



Overton Church of England Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 116305
Local Authority Hampshire
Inspection number 290493
Inspection dates 14–15 February 2007
Reporting inspector Brenda Iles

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Court Drove
School category	Voluntary controlled		Overton
Age range of pupils	4–11		Basingstoke RG25 3ES
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01256770249
Number on roll (school)	295	Fax number	01256773052
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Geoff Potter
		Headteacher	Mrs Fiona Wyeth
Date of previous school inspection	2 July 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This school is larger than average and most pupils come from the local area. There is a broad range of social and economic circumstances but a large number of pupils come from more affluent households. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is also below average, although a higher than average proportion have statements. Few pupils speak English as an additional language. Attainment on entry covers the full ability range and is above average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

Inspectors agree with the school's judgements that achievement, teaching and overall effectiveness are inadequate. The previous report showed teaching and learning were good and standards were above average. A period of decline followed and two years ago a very high proportion of lessons were identified as unsatisfactory. Robust action has brought improvement and the proportion of inadequate teaching has reduced. The school is beginning to move forward again. The headteacher's clear vision and leadership has led the school through a difficult period and rigorous self-evaluation accurately identified the priorities for improvement. The weaknesses are now being addressed systematically but the pace of improvement has not been fast enough to address fully the legacy of underachievement. Assessment information is not used consistently well to secure enough improvement in learning across all subjects. Pupils' targets are not precise enough to enable them to understand what they need to do to improve. Although standards by the age of eleven are broadly average, pupils do not make as much progress as they should in the light of their starting points.

Children start school with above average achievement and the good teaching in the Foundation Stage enables them to meet and exceed the expectations for their age group. This good progress is not sustained because of the weaknesses in teaching in Years 1 to 6. Although there are examples of good teaching across these year groups, the proportion is still not consistently high enough. The test results for eleven year olds in 2006 show signs of improvement and evidence of individual pupils' progress indicate the action taken is beginning to raise standards and achievement. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve satisfactorily.

The headteacher has structured a new leadership team which now includes the active involvement of governors. Governors fulfil their duties and satisfactorily support decision making. They are supportive and are beginning to share the responsibility for raising standards. The senior leadership and governors know what needs to happen next to meet challenging targets but have not yet had enough impact on the pace of change. Improved tracking of pupils' progress is providing more precise information about where action is needed and the impact of the steps the school takes to raise standards. The pace of pupils' progress is improving, although it is not yet fast enough. The school has satisfactory capacity to improve.

Pupils enjoy school, behave well and their attendance and attitudes to learning are good. The curriculum provides a balanced range of subjects, and clubs for older pupils are well attended. Good links with the church promote spiritual awareness. Personal development is good. Pupils understand how to maintain a healthy lifestyle and feel happy and safe at school. They enjoy a wide range of responsibilities and contribute positively to the community. These attributes indicate the capacity for higher achievement. Parents welcome the improved opportunities they now have to discuss and support their children's learning.

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement because it is performing significantly

less well than in all the circumstances it could be reasonably expected to perform. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve. Significant improvement is required to raise standards, tackle underachievement, improve teaching and assessment and secure a faster pace of change.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise achievement in English and mathematics
- Ensure the quality of teaching is consistently good enough to enable all children to achieve well
- Improve the use of assessment to set challenging personal targets with pupils

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Pupils make good progress in the Foundation Stage across all the areas of learning and attainment on entry to Year 1 is mainly above average. In the 2006 teacher assessments for Year 2 standards were average in reading, writing and mathematics. The national tests for Year 6 also showed standards in English, mathematics and science were average overall. However, in relation to their starting points, too many pupils did not achieve well enough. The proportion who reached the higher levels was below average in mathematics and average in English. In science, the proportion was above average, reflecting pupils' capacity to achieve highly. Pupils' good speaking skills are not reflected well enough in their writing and the quality of spelling, handwriting and presentation is too variable. In mathematics, numeracy skills are not applied well enough in practical problem solving tasks. There are some encouraging signs of recovery evident in the tracking of current progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development, well-being and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. Children in the Foundation Stage are supported well, settle quickly and make friends. The school council makes an effective contribution to school and community life, taking responsibility for a small budget and negotiating with their peers how the funds should be spent. They take pride in their school and work hard to achieve the weekly award for keeping their classrooms clean and tidy. Pupils like school, feel safe and understand the importance of taking regular exercise and of eating healthily. Attendance levels are high and pupils' positive attitudes and eagerness to achieve are indicators of how much more they are capable of achieving. Pupils are independent, take responsibility willingly and make decisions sensibly.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 4

Teaching and learning are inadequate. Inconsistencies in the use of assessment and target setting inhibit progress. Teachers' expectations are not high enough and tasks do not challenge pupils sufficiently. In some lessons the pace of learning is too slow. The quality of marking is variable and does not provide enough information about how work can be improved.

