



Spinfield School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 110336
Local Authority Buckinghamshire
Inspection number 288638
Inspection date 7 February 2007
Reporting inspector Christopher Parker

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Terrington Hill
School category	Community		Marlow
Age range of pupils	4-11		SL7 2RE
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01628 473551
Number on roll (school)	211	Fax number	01628 477652
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs Sue Robertson
		Headteacher	Ms Susan Hartley
Date of previous school inspection	12 February 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The school serves an advantaged area. Most of the pupils are of White British heritage and almost all speak English as their first language. There are fewer pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities than in most schools. When the children start school their skills are well developed for their age.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

The school provides an outstanding education for the pupils. As a result they achieve very well and reach exceptionally high standards. The youngest children make an excellent start to school life. By the end of Year 6 eight out of ten pupils reach the higher level in national tests. The pupils' personal development and well-being are also outstanding.

Very effective teaching and a vibrant and interesting curriculum underpin the school's success. The teachers use their good subject knowledge to plan lessons that challenge and support pupils of all abilities. Marking and target setting are particularly effective in helping pupils to improve. Teachers have high expectations and move lessons along at a brisk pace. Pupils are highly motivated and, in discussion, say they find lessons 'lively and fun'. The curriculum is wide ranging. Opportunities to write in, for example, history or apply their mathematical skills in science contribute significantly to the excellent progress the pupils make. Recent improvements in the facilities for information and communication technology (ICT) have led to its increasing use in lessons. However, it is not yet used as extensively or as imaginatively as it should be.

The senior management team keeps a sharp focus on the pupils' performance to make sure that they achieve as well as they should. The headteacher and senior management team frequently monitor the quality of the teaching. They scrutinise plans, observe lessons, check the pupils' work and monitor their progress. They use their findings to identify where teaching can be improved and help teachers to develop their skills still further. Governors also play a key role in checking that the school is performing as well as it should. By visiting the school regularly they find out for themselves how well it is doing. Collectively, the senior management team and governors have an accurate view of what the school is doing well and where improvements can be made.

The pupils behave very well. They express their views politely and clearly. Most make confident and interesting contributions to lessons. The views of pupils are sought, valued and acted upon. One parent, reflecting the views of others, commented how the school, 'proactively encourages parent involvement'. Relationships with parents and community organisations are very strong.

The school responded positively to the last inspection. Opportunities to write at length and across the curriculum, handwriting, and the pace of lessons have all improved significantly. More use is now made of computers but more remains to be done to fully exploit the school's new ICT facilities. The school is well placed to maintain the exceptionally high standards the pupils attain and to continue to enhance what it provides for them.

What the school should do to improve further

Provide more opportunities for pupils to make imaginative use of information and communication technology across the curriculum.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Standards are exceptionally high at the end of Years 2 and 6. The children make very good progress in the Foundation Stage and most reach the goals set for the end of the Reception Year. At the end of Year 2 standards have been very high for the last two years with a marked upward trend in reading and writing. The school reacted immediately when girls performed much better than boys' in the writing test in 2006. Additional support and more purposeful and motivating opportunities to write have resulted in many of the boys in Year 3 now writing with greater fluency. Standards in mathematics have remained significantly above the national average. At the end of Year 6 standards have been very high for several years. In 2006 all pupils reached the expected level and eight out of ten reached the higher level in English, mathematics and science. Progress measures indicate that for pupils of all abilities achievement is outstanding.

The pupils are exceptionally well prepared for the future, with some older and more able pupils tackling elements of the secondary school curriculum.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Personal development and well-being are outstanding. The pupils are actively involved in a wide range of opportunities for games and sports which many relish. Their sporting successes in cross-country running, football and netball are a testament to their enjoyment of these activities. First-aid training through Heartstart raises the pupils' awareness of how to stay safe. They say they feel safe on the playground, everyone gets on well and that they would have no hesitation in turning to an adult if they needed help. Their excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is the result of the many opportunities they are given. They explore the work of, for example, Mondrian and Pollock, participate in musical activities including African drumming and learn about celebrations in other cultures. A very few parents feel that standards of behaviour are slipping but in lessons and around the school the pupils behave very well.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

