

Woolhampton Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110025
Local Authority	West Berkshire
Inspection number	288566
Inspection dates	7–8 February 2008
Reporting inspector	Keith Sadler

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	93
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Graham Ward
Headteacher	Mr Andrew Bingham
Date of previous school inspection	3 February 2003
School address	Woolhampton Hill Woolhampton Reading RG7 5TB
Telephone number	0118 9712270
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Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This much smaller than average sized primary school serves the village of Woolhampton and some surrounding areas. The social circumstances of most pupils are similar to those typically found. Almost all the pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion with a learning difficulty or disability is average. The school has gained the National Healthy Schools Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory education. It also has some good features. Parents are supportive and they recognise the value of the positive family atmosphere that helps pupils to feel included and safe. As one parent said, 'The school cares for my children very well. It is a very special school and has played an important part in our children's lives.' In consequence, pupils thrive in their personal development. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Parents are unanimous in saying that their children enjoy school and pupils agree. 'Our teachers are nice. They are funny and joyful and make learning fun', said one pupil. Due to the successful personal, social and health education programme, pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe and of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle.

Pupils enjoy lessons because teachers manage them well and ensure that relationships are positive and supportive. These positive features help the pupils to have high self-esteem and be confident. However, teaching is satisfactory overall because teachers do not always ensure that the work set sufficiently challenges pupils, particularly the more able. In addition, the pace of learning is sometimes too slow because teachers do not have high enough expectations of what the pupils can achieve. In consequence, achievement in Years 1 to 6 is satisfactory.

Even though work set in literacy and numeracy lacks challenge for some pupils, taken overall, the quality of the curriculum is good. This is because there have been considerable improvements since the previous inspection when there were weaknesses in its breadth and some national guidelines were not being met. It now provides a wide range of interesting activities that are complemented by a good range of additional activities.

Results in national tests have been average for pupils in both Year 2 and Year 6 for the past three years. The exception to this is mathematics in which standards, three years ago were below average. They have risen to being slightly below average because a good improvement project to strengthen attainment has impacted positively. Quite rightly, the school is now focusing on increasing the proportion of pupils gaining the higher level at both Years 2 and 6.

The new headteacher has made a good start. He has a clear vision for the future of the school and has developed a strong sense of purpose and teamwork among the staff. Together, with the governing body, they share his commitment for further improvement. He has steered the school well in strengthening the curriculum, raising standards to the current satisfactory level in mathematics and improving behaviour. He has also improved the tracking of pupils' progress. However, at present this has not extended to involving the pupils. They do not always have a clear understanding of what their targets are and what they need to do to reach them.

The school has satisfactory monitoring and evaluation procedures. At present, there is a lack of sufficient rigour in checking provision. In addition, teachers with responsibilities are not fully involved because their role is under-developed. The improvements made demonstrate a satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children settle quickly and well in the Reception/Year 1 class. Older pupils in the class take care to make them welcome and the positive atmosphere enables children to understand class routines. The effective curriculum and good quality care enables the children to be happy and settled and to work with partners and in groups. Early literacy and mathematical skills are

promoted well through practical activities and the outside area is used well to support independent or guided learning. The senior teacher is an effective manager, keeping a close eye on the children's progress and overseeing the good balance of adult-led and child selected activities. She also ensures that the children both learn separately from and together with Year 1 pupils according to the best needs of the children.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards by increasing the proportion of pupils that gain the higher level.
- Quicken progress in lessons by ensuring that activities are always sufficiently challenging and by raising expectations of what pupils can achieve.
- Ensure that pupils know what their targets are in literacy and numeracy and what they have to do to achieve them.
- Bring more rigour to the self-evaluation process and ensure that subject leaders are directly involved in this process.

