by the older ones. Pupils feel safe, are happy and well-behaved and show a strong sense of responsibility, particularly towards new pupils and those who have learning difficulties and disabilities.

Spiritual and moral development is outstanding. Pupils show a very strong awareness of others and their beliefs and think through the consequences of their actions well. The very strong links with the church and with a school in Ghana support this well and make a strong contribution to the good social and cultural development of pupils. Pupils talk enthusiastically about their school. Behaviour and attendance are good because pupils enjoy coming to school to learn, a fact endorsed by parents.

Pupils follow healthy lifestyles through regular exercise and are starting to improve their diet through the school's healthy eating initiatives. They follow safe practices in all their work and understand why this is necessary. Pupils' involvement in the school and local community is outstanding. Pupils play a very full part in the school community through the active and influential school council. They have a very strong voice in the school and have been able to make changes, such as improvements to the playground. Pupils are very involved in the village community through the Forest School project, make a very good contribution to all village activities and are heavily involved in fund raising activities both in the school and the local community. The financial skills and understanding of democratic processes developed in this way help to prepare them for their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Inconsistencies in teaching across the school limit pupils' learning particularly in Years 3 and 4. Teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage are satisfactory but not enough use is made of the improved outdoor facilities to promote learning through play.

Good relationships between teachers and pupils create a positive climate for learning throughout the school. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 learn well as a result of well planned and well organised activities that are pursued at a brisk pace. Learning in Key Stage 2 is satisfactory although there is some good teaching in Years 5 and 6. Where teaching is weakest assessment information is not used well enough to plan and organise lessons that meet the needs of all pupils. As a result some pupils are not sufficiently well challenged and do not achieve as well as they could. Although the use of data and assessment is good in Key Stage 1 and in Years 5 and 6, and pupils work is well marked, this good practice is not sufficiently evident in all classes. In Years 3 and 4 marking does not always tell pupils how well they have done or how to improve their work and this reduces the amount that pupils learn as a result.

Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are thoughtfully supported by teachers and support staff. The small classes have a high level of adult support which is deployed effectively to help those pupils experiencing difficulties. Adults working with these pupils are well aware of their individual needs, ask supportive questions and offer good encouragement.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. It does not always meet the needs of all individuals or groups of learners and this is mainly due the inconsistencies in teaching. The Foundation stage curriculum is satisfactory. Increasing efforts are being made to set up a range of learning activities in the Foundation Stage based on play. However, this is not yet fully implemented.

Enrichment to the curriculum is excellent, with an exciting project to raise standards in environmental education, strong links with a school in Ghana and all pupils learning French. Special days or weeks, such as science or arts weeks, are used to boost pupils' interest and provide a different approach to learning. The school works closely with the local community to provide good opportunities to develop pupils' personal and social education and productive links with outside partners help to enrich the curriculum in science, information and communication technology and physical education.

Pupils are encouraged to take part in a wide range of clubs and other activities. Sport is popular with boys and girls of all ages. Pupils learn to play a musical instrument and have the chance to perform in public.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school looks after its pupils well. All staff and pupils work hard to ensure that pupils who are new to the school are made to feel welcome and quickly settle in to the family atmosphere. Careful analysis of individual needs means pupils can be given accurate and effective support, although this is not consistently used by all teachers, especially at Key Stage 2. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are served well.

Behaviour management is good because school rules are simple, regularly reviewed and consistently applied. Pupils are safe and secure. They turn to adults if they are upset with confidence that their problems will be sorted out. Procedures for child protection and health and safety are effective. The school works closely with a wide range of professionals to find just the right support for pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The new headteacher provides good leadership and is developing a sense of teamwork in the school. She knows the strengths and weaknesses through the satisfactory self-evaluation she has carried out. The headteacher has shared her findings with the newly appointed assistant headteacher and this information is already being used appropriately to improve standards in writing. However, the implications of the self-evaluation have yet to be fully debated and understood by all staff and governors.

Pupils are consulted about ways in which the school could improve and most feel that their views are taken into consideration. However, a small number of parents feel that they are not consulted enough and the school has planned a range of measures to improve this. The school's strong commitment to the care of its pupils ensures that those who join at different times during their school career do not suffer as a result.

Governance is satisfactory. A number of governors, including the chair, are intending to retire in the next year and there are suitable plans to train replacements and ensure a smooth change over. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. The new headteacher has already implemented positive changes and the school improvement plan sets out clear strategies to continue this improvement. The capacity to improve further is good.

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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	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?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	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	1	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?	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

Thank you for the help that you gave us in finding out about your school. We agree with you, and with the comments of many of your parents, that this is a school that makes learning enjoyable.

We found that your school is satisfactory with a couple outstanding features.

- Your achievement is generally satisfactory and it is good in Years 1 and 2.
- Results of the national tests are better than those of many other schools.
- Your personal development is good. You are polite and well behaved and your attendance is above average. Your social and moral development is outstanding and you feel safe.
- Your teachers help you learn satisfactorily but some marking does not help you enough and some of you could be challenged more.
- You have a satisfactory curriculum with some outstanding extra activities to help make your learning enjoyable. No wonder you like school!
- The school looks after you really well, especially when you join the school from other schools.
- The school is led and managed satisfactorily and your new headteacher certainly knows what is and is not working well.

We think your school is well placed to get better than it is now and, to help this happen, we have asked your teachers to:

- improve the way they mark your work so that you know how well you have done and how you could do better
- use all the information that they have about your progress to plan lessons that challenge all of you to do the very best that you can.

We wish you well as you all work together to improve your school.