

Seer Green Church of England Combined School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110458
Local Authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	288679
Inspection date	19 September 2007
Reporting inspector	Rob Crompton

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	212
School	
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr P Bingle
Headteacher	Mrs O Davison-Oakley
Date of previous school inspection	3 December 2001
School address	School Lane Seer Green Beaconsfield HP9 2QJ
Telephone number	01494 676344
Fax number	01494 730692

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector. The school was visited for one day. The inspector investigated the following issues in detail: achievement and standards, pupils' personal development, care guidance and support, and leadership and management. Evidence was gathered from the school's self-evaluation, national published assessment data and the school's own assessment records, curriculum and planning documents, observation of the school at work, interviews with staff and pupils and the parents' questionnaires. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

The school serves the village of Seer Green and draws pupils from surrounding parishes. The local area is very affluent. Most children attend a playgroup or nursery before starting in Reception. As they enter the school, their level of skills and understanding is above that typical of the age group. Seven pupils have a statement of special educational need, which is twice the national average.

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 standard of education and care. Pupils have excellent attitudes to learning, behave impeccably and are very proud of their school. The school is very inclusive and is focused on encouraging both academic excellence and the personal and social development of all pupils. The relatively small size of the school means that pupils are well known to staff and there is a very strong emphasis on meeting their individual needs. Students feel safe and well cared for and many commented on the friendly nature of the school and the good relationships they enjoy with each other and their teachers. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. This comment was typical of a number of others received from parents: 'Seer Green is a warm, stimulating environment for children to learn and thrive'.

Children enter the school with skills and understanding that are above those typical of the age group. They make excellent progress so that the standards reached by Year 6 pupils are well above average and sometimes exceptionally high. The outstanding achievement of pupils results from a combination of high quality teaching and excellent care, guidance and support. The great majority of pupils reach or exceed the challenging targets they are set. The tracking and monitoring of pupils' progress are very rigorous and there is rapid and effective intervention when necessary. For example, pupils with particular gifts or talents are quickly identified and special provision is made for them, in partnership with a local secondary school. Parents are very complimentary about the provision for pupils with learning difficulties and several wrote moving tributes. One wrote, 'I cannot imagine any better school or more dedicated staff'. Another commented, 'The headteacher and staff have been amazing, making my daughter feel like any other child'. As a result of first class support, the progress of pupils with learning difficulties is at least in line with that of other pupils. Teaching assistants play a major role in this, particularly in their skilful and sensitive support for pupils with emotional or behavioural problems.

Pupils support each other and respect differences. They have an excellent understanding of how to lead safe and healthy lives. Pupils have a good range of opportunities to take responsibility and contribute to the life of the school. Indeed, the older pupils rightly feel they should be given further roles, such as keeping an eye on the library to allow more pupils access to it during breaktimes. Through their school council, pupils acquire a very good understanding of working together to improve their community. By the time they leave, pupils are armed with high-level skills to help them move on successfully in all that they do.

The teaching is outstanding. As one pupil put it, 'we work hard and learn a lot, but in a fun way'. Specialist teaching in art, information and communication technology (ICT), physical education, science, French, music and religious education enhances the quality of learning and drives achievement in these subjects. Teachers ensure that pupils are aware of the next steps in their learning, often involving them in self-review. This means pupils develop mature attitudes and an increasing awareness of how they can contribute to their own success. Teachers provide very good feedback through marking and pupils in their turn use a 'traffic light' system to comment on how difficult they find the work. Some marking, however, does not pay enough attention to pupils' handwriting and presentation, which can be careless and untidy.

The curriculum is outstanding and provides tremendous opportunities for pupils' academic and personal development. It contributes significantly to their excellent cultural and spiritual development. Reflecting the views of many parents, one wrote, 'The school goes beyond

academic achievement to nurture and develop the whole child'. The school has gained national awards for its work in the arts, physical education, geography and health education. Music is a major strength and permeates the life of the school. Over half the pupils are learning an orchestral instrument. The tuneful and expressive singing in assemblies is a joy. Pupils talked enthusiastically about the wide range of visits, visitors and clubs. They have fond memories of a Mexican feast, writing letters using the Greek alphabet and constructing a sculpture with the help of a visiting artist.

This extremely caring school welcomes all children, whatever their needs. Pupils and parents recognise this and it is a key factor in pupils' very positive attitudes to school. Child protection and health and safety procedures are well established and any pupils who are at risk are quickly identified and supported extremely well.

The leadership and management of the headteacher and other senior managers are excellent. Governors provide strong support and use their very good knowledge of the school to monitor and evaluate the school's performance and achieve very good value for money. Managers at all levels have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in their areas of responsibility. For example, a slight dip in writing standards in Years 1 and 2 was addressed very effectively. Every effort was made to bring about improvements and the fruits of these efforts are clearly emerging. The school has made very good progress in addressing the issues identified in the last Ofsted inspection. Managers are not complacent and recognise where further improvement can be made. The evidence is that they have an excellent capacity to achieve this.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

The outstanding provision in the Foundation Stage gets children off to a flying start. Children build very well on the good social, language and number skills they have on starting school. This is because the highly effective team of staff provides challenging activities that move children's learning on apace. An excellent partnership with parents and pre-school settings means children settle in smoothly. Through close observation, adults track progress meticulously and modify their teaching accordingly. A very good balance between teacher led sessions and activities initiated by the children provides highly effective support across all areas of learning. As a result, children make very good progress. With few exceptions, all children reach or exceed the standards expected by the end of Reception.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve pupils' handwriting and presentation skills.
- Build on pupils' highly positive attitudes and trustworthiness by providing further opportunities for them to take on responsibilities.

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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?	1
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?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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.

Annex A

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

28 September 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Seer Green Church of England Combined School, Beaconsfield, HP9 2QJ

Thank you for welcoming me to your school. I thoroughly enjoyed my visit. You told me you thought the school was fantastic and I agree with you. One boy said that it was 'an exciting musical school' and I could see what he meant. Teachers make learning fun and keep a close eye on how you are doing to make sure you learn new things every day. As a result, you make really good progress in each class and reach high standards by the end of Year 6. Music certainly plays an important part in school life and it was a delight to hear your lovely singing in assembly.

One of the best things you like about the school is its friendliness. I saw this for myself in the way you get on so well together in lessons and at breaktimes. You can take much of the credit for the happy atmosphere because you behave so well and take pride in your school. The girl who told me that the school is 'open to everyone' summed things up perfectly. It was a pleasure to see how you look after one another, especially when someone needs a little extra encouragement or support.

All the good things you enjoy do not happen by accident of course. The school is run extremely well to ensure you get the most out of lessons and the wealth of extra activities.

I have suggested a couple of things that could be improved. Looking at your books, I found some of you did not take enough care in writing neatly or setting out your work clearly, so I have asked teachers to check on that more carefully. You can do your bit by trying hard. If you write in pencil, make sure it is sharp! Some older pupils thought that they could take on more responsibilities around the school and I agree. I have suggested that they might help in keeping an eye on the library at breaktimes, for example, so more children can use the wide range of books available.

With very best wishes for the future,

Yours sincerely,

Rob Crompton

Lead inspector