



Speen CofE VA School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 110468
Local Authority Buckinghamshire
Inspection number 288683
Inspection date 8 November 2006
Reporting inspector Christopher Parker

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

Type of school	Infant	School address	Flowers Bottom Lane
School category	Voluntary aided		Speen
Age range of pupils	4-7		Princes Risborough HP27 05X
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01494 488321
Number on roll (school)	34	Fax number	01494 488321
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs Amanda Cleaver
		Headteacher	Mrs Denise Nayna
Date of previous school inspection	15 April 2002		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a very small school serving an area where most pupils come from advantaged homes. Attainment on entry is above average but fluctuates from year to year because the number of pupils in each cohort is very small. Currently, a very small proportion of the pupils have learning difficulties. Last year, the proportion was much higher illustrating the variation from year to year.

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 excellent education for the pupils. The headteacher's outstanding leadership is the main reason why the school has continued to do so well since the last inspection. The wide range of opportunities the school offers motivate and interest the pupils. They are confident and very receptive to the good teaching. Class sizes are small and pupils are often taught in even smaller groups. As a result they make rapid progress and their personal development is outstanding.

The youngest children settle very quickly into the exceptionally well managed Reception class. They make rapid progress. One parent wrote how her son, who had previously shown no interest in writing or drawing, instantly began to enjoy school and now, 'his writing is excellent considering the short time he has been doing it.'

Achievement is outstanding. Test results at the end of Year 2 fluctuate because of the different make up of the very small cohorts. In 2004 and 2005 results were exceptionally high. This year they were lower, although still well above average, because of the unusually high proportion of pupils with learning difficulties. Nevertheless, the pupils exceeded the challenging targets set for them. Standards in writing are not quite as high as those in reading and mathematics. The school has used a number of strategies to help the pupils attain higher standards. It has been particularly successful in using the Early Literacy Strategy to help pupils to make rapid progress. Setting targets for pupils has also proved beneficial. However, some of the targets are not precise enough to help the pupils to improve their work even more.

The teaching is consistently good. Teachers set out very clearly what they want the pupils to learn. The tasks set for the younger children provide opportunities for them to make choices when they are not involved in a group being skilfully led by an adult. The work the teachers' set is generally well matched to the pupils' needs but some writing tasks are not demanding quite enough from abler pupils to make sure they make rapid progress. Pupils enjoy lessons because the relaxed atmosphere within the school encourages them to contribute confidently. Their outstanding behaviour allows lessons to take place free of any interruptions.

All aspects of the pupils' personal development are outstanding because they gain so much from the rich curriculum. Personal, social and health education promotes consideration and cooperation. Excellent links with many community and sporting organisations provide a vast range of opportunities and challenges that enhance a healthy lifestyle. The worship trail promotes spiritual development and a growing awareness of other faiths and cultures.

The very effective leadership, strong governance and good teaching have maintained high standards and continued to develop what the school offers. It is well placed to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Sharpen and refine targets for writing to move pupils rapidly to the next stage

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Achievement is outstanding and as a result standards are high. The children have achieved a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year. Currently, the youngest children are growing in confidence, working well together and making rapid strides in their knowledge of sounds and letters and in their early writing. Because they make such a good start and continue to make rapid progress standards in reading have been exceptionally high for a number of years. One parent commented how her child's reading had, 'improved exponentially'. Standards in mathematics have also been very high for the last few years. By the end of Year 2 pupils have a very secure foundation for the future.

Excellent behaviour and an atmosphere in which pupils feel safe and relaxed generate confidence and a willingness to tackle challenges. This is also true of the very few pupils with learning difficulties, who are also moving forward rapidly. Of the pupils who took the national tests at the end of Year 2 in 2006 over half had learning difficulties but they achieved particularly well and the results were well above average.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are outstanding. Their attendance is good. The pupils feel safe and take part in a very wide range of activities to help them to be healthy. They also develop a very healthy attitude to trying things out. This is possible because of the rich curriculum the school offers. Parents are also actively involved in after school clubs and events as part of the healthy schools initiative. Currently, parents are running an after school activity that brings the school grounds, dance and music together which pupils greatly enjoy.

