



Kempsford Church of England Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 115629
Local Authority Gloucestershire
Inspection number 290281
Inspection date 13 November 2006
Reporting inspector Helen Barter

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Kempsford
School category	Voluntary controlled		Fairford
Age range of pupils	4–11		GL7 4EY
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01285 810367
Number on roll (school)	122	Fax number	01285 810004
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Chris Sheppard
		Headteacher	Martin Ballard
Date of previous school inspection	26 March 2001		

Age group	Inspection date	Inspection number
4–11	13 November 2006	290281

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This small village school is located near the rural town of Fairford. It is in close proximity to an air force base from where a number of pupils come, some of whom have been educated abroad and have had varied experiences of schooling. There is a higher than usual number of pupils who join and leave the school at different times. Most pupils are White British but there is a small proportion from other ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is slightly higher than average. In the last two years, the school has been through a difficult period with staff changes and absences, protracted building works and a number of changes within the governing body.

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. After a significant period of disruption, it is now in a position to get to grips with what it needs to do to drive forward improvement. Senior leaders recognise that the school needs to 'raise its game' if it is to improve pupils' achievement. It is acting positively by developing more systematic monitoring of groups of pupils to identify those who are likely to underachieve. Leadership and management are satisfactory and recognise the need to establish more robust self-evaluation processes so that the school development plan focuses more precisely on those priorities which are key to its further improvement. The headteacher has maintained the school's caring ethos throughout a difficult period and parents have remained supportive of the school. They describe it as providing 'a sound, all-round education and a very happy environment for our children'.

Teaching and the curriculum provided for pupils are satisfactory and have resulted in pupils' achievement being satisfactory. Good provision for children in Reception means they meet the goals they are expected to achieve. They develop strong personal and social skills on which they build as they move through the school. Pupils make satisfactory progress in Years 1 to 6 and reach broadly average standards by the time they leave. Standards have risen in English in the past two years and are now above average. However, there is too great a variation in mathematics standards each year and pupils do not always meet the challenging targets set for them.

There are a number of strengths in the quality of education provided, such as good use of information and communication technology (ICT) and enrichment activities, which encourage pupils to enjoy learning. However, information about pupils' progress is not used consistently well to provide them with work which is closely matched to their abilities and challenges them to do as well as they can. Literacy targets help pupils to understand what is expected of them and to reach higher standards. This practice is not yet established in mathematics with the result that pupils are not always sufficiently challenged and they do not fully understand what they must do to improve their work.

The care, support and guidance provided for pupils are satisfactory, although more attention needs to be given to providing pupils of all abilities with guidance which will help them to reach their targets. The pastoral care provided is a strength within this provision and ensures that pupils' personal development is good. Pupils thoroughly enjoy school and are developing into responsible and caring young people. New pupils settle because everyone is 'really friendly and you are made to feel welcome'.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide pupils with work in mathematics which is better matched to their different abilities so that they are challenged to reach higher standards and meet their targets.
- Make better use of information about pupils' progress to plan work which helps them all to achieve well throughout the school.

- Strengthen leadership and management through developing more rigorous self-evaluation processes in order to provide a sharper focus on the most important priorities for the school's development.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Children start in Reception with skills and experiences which are average for their age. Good quality teaching enables them to make good progress and achieve the goals expected of them by the end of the Reception Year, with about a quarter of children exceeding them. All children develop good personal and social skills.