Teaching in the Foundation Stage is consistently good. Teachers plan exciting activities which are matched well to children's stages of development and experiences, so learning is effective. Accurate assessments are used well to plan activities which challenge children to achieve more.

Some good teaching also takes place in other year groups. In these lessons teachers use a good range of strategies to engage pupils and consequently they make good progress. This was particularly evident in practical problem solving activities seen in science in Years 5 and 6 and mathematics for Year 1. The proportion of such lessons is too small to overcome pupils' underachievement.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory overall and in the Foundation Stage it is good. It is well planned but does not always meet the different needs of learners in lessons. The basic skills of literacy and numeracy are not yet being consistently extended through other subjects. Nevertheless there are examples where this is beginning to be successfully developed, for example writing biographies of Neil Armstrong in Year 2 linked to their space project and recording the outcomes of science experiments in Years 5 and 6. There is a good programme of personal, social and health education which is linked to subjects such as science and physical education. Visits and visitors provide enrichment for example to promote spiritual and cultural understanding and to encourage healthy eating. Members of the church regularly lead assemblies and this enhances spiritual awareness effectively. Extra curricular activities are well attended and provide opportunities for music, sport and gardening. Not enough is done to extend these opportunities for younger pupils in Years 1 and 2.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. Effective procedures are all in place to secure the health, safety and well being of pupils. Staff care for pupils well, relationships are good and pupils feel safe and secure. They trust the adults who support them. Support for pupils with learning difficulties is effective. Links with outside agencies are good and support pupils' individual needs well. Assessment information is now

more consistently analysed across the school but not yet used well enough to ensure pupils understand how to improve. Not all pupils yet understand their targets and how to achieve them. Marking does not consistently indicate what pupils need to do next. Good community links enable pupils to understand how to become responsible citizens. The school is an integral part of the community. Summer Fairs, autumn bonfire parties and cultural celebrations are supported well. Parents welcome the open door policy and appreciate the regular opportunities that enable them to be involved in their children's learning. As one parent said, 'The school continually improves yet remains a very happy place.'

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher has led the school through a challenging period. Following rigorous self-evaluation and with good local authority support she is systematically addressing weaknesses. Self evaluation judgements are mainly accurate and the school improvement plan is clearly focused on raising standards and accelerating pupils' progress. The appointment of new staff and changes in the governing body have led to the restructuring of the leadership team. This is enabling staff and governors to work in closer partnership and to become involved in monitoring and evaluating the school's work. A rigorous programme of training, linked to performance management has enabled the recently restructured leadership team to understand their roles and responsibilities. The capacity to improve is satisfactory because the leadership team know the school's strengths and weaknesses and have identified the next steps to take. This is beginning to have a positive impact on achievement. They promote good personal development, care and well being of pupils.

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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?	4
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
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	No

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4
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?	4
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	4
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?	Yes

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for helping us during your school inspection and making us feel welcome. We enjoyed talking to you and visiting lessons. We thought you behaved well and were pleased that so many of you told us that you like coming to school. Although you enjoy learning we feel you can achieve more and have given your school a Notice to Improve. This means that inspectors will visit the school in about 6 months and then again in about a year.

Your headteacher, teachers and governors understand the school's strengths and what needs to improve to ensure you all achieve your best. We particularly enjoyed visiting the Foundation Stage and were impressed by the way children worked together and organised themselves.

We saw some good lessons and know you enjoy opportunities to investigate and take part in clubs and teams. We think you need more help to understand how to improve your work, especially in writing and mathematics. We know how much you value visits and opportunities to take part in local events and to keep your classrooms clean and tidy. We are also pleased you know who to go to if you have a problem and that you feel school is friendly, caring and safe.

There are ways in which we think your learning can improve. We think your teachers should improve the planning of lessons to help you to make faster progress in English and mathematics. We have also asked them to ensure you understand your targets and to explain what you need to do next when they mark your work. We have asked the leadership team to make these improvements over the next year so everyone can see how well you are doing.

Enjoy helping your school to continue improving!

Brenda Iles(Lead inspector)