



Finchampstead CofEVA Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 110012
Local Authority Wokingham District Council
Inspection number 288563
Inspection date 25 January 2007
Reporting inspector Steven Hill

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	The Village
School category	Voluntary aided		Finchampstead
Age range of pupils	4-11		Wokingham RG40 4JR
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0118 973 2166
Number on roll (school)	108	Fax number	0118 973 1752
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Roland Cundy
		Headteacher	Mrs Sandra Symms
Date of previous school inspection	16 September 2002		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a small village school with four mixed-age classes. The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage, and almost all speak English at home. No pupils are at the early stages of learning English. Relatively few pupils have learning difficulties or disabilities, although a high proportion have statements of special educational needs. Pupils' social circumstances are generally better than average, with few pupils claiming free school meals. Attainment on entry is wide-ranging but is above average overall. The current headteacher took up post in September 2006.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school that provides outstanding pastoral care. Pupils achieve well throughout and their standards are significantly above average. Their personal development and well-being are excellent. They thoroughly enjoy learning as well as the social aspects of school, taking part in a wide range of activities with enthusiasm. They are growing up into confident, thoughtful and considerate young people, who take a pride in their accomplishments and in their school. They have excellent relationships with each other and with staff, and their behaviour is exemplary. Attendance is well-above average.

There is good provision for children in the Foundation Stage, who settle quickly and happily into school. Staff work hard and successfully to provide a good curriculum that is well matched to these young children's particular needs, alongside their Year 1 classmates. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection. Children make good progress, many reaching standards that are above average by the time they reach Year 1.

The good progress continues throughout the school, with consistently above-average standards attained by Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics. Standards are also consistently above average at Year 6. A relative weakness in writing results in 2006, in comparison with some very high scores in mathematics, science and reading, has been successfully addressed by the school this year. Pupils in the current Year 6 are producing some very good work in writing, and are on course to attain high standards by the end of the year.

Good teaching and learning, an interesting curriculum, and very good procedures to assess pupils' progress and respond to their needs underpin pupils' good achievement. Teachers manage classes well, plan effectively for individuals' needs and work hard to make lessons interesting. As a result, pupils concentrate very well, work hard and are keen to succeed. Good use of interactive whiteboards by teachers enhances the pace of pupils' learning, as well as their enthusiasm. The extensive use of paired discussion in class is very effective in developing pupils' understanding of different subjects, as well as their speaking, listening and thinking skills. The curriculum is starting to make good use of links between subjects to make lessons more interesting and to improve standards. This has been very effective this year in helping raise writing standards, but is not fully established in all subjects.

The school is well led and managed, and the new headteacher is building effectively on the good systems already established to improve provision further. Subject leaders play a much more effective role in supporting colleagues and raising standards than at the last inspection. They have made a start on working alongside each other in lessons to share expertise, and the school has correctly identified that increasing this should be a priority to build on the existing good provision. The arrangements made to deploy teaching staff and the skilled teaching assistants in the mixed-age classes are very effective in providing small single-aged teaching groups. This greatly enhances achievement, as pupils' needed are catered for very effectively at such times. The

school has worked effectively to involve parents in the work of the school, and the vast majority are strongly appreciative of all it does. One wrote 'This is a really good school with a warm and welcoming atmosphere'. However, a minority of parents are not convinced that the school seeks or takes into account their views, despite some good work done on this over the last few years. The school has made significant improvements since the last inspection, and its good self-evaluation means it is well placed to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Extend the links made between different subjects to improve pupils' understanding and enjoyment further.
- Consolidate and extend the use of 'peer observations' by teachers, so that their expertise can be shared more effectively.
- Improve communication with parents so that they all feel they are able to make their views known, and can see how these are taken into account.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good and standards are above average. Children get off to a good start in the Foundation Stage, and their attainment is above average by the end of Reception. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 continue to make good progress, and standards are consistently above average by the end of Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics. Good achievement in the older classes ensures this good start is maintained.

At the end of Year 6, standards in mathematics and science have risen significantly over the last few years, and results of national assessments in 2006 showed pupils had made very good progress in these subjects. They did very well in reading too, but not so well in writing. This lowered their scores in English overall, although standards were still above average. An extensive focus on raising writing standards this year has been successful. Pupils in Year 6 are now making very good progress in writing, and producing some work of high quality, particularly in the context of other subjects. The printed 'newspaper reports' on the death of John Lennon, showing high standards in history, information and communication technology (ICT) and writing, are very good examples of this.

Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, including those with statements of special educational need, also make good progress, because staff work effectively to meet their particular needs.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. They get on extremely well with each other and staff, and are very caring. They support one another well, both informally and through the responsibilities they take on such as being 'Big

Buddies' to younger pupils. They have very well developed collaborative skills, working effectively in teams as well as showing high levels of independence when required. They reflect thoughtfully about difficult issues and about other peoples' views. They have a much better understanding of different cultures than at the time of the last inspection.