A small proportion of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged to be satisfactory but who have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Current Year 5 and 6 pupils are on course to attain average standards. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. They make steady progress between Years 1 and 6 from their broadly typical levels on entry to Year 1. This is because learning is slowed as teachers do not sufficiently challenge pupils. Recent improvements in the tracking of pupils' progress ensures that any pupils that fall behind are quickly identified. Because the provision for pupils that learn at a slower rate is good, and a lot of individual attention is provided, they make good progress towards their targets. There is no difference in the performance of boys and girls.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They behave exceptionally well in lessons and, around the school, their behaviour is good. They are attentive, even when work does not challenge them enough, show respect and are polite and well-mannered. Pupils say that they enjoy school, especially the wide range of clubs and the many visits that they make. They also enjoy taking responsibility and the sense of belonging promoted through their various responsibilities around the school. These include supporting lonely pupils, looking after equipment in the shed and being playground buddies. In addition, the school council is proactive and has been successful in ensuring that pupils' ideas are shared and acted upon. The positive personal development and their satisfactory skills prepare pupils appropriately for secondary education and their future lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Although teaching is satisfactory overall, there are some considerable strengths. Relationships are very positive, staff manage the pupils well and they provide a wide range of curricular

opportunities. In addition, the support staff make a valuable contribution to learning, particularly in the Foundation Stage and when working with pupils with learning difficulties. However, teachers' planning does not provide the necessary variations of challenge necessary to meet pupils' learning needs, particularly the more able. In addition, teachers do not always have high enough expectations of what the pupils can achieve. These twin factors reduce pupils' progress in lessons and result in satisfactory overall achievement.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

There have been considerable improvements in the quality and range of the curriculum since the previous inspection when there were gaps in meeting national guidelines. These weaknesses have been removed. Teachers link subjects together well and this promotes purpose and gives meaning to learning. For example, pupils in Year 6 delighted in the World War 2 topic when teachers linked a wide range of literacy work, art, information and communication technology (ICT) and design and technology as well as the history on which the topic was based. Pupils dressed as evacuees and were waved off from Midgham station by parents when they visited the museum in Reading. In addition, a local historian visited the school and he showed pupils the bunkers in the village and how the Kennet/Avon canal provided a line of defence. Pupils made their own shelters in Douai Woods. There is a wide range of clubs and extra-curricular activities and membership of the Federation enables many activities, particularly those that are sports based, to be provided.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Parents are unanimous in their view that their children are safe in school. This is because care is a strong feature and there are good procedures for safeguarding pupils and ensuring their health and safety. The school tracks pupils' progress well particularly in literacy and numeracy. However, the information is not used well enough by teachers either to match their planning to pupils' learning needs or to ensure that pupils are clear about what their targets are and how to make their work better. Most parents feel that the school keeps them well informed. However, a number of parents do not feel that they have as much information as they would like about their children's progress. These concerns were investigated and it was found that the school does more than many schools.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The new headteacher has made a good start. He has the confidence of the experienced staff and together they are keen to seek ways to improve the school's provision and pupils' achievement. However, leadership and management are satisfactory because, although there are some stronger areas such as the leadership and management of special educational needs and the Foundation Stage, there are some weaknesses. Although self-evaluation procedures are in place, they are not rigorous or systematic enough and they do not sufficiently involve subject leaders. Despite this the school has a broadly accurate view of its strengths and weaknesses and the development plan is a useful tool for improvement although it currently contains too many targets. Governors are very supportive of the school and are committed to the school's improvement. However, at present, they are too reliant on information from staff

rather than by systematically visiting the school, and hence there are limitations in the effectiveness of their monitoring.

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Annex A

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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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	3

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?	3

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.

Annex A

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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	3
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

25 February 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Woolhampton Church of England Primary School, Reading, RG7 5TB

Thank you for welcoming me to your school when I visited you recently. I enjoyed meeting you and watching you learn and play. I was pleased to hear that you enjoy school and learning. You are rightly proud of the lovely environment in which your school is placed.

Your school is satisfactory and getting better. You told me that you feel safe in school and I can see that this is because the staff take good care of you. I was very impressed with your behaviour in lessons and around the school. I particularly liked the way that older pupils look after younger ones to stop them from being lonely in the playground. I also enjoyed hearing about the topics that you do. I am impressed by how your teachers make different subjects link together very well.

However, your school can improve. The standards that you reach are not high enough by the end of Year 6 so I have asked your teachers to concentrate on making sure that more of you reach the higher level for your age group when you leave. I have also asked your teachers to make sure that they provide work that is hard enough for you to make good progress, particularly those of you who find learning easier. In addition, I have asked your headteacher and teachers who are in charge of subjects to check how well you are being taught and your progress more thoroughly. Finally, some of you do not know what your targets are in literacy and numeracy. You need to know these, and what you have to do to do even better in these subjects.

Best wishes for the future.

Keith Sadler

Lead Inspector