



Shaw-cum-Donnington Church of England Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 109974
Local Authority West Berkshire
Inspection number 288552
Inspection dates 6–7 February 2007
Reporting inspector John Earish

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Love Lane
School category	Voluntary controlled		Donnington
Age range of pupils	4–11		Newbury RG14 2JG
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01635 40971
Number on roll (school)	80	Fax number	01635 31327
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr D Cobbett
		Headteacher	Mr J K Watts
Date of previous school inspection	10 June 2002		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This very small school is situated on the northern edge of Newbury. Although the school admits pupils from a wide variety of social backgrounds, the proportion eligible for free school meals is below average. Almost all are of White British heritage. When children start school, their skills and abilities are below those expected of four year olds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is similar to that found nationally.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory and improving school. There are many good features that are having a positive effect on the pupils' good personal development and care and well being. Pupils enjoy school and the vast majority behave very well in and out of lessons. One of the pupils commented, 'I like school because there are lots of activities and you really learn fast'. They have good opportunities to take on responsibility, for example, as 'buddies' for the younger children and when representing the views of others as school councillors. Teachers take good care of their pupils and guide and support them well. Parents overwhelmingly agree. One wrote, 'My daughter is always eager to go to school and the teachers are approachable and helpful'.

Achievement is satisfactory overall. Good provision in the Foundation Stage helps young children settle quickly and effortlessly into school life and they make good progress. Pupils leave the school at aged 11 with broadly average standards and skills in English, mathematics and science. However, information shows that they make uneven progress particularly in English. The best progress is made between Years 1 and 2. Inspection evidence shows that the school is successfully addressing this issue. The current Year 6 are making much better progress and are on track to achieve higher standards by the end of the year. These improvements show the school's determination and good capacity to improve further.

The teaching is satisfactory with good features that are helping to accelerate pupils' progress. Improvements to the teaching have been instigated by the headteacher and staff so that the good progress made by the younger children is sustained throughout the school. The legacy of some less effective teaching mostly affected the progress of higher ability pupils. Teachers are now making much better use of assessment information to challenge these pupils, although some inconsistencies remain.

The curriculum is good. There is a good range of activities that capture pupils' enthusiasm and interest. Their personal skills are promoted well and they have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles and staying safe. Pupils with learning difficulties are well supported. However, there are weaknesses. Teachers do not always make the most of the opportunities to make links between subjects to develop pupils' skills of writing, speaking and listening.

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The most important areas for improvement have been accurately identified and appropriate actions are being taken to tackle them. The effectiveness of subject leaders in monitoring quality and standards is under-developed and has resulted in some inconsistent progress. This is recognised by the headteacher who has made it a priority for development this year. Governors are supportive and are satisfactory at holding the school to account for its performance.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise the level of challenge for higher attaining pupils.
- Develop links between subjects to provide more opportunities for pupils' to use their skills in writing and speaking and listening.

- Develop the monitoring activities of subject leaders to improve the consistency of pupils' progress.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement is satisfactory overall. Children start school with skills and abilities that are lower than those expected nationally. They make good progress in all areas of the Foundation Stage curriculum and by the time they enter Y1, most achieve standards that are in line with those expected for their age.

