



Somerfords Walter Powell VA CE Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 126442
LEA Wiltshire
Inspection number 282115
Inspection dates 15 November 2005 to 15 November 2005
Reporting inspector Janet Sinclair RISP

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Dauntsey Road
School category	Voluntary aided		Great Somerford
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Chippenham, Wiltshire SN15 5HS
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01249 720797
Number on roll	48	Fax number	0709 281 1887
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs Steve Fraser
Date of previous inspection	29 November 1999	Headteacher	Mrs Terry Hall

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one additional inspector.

Description of the school

Somerfords Walter Powell is a much smaller than average Church of England primary school. Standards on entry to the school are wide ranging but average overall. Numbers eligible for free school meals are low. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds and there are no pupils who have a first language other than English. A small number of pupils are from the travelling community. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is below the national average, whilst those with a statement of special educational need are above average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The inspection team agrees with the school's judgement that its effectiveness is satisfactory. Standards are average in reading, writing and mathematics by Year 6 and pupils make satisfactory progress. Teaching is also satisfactory. Although standards in spelling and presentation have improved since the last inspection, standards in writing in Year 2 are not high enough. A good start has been made in raising standards in mathematics although there is further room for improvement. Provision in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory with some good aspects and children are making sound, and sometimes good, progress towards the goals expected at the end of the Reception year. Pupils' personal development is good. Pupils very much enjoy coming to school, are extremely well behaved, and keen to learn. A good range of curricular activities and after school clubs provides valuable learning opportunities. The school has faced some very challenging circumstances since the last inspection with many changes in staffing, including at senior level. Although leadership and management are satisfactory overall, the headteacher has shown good leadership in bringing stability and a sense of purpose to the school. There is not as yet sufficient rigour in monitoring and evaluating to raise standards but the school is heading in the right direction. It is now well placed to make the further improvements necessary in order to raise standards. The school currently provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve writing in Year 2
- continue to improve standards in mathematics
- make it clear to teachers what they should do to improve teaching and check systematically to ensure that this is happening and standards are being raised
- link whole school improvement plans more specifically to what they are expected to lead to in raising standards and rigorously measure the impact of that.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

The school has very small numbers of pupils taking the tests in Years 2 and 6. Therefore data for comparing the school's performance with national averages is unreliable as the performances of one or two pupils can lead to big swings in results. Attainment on entry is wide ranging, but is average overall. Evidence from the school's records and inspection findings indicate that standards are average and pupils make satisfactory progress in reading, writing and mathematics. In Year 2, however, few pupils achieve the higher Level 3 in writing. Difficulties in the recent past have affected the progress of some pupils. For example, shape and space had not been well covered in mathematics. Targets set are usually met and were realistic for the ability levels of the Year 6 group which recently took the tests in 2005. All groups of pupils, including those with learning difficulties, make satisfactory progress. The school realises that it will have to raise targets progressively to aspire to above average standards.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The school provides well for pupils' personal development and well being. There is a wide range of activities, which pupils enjoy. Pupils say that they really like school and it is a friendly place which they would recommend to anyone. They have very good attitudes to work and behave very well throughout the school day. Pupils with behavioural difficulties are catered for well and their behaviour is also very good. The school provides well for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and that is helped by visitors from other faiths, clear expectations for good behaviour, and pupils' support for each other. For example, older pupils look after younger pupils in the playground and the school council sees it as their responsibility to 'sort out problems'. Pupils learn about healthy life styles in science and through healthy school dinners and snacks. Regular physical education and after school football ensure adequate physical activity. A particular favourite of some pupils is the use of apparatus in physical education. There are no cooked meals on site but pupils are encouraged to bring healthy food to school. This is reinforced well by having a special whole school 'snack time' on Fridays to encourage children to try a variety of foods which they may not consider otherwise.

The elected school council take their responsibilities seriously. Some of their ideas and suggestions have led directly to improvements such as the provision of playground equipment and the upgrading of the toilets which they previously found 'cold, uninviting and scary'. Pupils contribute well to the community through dance performances at school fetes, links with the church, and inviting members of the community to their Christmas concerts. Their punctuality and attendance are good.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall but lessons generally lack a brisk pace. In all lessons teachers have very good relationships with their pupils, which encourage them to respond very well. Lessons are well planned and resourced, including matching work to the wide variety of pupils' needs.