The teaching is extremely effective. Activities are carefully planned. Introductions to lessons are well-focused so that it is clear to pupils what they are expected to learn. Brisk and challenging tasks characterise the teaching of English and mathematics. Teachers use their subject knowledge and the information they collect about each child's progress to pitch their questions at the right level to make the pupils think. In the reception class letter sounds are very well taught and pupils are already able to

recognise words which rhyme. Some are able to predict what the next rhyming word might be. In Year 6 mathematics is very well taught. Time challenges and demanding problems motivate the pupils and capture their interest.

The pupils' work is marked so that they know what to do to improve their next piece of work. Some marking, for example of Year 6 history projects, evaluates and values the pupils' contributions.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The school provides a very broad and interesting curriculum. The pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are developed very effectively, not only in English and mathematics lessons but also through well planned activities in other subjects. ICT is now being used more effectively. In discussion pupils say they are using computers more frequently than in the past but the new facilities are not yet used as extensively or as imaginatively as they could be. The curriculum is enriched by theme days, visits and visitors that provide an extra dimension to what the pupils are studying in lessons. The Foundation Stage curriculum provides many opportunities for children to work with adults as well as to develop independence and make choices. Creative elements of the curriculum, such as art and music, are well represented on the timetable and in after school activities. Extensive sporting opportunities are also available to pupils both during and after school. These benefit greatly from the contributions of teachers, parents and community organisations.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support are outstanding. Pupils feel safe and secure and are very confident that any difficulties will be dealt with quickly by the adults. Procedures for child protection are clear and health and safety arrangements appropriate. The school carries out all of the checks that are required on the adults who work in the school.

Pupils of all abilities are given excellent academic guidance to ensure they reach the levels they should. This is an important factor which contributes to their excellent achievement. Teachers keep a close eye on progress and set challenging targets. More demanding tasks are set for those who are able, gifted and talented. Pupils with learning difficulties are given very good support by teaching assistants.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Leadership and management are outstanding. The headteacher, senior management team and governors combine very effectively to monitor and evaluate the school's performance. Lessons are frequently observed and areas where improvements can be made are clearly identified. For example, some teachers were not always making clear to the pupils what they would learn in a lesson. Others were not consistently challenging

all groups of pupils. These shortcomings have been tackled to make sure teaching is always of high quality.

A few parents feel their opinions are not taken into account but the school canvasses their views through questionnaires. Surveys of both pupils' and parents' views form part of a very well planned cycle of activities that contribute to the evaluation of the school's performance and help to determine the priorities for improvement. The vast majority of parents are highly satisfied with the school, some describing it as 'an excellent school', with a 'happy environment' and a 'lovely atmosphere'.

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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?	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

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	1
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?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
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?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
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	1
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

This letter is to tell you about the findings of the recent inspection and to thank you for taking the time to talk to me about your school. You attend an outstanding school which successfully encourages you to share and care for each other. You behave well. Some of you told me how much you enjoy school and that it is 'the best!'

You say you feel safe at playtimes and are very confident that the adults would help you if ever you had a problem. Some of you also said that the school provides lots of interesting opportunities and I agree. You are given responsibilities, such as school council members and ICT monitors, which you particularly enjoy and carry out conscientiously.

The teachers are helping you to achieve very well. They set you very clear targets in your work, which help you to concentrate on what you need to do to improve. The teachers successfully introduce new ideas in their lessons, which some of you think are 'lively and fun'. The lessons I saw were very well planned so that there was something to interest and challenge every group in the class. The teachers ask you some searching questions to which you give thoughtful answers.

The headteacher and teachers are constantly looking at how well the school is doing so that improvements can be made. I have asked them to give you more opportunities to use computers in interesting and imaginative ways.

I hope that the school continues to help you to reach very high standards and that it continues to be very successful in helping you to do as well as you possibly can.

Yours sincerely

Christopher Parker

Lead Inspector