The school council is very proactive, initiating positive changes within the school, as well as undertaking fund-raising events to support different charities. Pupils take a full part in the local community, particularly through links with the church. They have a very good understanding of healthy lifestyles, and pupils in Year 6 explained how they have changed their eating habits in the light of what they have learned. Pupils take part enthusiastically in a wide range of physical activities, and are particularly keen on the 'Planet Sports' sessions taken by professional coaches. Their enjoyment of all aspects of school is reflected in their very good attendance. They are extremely well prepared for their future lives in and out of school by their outstanding social skills, positive attitudes and secure skills in literacy and numeracy.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Good teaching and learning throughout the school result in pupils' good achievement. Very positive relationships, high expectations and well-established routines ensure that pupils' behaviour and concentration are excellent. Teachers make good use of assessments in their planning so that work is well matched to individuals' needs. Together with a brisk pace, this ensures that pupils are fully engaged in their work and make good progress. Teachers develop pupils speaking and listening skills very well in lessons across the curriculum, and successfully encourage them to work in teams. Pupils' work is marked carefully and they are given clear pointers how they can improve. Good subject knowledge underpins clear explanations by teachers, often helped by effective use of interactive white boards. Teachers are starting to involve pupils in evaluating their own learning, although this is not yet fully established.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school provides a wide and interesting curriculum for its pupils, which supports good achievement in the 'basics' of English, mathematics and science, and provides interesting work in other subjects. Teachers are working hard to make links between different subjects, but this process is not yet complete. The work done so far is appreciated by pupils because, as a girl in Year 2 told the inspector, 'mixing up subjects' like this makes lessons more interesting. The curriculum for personal, social and health education is particularly strong, contributing very effectively to pupils' outstanding personal development. Enrichment of the curriculum is strong through visits and visitors to school, and pupils really enjoy the wide range of after-school clubs available.

The teaching of German, specialist teaching of music and sports, and extensive opportunities for pupils to learn musical instruments contribute to good standards and pupils' enjoyment of school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support are outstanding. Pupils are looked after very well and feel safe, secure and confident in school because they know they are valued as individuals. Pupils in Year 2 reported that the school was a 'nice, kind, caring community...people look after you very well'. This was echoed by Year 6 pupils who stressed that the school was 'safe...no bullying or trouble...all the people are very friendly'. Secure procedures are in place to safeguard learners and ensure that they are happy and confident in their learning. Several parents wrote to express their appreciation of the school's exceptional work to care for their children when they had had particular problems.

Academic support and guidance are also strong. Pupils' progress is tracked carefully and prompt action is taken if they are not doing as well as they should. They are provided with individual targets for their learning and this helps them understand how they can improve their work. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are provided with clear individual education plans that set out specific manageable targets. Effective help from their teachers and the skilled support staff means they make good progress towards them.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Good leadership and management over several years have resulted in good provision, with very strong pastoral support for pupils, leading to good achievement and outstanding personal development. The new headteacher is building effectively on the good systems in the school to raise standards further. The school's success is based on good procedures for self-evaluation that show what needs doing, and good teamwork to address any issues that arise. The monitoring of teaching is accurate and rigorous, and teachers have been given clear pointers to help them improve their practice. Standards are tracked carefully, and effective action when needed. The recent work by all staff, in response to relative weaknesses in writing shown by national assessments, is a good example of the school's successful management systems. Governors play a full part in the work of the school, have a good understanding of its needs, and fulfil their responsibilities well.

The management of resources is outstanding. The impressive development and use of the idiosyncratic but extensive accommodation contributes well to pupils' progress. They praised the 'very good facilities' in the school, and very good equipment available. The deployment of teachers and other staff, to minimise the size of teaching groups whenever possible, is a particular strength that contributes well to pupils' achievements.

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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?	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	1
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	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

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?	1

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	1
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 your warm welcome and all your help when I visited the school. You all told me how much you enjoyed being there and I could see lots of reasons why. I agree with you that Finchampstead is a good school.

I was particularly impressed by your hard work in lessons, your excellent behaviour and how well you all get on together. You are very good at taking on responsibilities and at working in teams. You make a big difference to the school by contributing your ideas, particularly through the school council. I was pleased to see that you understand how to keep healthy, and that you are doing something about it by eating sensibly and joining in enthusiastically with all the opportunities for exercise and sports. You do so well because all the adults in the school work hard to take care of you.

You are all making good progress in your work because of good teaching. You have lots of interesting things to do and you told me how much you enjoyed lessons when teachers 'mixed up' subjects to help your learning. We have agreed that they are going to do much more of this in the future.

The headteacher, staff and governors are good at organising the school and are always trying to make it better. They keep a very careful eye on how things are going, and are good at sorting things out if there are problems. We have agreed that the teachers who are experts in particular subjects are going to spend more time working together in class, so they can give each other tips about making lessons even better.

The letters from your parents showed me how much they appreciate the work the school does to help you. A few of them would like more chances to contribute their ideas, and to know more about what is going on, and the staff have agreed to think about how this can be organised. I know that your headteacher already has some good ideas for this.

I hope you carry on enjoying school so much, working hard and helping each other.

Best wishes,

Steven HillLead Inspector