However, when it comes to the actual lessons, there is mostly not enough emphasis on questioning that fully challenges all pupils. In addition, in Year 2 there are insufficient opportunities to write interesting and imaginative stories to extend pupils' skills. The weaknesses in pupils' knowledge in relation to shape and space in mathematics are being addressed by teachers putting a major focus on that in lessons. Marking is used well to focus on what has been achieved but is less effective in telling pupils what they need to do to improve or in ensuring improvement takes place.

As a result of children in the Foundation Stage being taught separately in the morning the teacher is able to cater well for their needs and provide good opportunities for

them to experiment, learn and play. In the afternoon when they join pupils in the Years 1 and 2 class, teaching and learning are satisfactory.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is varied and interesting and religious education has a prominent role. Activities include good quality swimming instruction for all pupils. Pupils particularly like the opportunities provided in creative subjects such as art and design and technology. The wide variety in ability and mixed age classes is a challenge in providing for individual needs in Years 3 to 6. The curriculum is therefore constantly under review. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are well supported through the work specified in their individual education plans and are integrated well within the classes. Curricular provision and coverage for Foundation Stage children reflects national guidance but, because of the teaching arrangements in the afternoon, provision is only satisfactory overall. The school organises a good range of visits, visitors and special events to enrich the curriculum. Pupils enjoy their residential experience at Newbarn where they take part in problem solving and orienteering activities and work as a team. Through this they develop skills which are important for later life. Pupils enjoy the good range of school clubs such as football, modelling and sewing. For a small school the accommodation is good and well used.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils are well cared for and supported. Guidance is satisfactory. The school is a caring, orderly environment. Pupils are encouraged by knowing that staff will always help them when they get stuck with their work. They feel safe from bullying because they say that the school deals with any concerns quickly. Child protection procedures are securely in place and the headteacher has recently had training. Risk assessments are undertaken for all trips and also for use of the school pond. Pupils are fully aware of the importance of the safe use of tools such as glue guns and science equipment. Safety in the wider context is addressed through activities such as cycling proficiency for older pupils.

The school keeps good records of pupils' progress and is now beginning to use them to track individual progress so that those pupils who are not making good enough progress are quickly identified and supported. Pupils are fully aware of their targets and are encouraged to comment on their achievement of them. There are sound links with other schools and external agencies.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The headteacher has led the school effectively through a very difficult period and now there are good procedures in place and stability in staffing. The school runs smoothly and efficiently. Team spirit

is good. Governors are supportive and know their school well. They realise how resources have to be deployed well to cater for the mixed age teaching groups and have been proactive in securing the additional teacher for the Foundation Stage. This involved difficult financial decisions but ones which are benefiting the children.

The school has a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses and the need to raise standards to above average so that pupils make good progress. Leadership has been the most influential factor in bringing about the improvements in pupils' records and in setting targets for year groups. This is already leading to improvements in provision. Detailed, but mainly informal, evaluations of teaching are undertaken. These help teachers see what they have done well but are less effective in showing where they need to improve in order to raise the quality of teaching and pupils' standards further.

There is a detailed school improvement plan in place with action plans showing how key developments will be managed. However, the expected outcomes in terms of how children will benefit and how standards will be raised are not specific enough. It therefore makes it more difficult to check how successfully change is progressing and how successful initiatives are. The school has responded well to requests for further information by giving parents details of termly classroom activities. Most parents are very pleased with what the school now offers after periods in the recent past when they had considerable worries. They have confidence in the headteacher and her staff.

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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?	3	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	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	3	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	1	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?	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

Somerfords Walter Powell Church of England Primary School Dauntsey Road Great Somerford
Chippenham Wiltshire SN15 5HS

16 November 2005

Dear Pupils

Thank you for helping me with the inspection. I enjoyed talking to you and spent a very enjoyable day in your school.

I was impressed by how well you behave in lessons and how hard you work in order to do things better. I was pleased about the opportunities you get to go on trips and the many after school clubs that you can attend. I know you enjoy these activities very much. You told me that you are very happy in your school and find everyone, but especially your teachers, friendly and kind. You also have a good headteacher. I can see why you would recommend your school to others!

Your school is doing some things well, especially taking care of you and providing interesting things for you to do, but there are some things which the school is not doing well enough. Writing in Year 2 can improve because pupils in Year 2 are not given enough opportunities to practise writing interesting and imaginative stories with lots of exciting words in them to help them reach higher standards. A good start has been made in improving standards in mathematics and it is important that the school keeps that up. In its school improvement plan, the school needs to be a bit more exact about what it wants to do better in order to improve standards in your work.

Best wishes

Janet Sinclair

Lead Inspector