



Church End Lower School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 109470
Local Authority BEDFORDSHIRE
Inspection number 288387
Inspection dates 4–5 December 2006
Reporting inspector Robert Drew

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

The inspection of the day care was carried out under Children Act 1989: Part XA (as introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000) and, where (funded) nursery education is provided, under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

| | | | |
|---|--------------------|-------------------------|--|
| Type of school | Primary | School address | Church Walk |
| School category | Community | | Marston Moretaine, Marston Moretaine Bedfordshire MK43 0NE |
| Age range of pupils | 4–9 | Telephone number | 01234 768271 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed | Fax number | 01234 768271 |
| Number on roll (school) | 261 | Chair | Mr Simon Humpreys |
| Number on roll (day care) | 250 | Headteacher | Mr Brian Storey |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body | | |
| Date of previous school inspection | 14 May 2001 | | |
| Date of previous day care inspection | 1 January 1900 | | |

| | | |
|-------------------------|--|------------------------------------|
| Age group 4–9 | Inspection dates 4–5 December 2006 | Inspection number 288387 |
|-------------------------|--|------------------------------------|

© Crown copyright 2006

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors over two days.

Description of the school

The school is a little larger than average and expanding. It serves the village of Marston Moretaine, about 10 miles from Bedford. Children's attainment on entry to school is typical of children nationally. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is average. Pupils' social and economic backgrounds broadly match the national range. The great majority are White British while very small numbers come from several minority ethnic backgrounds. The school has a relatively new senior leadership team and has recently created child care provision on site.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The school's overall effectiveness is good and is improving, as seen in the above average standards throughout the school and the good achievement of pupils. This judgement matches the school's own view. The most recent results in national tests in Year 2 were well above National expectations in English, especially in writing, and just above in mathematics. These standards are consolidated and improved on in Years 3 and 4. Standards in science are also above those expected. In the Foundation Stage, children's achievement is good and many children exceed the standards expected nationally.

The newly formed senior leadership team gives an excellent sense of direction and has raised the expectations of staff and pupils. Teaching and learning are helping to meet this challenge. The quality of teaching is already good, with lessons typically well planned, relationships are very positive and pupils eager to learn. Teachers have also shown they know how to improve. For instance, their renewed promotion of writing skills has had a major impact on standards. All are now secure using information and communication technology (ICT) in lessons. The use of assessment in lessons lacks consistency. Work is not always challenging for all pupils in some subjects. The curriculum is good and provides a wide range of learning experiences for pupils. Teachers are currently working to establish new ways to teach mathematics. The tracking of pupils' academic progress is very good in English and mathematics, but less effective in other subjects.

The school rightly considers pupils' personal development to be outstanding. Pupils' maturity, positive attitudes and sense of enjoyment are exceptional. This is partly a credit to the pupils and their families, reflected in the overwhelmingly supportive views they express about school. Staff are very consistent in their encouragement of pupils and in their expectations of behaviour. Pupils know exactly where they stand as a result and their behaviour is excellent. They also show an impressive awareness of how to be safe and live healthily. Their contribution to the school community is good. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. These positive features stem from the school offering so many opportunities for pupils to join in school activities. In addition, most aspects of care, guidance and support are very well organised and have a strong impact on pupils' personal development and a good effect on their progress in subjects. All legal requirements for protecting pupils are met.

Leadership and management are good and show an impressive record of recent improvement. Many initiatives have been successfully introduced following accurate diagnosis of the school's needs. Monitoring of teaching and the general monitoring and support work of subject coordinators are both at an early stage in some subjects, though high quality work is already present in the leadership of English. The governing body has a more detailed knowledge of the school than usual and offers good strategic advice. The school provides very good value for money and has a good capacity to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in mathematics to match more closely the high standards seen in English.
- Reach greater consistency in teaching and learning through more effective monitoring by subject coordinators.
- Use assessment consistently well to guide teachers in providing challenging work for all pupils.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

All pupils' achievement is good because of the good teaching, pupils' excellent behaviour, their eagerness to learn and the resulting strong progress. Children make good progress in Nursery and Reception classes. By the time they enter Year 1, most reach the nationally expected standards and many surpass them. Progress continues to be good in Years 1 and 2. Compared to all pupils nationally, attainment is strongest in reading and writing and standards in mathematics are just above those expected. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 attain standards above those expected for their age. They make good progress in reading and mathematics and outstanding progress in writing, the result of significant improvements in the teaching of writing skills over the past year. Pupils with learning difficulties achieve well because of the good support they receive. Pupils' achievement is also good in science and ICT.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils have exceptionally good attitudes towards their work and say that they enjoy coming to school very much. Their attendance is good. They feel valued as individuals, relationships are strong and behaviour is excellent. Pupils make a good contribution to the life of the school through the school council, which has a budget for chosen projects. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils are highly reflective for their age and remarkably confident. They show great respect for others and a perceptive understanding of why people behave as they do. Lessons about healthy lifestyles have made pupils very keen to take part in physical education and sport. They eat healthily and enjoy daily fruit or vegetable snacks. They demonstrate a good understanding of how to stay safe and show concern for the wider community by raising money for charities. Pupils' acquisition of literacy, numeracy and social skills prepares them very well for their next stage of education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well because teaching and learning are good. Teachers in the Nursery and Reception classes provide a good range of well organised play activities that make learning fun, with a good balance of adult and child led activities. All teachers have high expectations of behaviour, so that pupils are very attentive and respond very quickly to instructions. The quality of relationships provides an outstandingly supportive climate in which to learn. Teaching assistants are particularly effective when working with small groups. Teachers' lesson planning is good, especially for reading and writing, when activities are matched well to pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills. Assessment information is not always used as well as it could be to fine tune activities to match pupils' varied learning needs in some subjects. Pupils' individual targets for literacy and numeracy are beginning to raise standards further, particularly in writing skills.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school provides a good range of learning experiences that are matched well to pupils' interests and needs. The quality of the curriculum helps pupils make good progress. The Foundation Stage curriculum gives children a good start, and literacy and numeracy skills are promoted well throughout the school. Opportunities to develop writing skills in a range of subjects are particularly good and ICT contributes significantly to pupils' learning. Some gifted and talented pupils have the opportunity to take part in a design and technology workshop, but overall opportunities for these pupils to extend their skills, knowledge and understanding are limited. The school has effective systems for supporting those with learning difficulties, although pupils' targets in their individual education plans are not always specific enough. Great attention is given to pupils' personal development and the curriculum is enriched by an outstanding range of clubs and special events.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides very good care, support and guidance. Pupils learn and grow in an environment that is calm and orderly because staff are consistent in applying the code of conduct. This contributes significantly to pupils' personal development and underpins their good achievement. Parents appreciate the level of care provided and feel that they are kept well informed. The school promotes health and safety well and makes sure pupils are suitably protected. It works closely with external agencies in supporting those with learning difficulties. Pupils are known as individuals and have trusting relationships with staff. Most know their targets in literacy and numeracy and older pupils in particular are aware of what they need to do to reach the next level.