The school council reports on its work to the rest of the school during assembly. They are clearly very proud of their work and take their roles as chairman, secretary and treasurers very seriously. The treasurer shares the secretary's role at the moment because they 'haven't got any money!' Nevertheless, they make a very important contribution to decisions on the school grounds and the buildings.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The teaching and learning are good. The teaching of the youngest children is particularly effective because it encourages them to make choices and generates independence. The careful deployment of teaching assistants allows most activities to be carried out in small groups providing the pupils with much individual support.

This approach helps pupils with learning difficulties to make rapid progress through carefully modified tasks and to participate fully in all activities.

Pupils are encouraged to contribute to lessons and there is a relaxed approach which allows conversations between the teacher and the pupils to develop. Pupils enjoy and benefit from explanations and greater challenge that develop through these conversations. They help to move learning along at a good pace. Tasks are interesting and in most cases are planned to provide a good challenge for pupils of different ages and abilities. However, some writing tasks are not precisely matched to the needs of abler pupils because targets are too broad.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The outstandingly rich curriculum is one of the main reasons why pupils do so well academically and personally. Much of the enrichment is the result of the close links with many organisations. The police and health services provide special activities on the dangers of drugs, alcohol and smoking. Specialist teaching extends the music curriculum. Opportunities are available to all pupils in Years 1 and 2 to take part in, for example, French, dance, cricket, athletics and speed and agility training. Wycombe Wanderers run football training, London Wasps tag rugby and a golf professional provides coaching. Many of the courses run for a few weeks and are then replaced by others. This gives the pupils the opportunity to be involved in many different activities. Pupils value and enjoy these activities and what the whole curriculum offers them. Their enjoyment was illustrated by one pupil who said how at the weekends she, 'can't wait for Monday to be back at school.'

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care and support of pupils is a very strong but some elements of academic guidance are not as refined and precise as they could be. The school has taken steps to make sure that all requirements are met so that the pupils can learn in safety and with very effective support. This is very well illustrated by the preparation for a parent-led after school activity that has a good adult to pupil ratio and a first-aider always present.

The tracking of the pupils' progress is comprehensive but in some areas it is not sharply focussed enough on the next small step pupils need to take. Nevertheless, it allows the school to identify those who need a 'boost' and to provide them with extra support so that they reach the levels expected of them.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Leadership and management are outstanding. The high standards reported at the time of the last inspection have been maintained because the headteacher is committed to the pupils achieving as well as they can. This extends well beyond their academic

achievement. Varied and interesting opportunities for all pupils result in a rich curriculum and very well motivated pupils who enjoy learning. Subject leaders make a good contribution to planning and improving what the school offers.

Self evaluation is used effectively. The quality of teaching is accurately evaluated by the headteacher and governors. Weaknesses that are identified are addressed at staff meetings, through training or form areas for improvement in the school development plan. Governor working parties monitor the success of improvement activities. As a result of training on the analysis of data, governors hold the school to account for the pupils' performance. Governors invite parents' views through surveys. These confirm a very high level of satisfaction. Governors also interview pupils to get their very clear views of the school. The school council was set up following this type of activity to harness pupils' ideas.

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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	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?	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	2
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?	2
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?	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?	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	2
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

Thank you for making me so welcome when I visited your school. I really enjoyed the day.

You go to an outstanding school and do very well because the headteacher and teachers give you so many interesting things to do. You are making super progress in reading and mathematics. You are also doing well in writing but I have asked the teachers to give you targets to improve in smaller steps than the ones you have now. I want them to do this so that your writing gets even better.

Your behaviour is excellent. Everyone gets on very well with each other and you are always willing to help if someone falls down in the playground or is feeling left out of a game. Some of you told me how much you like school. I'm not surprised because of all the extra things you are able to do!

I hope you continue to enjoy school and to do well.

Yours sincerely

Christopher Parker

Lead inspector