Pupils make satisfactory progress from Year 1 to 6 and reach broadly average standards by the time they leave. A focus on improving pupils' writing skills has improved standards in English in the past two years, although fewer pupils achieve the higher level in writing than they do in reading. Standards in mathematics are erratic with significant dips in some years and above average standards in others. Over time, mathematics standards lag behind English and science and pupils of all abilities, particularly the more able, do not always meet their challenging targets. Pupils with learning difficulties make satisfactory progress, although they do not always meet their targets because work provided is not planned accurately enough to support their learning.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good. Good attendance and positive attitudes to learning reflect pupils' enjoyment of school. Behaviour is good, although pupils are sometimes restless when work is not well matched to their needs. Parents describe their children as 'confident and secure' because 'they know the rules and respect their teachers.' Pupils have good social skills developed through work, play and activities such as residential visits. They say that they feel safe and secure because they are free from bullying. Pupils know it is important to care for themselves. They are 'healthy eaters' and keen participants in after-school sports. Pupils' spiritual development is particularly good and fostered through strong links with the village church. In assembly, they listened thoughtfully to how Bishop Tutu worked against apartheid and were quietly reflective in their prayers. Pupils are keen to help others in their community and have a good say in school life through their class and school councils. Pupils have satisfactory skills to prepare them for life ahead although a number express a lack of confidence in using their mathematical skills.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Relationships between adults and pupils are positive and pupils want to learn as a result. Good quality displays throughout the school stimulate pupils' interest and place value on the work they do. ICT is used well to engage pupils' interest and involvement in lessons. Teachers do not make enough use of what they already know about pupils' learning to plan work for them which challenges them and enables them to make as much progress as possible. Targets set for pupils with learning difficulties are not specific enough with the result that teachers sometimes plan work which is too challenging for them. Pupils say that they are 'confused' when this happens. Teaching assistants give careful attention when supporting pupils with learning difficulties and help them to make satisfactory progress. Their skills, though, are not always fully utilised in whole-class teaching sessions. Homework is not provided consistently to give pupils the opportunity to reinforce and extend their learning beyond the school day.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Children in Reception benefit from a good curriculum. The wide range of opportunities to develop speaking and listening skills is bearing fruit in children's improved writing skills in Reception and in Year 1. For older pupils, an improved rolling programme of planned activities across the mixed-age classes makes sure that they develop the skills they need. The school recognises the need to develop its provision for pupils with learning difficulties so that they are given more precise targets to work towards. There is a register of its gifted and talented pupils but no systematic plans for additional opportunities to extend and challenge them. Good use is made of staff expertise for teaching in physical education, music and French and as a result pupils achieve well and enjoy these subjects. The new school hall has improved provision for physical education well. The good range of extra-curricular activities, such as the recent 'hit' production of *Oliver*, contributes significantly to pupils' personal development and enjoyment of school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The strong Christian ethos helps pupils to feel valued, safe and well cared for. Pupils know that adults listen to them and sort out their concerns. Parents commented that 'We are very proud of our village school because it positively nurtures the children and encourages a very caring environment.' Although some improvement has been made in monitoring pupils' academic progress, there is still more to be done if pupils' achievement is to improve. New targets in literacy help pupils understand what is expected of them but this does not yet extend to mathematics. Marking is used to

make helpful comments and often involves pupils well in dialogue about how well they think they have done. However, teachers do not always use marking effectively to guide pupils on the next steps towards improvement.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher, who is well supported by senior staff, effectively promotes the caring school ethos. Parents praise all staff for their 'professionalism and commitment' to the school. The school is now settled following significant disruptions, which have hampered the rate of improvement. Senior leaders have recently had more opportunities for monitoring of teaching and learning and recognise that these now need to have a sharper focus on the areas which require the greatest improvement.

The school knows where its strengths lie but its self-evaluation requires more rigour in order to identify the most important areas for development. It has demonstrated that it has capacity to improve further, as seen in the measures put in place to raise standards in English in the past two years. Although its role in holding the school to account for its performance is still evolving, the new governing body is supportive of the headteacher and committed to improving the school. Good use is made of partnerships with other schools, the community and church to broaden pupils' learning and extend staff's skills and experiences beyond the small school environment.

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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?	3
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	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

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	3

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

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 performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	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

Thank you for making us welcome when we came to visit your school. You were very polite and friendly and we enjoyed talking with you during the day. I am writing to tell you some of the things we found out.

- Your school provides you with a satisfactory education and you reach standards which we would expect by the time you move on to secondary school.
- Those of you in Reception are learning well because you are given lots of interesting things to do and are getting plenty of help with your writing.
- You like school and you behave well because you understand the rules and know that people will help you if things go wrong.
- You are growing up into responsible young people and you have really good ideas for improving your school in your class and school councils.
- You learn well when teachers give you activities which make you have to think hard.
- You enjoy the extra activities that the school organises for you. Your production of Oliver sounded really great!
- Your teachers care about you and want to make sure that you are happy at school and well looked after.
- All the people who lead and manage your school have your best interests at heart and want to make the school an even better place. You are lucky to have your lovely new school hall and classrooms!

To make your school even better, we have asked it to work on these things:

- Help you to improve your mathematics by setting targets for you to work towards and then giving you activities which are planned at just the right level for you so that you achieve them.
- Make sure you are given work which makes all of you have to think hard so that you do as well as you possibly can.
- Keep checking how well the school is getting on and then decide the most important things to work on which will make it even better than it is now.

I wish you all the best for the future.