The system for tracking pupils' progress is very good in English and mathematics but is less well developed in other subjects.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher has provided an excellent sense of direction since his arrival two years ago, which is helping the school to improve significantly. The school's capacity to self evaluate is good. Already standards have risen in areas made a focus for development, such as in writing. Further impetus for change comes from effective work by the deputy headteacher and the staff's collective support for initiatives. Subject coordinators have a satisfactory impact on the work in subjects overall. All have adopted a more demanding role and are beginning to monitor and support colleagues effectively. Governors give effective support to senior leaders and have a detailed knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Monitoring of teaching, to improve consistency, is less extensive than it might be but this and other areas for improvement have been successfully identified.

Effectiveness of registered day care

Grade: 3

Church End After School Care Club provides a satisfactory quality of child care. Children feel secure and are well behaved because they are cared for by familiar staff, who offer positive and thoughtful support and who provide a good range of enticing activities, such as cooking and arts and crafts. Children are expected to use their independence and may choose to participate in the planned activity or not. The purpose built accommodation is bright, very clean extremely well resourced and welcoming. In the summer children enjoy playing active outdoor games and using the exciting adventure playground. Sessions are planned for each half term which allow children to learn effectively through imaginative and practical activities, although as yet not all staff are involved in the planning. Children are provided with healthy snacks but are not given the opportunity to serve themselves, nor are they able to help themselves to drinks of water when they are thirsty.

The manager is suitably qualified and has the added advantage of working in the school as a teaching assistant which means she is well known to children and parents. She also holds a first aid qualification. There is a policy for child protection but it does not contain clear details about how to contact the local authority if staff have concerns. Parents are informed about accidents and they are encouraged to sign the accident record. Staff, children and parents are not fully aware of the procedures to be followed in the event of an emergency evacuation, nor are there regular fire drills. A satisfactory partnership with parents is in place, but as yet there is no informative handbook available containing policies and procedures. There are currently no regular risk assessments of the premises. Staff are always available at end of sessions to talk to parents.

Recommendations or actions to improve the registered day care

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take into account the following recommendations:

- Update the Child Protection Policy to include details of whom to inform at the local authority.
- Make sure there are clearly defined and displayed procedures for emergency evacuations and that fire drills are carried out periodically.
- Ensure regular risk assessments of the premises are conducted.
- Ensure children have easy access to regular drinks of water.

Since the registration in July 2006 there have been no complaints about the registered day care that required Ofsted or the school to take action so that the day care continued to meet the National Standards. The school is required to keep a record of complaints about the registered day care made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints about the registered day care other than those made to Ofsted.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Inspection judgements

| | |
|---|-----------------------|
| Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate | School Overall |
|---|-----------------------|

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 | 2 |
| 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? | 1 |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 1 |
| The behaviour of learners | 1 |
| 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 | 1 |
| The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community | 2 |
| 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 |

The effectiveness of the registered day care

| | |
|--|-----|
| The quality and standards of the registered day care | 3 |
| How effective is the day care in helping children to be healthy? | 3 |
| How effective is the day care in protecting children and helping them to stay safe? | 3 |
| How effective is the day care in helping children to achieve and enjoy their learning? | 2 |
| How effective is the day care in helping children to make a positive contribution? | 3 |
| How effectively is the day care organised? | 3 |
| Does the day care meet the needs of the range of children for whom it provides? | Yes |
| Has the day care improved since the last inspection? | Yes |
| Does the day care require enforcement action? | No |
| Does the day care require a notice to improve? | No |

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

6 December 2006

Dear Pupils

Church End Lower School, Marston Moretaine, Bedfordshire, MK43 0NE

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave my team earlier this week. Special thanks go to those who gave up your playtime to speak with inspectors.

We enjoyed our visit because so many things about the school are good:

- Your behaviour is excellent - far better than we often see.
- The way the school guides and supports you is very good.
- Standards in subjects are above average and you make good progress. Your writing is particularly good.
- The headteacher leads you really well and the school is improving in many ways.
- You and your parents say very positive things about the school.

If the school is going to be even better it should:

- Raise standards in mathematics so that they are as good as those in literacy.
- Make more teaching as good as the best we saw.
- Use assessments of what you know to provide challenging work in all lessons for all of you.

We look forward to hearing even better news of your school in the future.

Yours sincerely

Robert Drew

(Lead Inspector)