Very small year groups, which include a wide spread of abilities, result in variations in performance in national tests. This picture is further complicated by parents who choose to move their children to the school at any time up to Year 6. Overall, standards by the end of Year 6 are broadly average. Detailed analysis of teacher assessments shows that some of the older, higher attaining pupils could do better, particularly in English. Progress in writing, although satisfactory in developing basic skills, is hampered by insufficient opportunities to write and discuss in sufficient depth in subjects other than English. Those pupils with learning difficulties receive well focused support and make good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is good. Pupils are very happy at school, are keen to learn and behave very well. They really enjoy the many opportunities that the school has to offer them and speak enthusiastically about it. Pupils attend very regularly and this is further evidence that they are happy and content. Parents also appreciate the strong emphasis on nurturing pupils' personal development. As one parent wrote 'the school has helped develop my son's confidence both academically and socially'. Another added that 'the small, supportive family atmosphere encourages quieter children to blossom'. Pupils know about the importance of a healthy lifestyle, staying safe and happily join in the 'huff and puff' games led by Year 6. They make a good contribution to the community and are concerned about social issues. For example, pupils have worked alongside actors from a local theatre to learn about homelessness and were surprised how many homeless people could be found living on the streets. Pupils feel safe at school and say that bullying is rare. However, when it does occur it is dealt with very quickly by the adults. Pupils develop appropriate skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT which prepares them well for the world beyond school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teachers have high expectations for behaviour and have established positive relationships with their classes. In the best lessons, teachers share the learning objectives, set a good pace, structure the learning well, make links between areas of learning, and make good use of resources, particularly information and communication technology (ICT). This helps pupils to make good progress in their lessons. However, this is not always the case. There are occasions when teachers miss opportunities to challenge the higher attaining pupils and progress slows. Much work has been done recently to address this weakness by introducing success ladders so that pupils of all abilities can understand what they must do to make consistently good progress. Pupils say they find this very useful and it helps them learn better. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are well supported by class teachers and their assistants.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum meets the needs of all pupils well, including those with learning difficulties. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good with a good balance between work chosen by the teacher and activities selected by the children. ICT is used well to support learning across curriculum. For example, pupils have recently used digital photography to produce portraits under the guidance of a local artist. However, opportunities for pupils to discuss and to write in different styles and contexts are not always fully exploited in subjects other than English.

The school ensures that all pupils have many opportunities to participate and enjoy a good range of enrichment activities and after school clubs despite its very small size. Such experiences, together with good provision for personal, social and health education, and the emphasis on staying safe and healthy, develop in pupils a good sense of personal and social responsibility.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. The overwhelming majority of parents praise the school's work and feel their children are safe and well cared for. Child protection procedures are widely understood and implemented. As a result, pupils feel safe and secure. Systems to ensure pupils' health and safety are effective and reviewed regularly. Their academic and personal development is carefully monitored as a result of significant improvement to the systems to track and analyse pupils' performance. These are now of good quality. Pupils say that the introduction of challenge ladders, where they can assess for themselves how well they are doing at meeting their targets, is really helping them improve. Pupils with learning difficulties are cared for well and additional provision is well matched to their needs.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The school's processes for self-evaluation are accurate and have been used successfully to write a school development plan that sets out the correct priorities for improvement and provides a useful framework for action and review.

The number of staff is small which means that each teacher has considerable responsibilities for leading developments in more than one subject. However, their role in monitoring how well this is making a difference to standards and achievement is under-developed. This is recognised by the headteacher who has reorganised subject responsibilities with the full co-operation of the teachers. This is enabling staff to have a clearer view of the progress that individual pupils are making across the school and a greater influence over the quality of learning, by sharing information and pin-pointing the next steps for improvement. Governors are supportive and recognise that there is still more to be done to improve the consistency of pupils' progress. Much has already been achieved with evidence that pupils are on course this year to reach more challenging targets. The overwhelming majority of parents think well of the school.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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
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	3
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?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
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	2
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?	3
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?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you very much for making me so welcome when I visited your school recently. I was really impressed with your friendliness and very good behaviour and your sensible and helpful attitudes towards each other.

I agree with most of your parents that behaviour in the school is very good. Those of you I spoke to told me this too. You said that bullying is rare but that it is dealt with well if it does happen. Your school is a safe place because adults work hard to make it so, and you have clear ideas about how to keep safe and healthy.

I think that you are given a satisfactory education which prepares you for the next stage of your learning. To make it even better, however, I am asking your teachers to make sure that everyone in the class is given work that is not too easy or too hard for them. I would also like to see you given more opportunities to use your writing skills in lots of different subjects. Teachers are also going to spend more time checking how much progress you are making and to help you improve even more.

You can all help by continuing to work hard and to meet the targets set for you.

With best wishes,

John Earish Lead Inspector