

West Meon Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116322
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	290501
Inspection dates	31 October –1 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Elisabeth Linley HMI

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	76
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Linda Davies
Headteacher	Mrs Hilary Hopkins
Date of previous school inspection	11 March 2002
School address	Church Lane West Meon Petersfield GU32 1LF
Telephone number	01730 829 213
Fax number	01730 829 935

Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

West Meon Church of England Primary School is smaller than most primary schools and all the classes cater for mixed-ages. As a church school, it admits pupils from beyond the school's immediate location and the mobility of pupils joining and leaving school at times different to normal is high. Most pupils who attend are from a white British cultural heritage and no pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils identified by the school as having learning difficulties is broadly average. At the time of the inspection, the school had just completed an extension providing an extra room that is to be used by the older children for their classroom.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Parental support for West Meon Church of England Primary School is unquestionable. 'It is a lovely school with a very caring environment' writes one parent - just one example of the many positive comments shared about the school. Pupils are right in their view that they attend a good school and they really enjoy being there! It is no surprise therefore that their attendance is excellent.

Pupils benefit from the outstanding pastoral care provided for them. As a result, their personal development and well-being are outstanding. The very good partnerships established with parents and others enhance the school's high quality of care, guidance and support provided. What is most impressive, however, is the depth of knowledge that teachers have about the pupils in their class. The pupils' personal development and academic progress are tracked methodically and this contributes well to the staff's understanding of pupils' needs and planning for their future learning. As a result, teaching and learning are good. However, targets set to aid pupils' improvement are often too cautious and pupils do not consistently know what they are. Nonetheless, in relation to their starting points, pupils achieve well and attain above average standards overall.

The staff at West Meon work together really well. Of the staff team, a parent writes: the headteacher 'leads her staff and students with a gentle sensitivity which enables every person to leave their time at West Meon a better person'. This encapsulates the very good leadership provided by the headteacher and the commitment of the staff as a whole to provide a good curriculum that makes learning fun. As a team, they are not complacent; they know that standards in writing are lower those in reading and mathematics and this remains an active part of the school improvement plan. The headteacher, senior teacher and all staff work well with governors and together they provide good leadership and management of the school.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Reception aged children are taught as part of a mixed class with Year 1 pupils. They benefit from the good teaching of the class as a whole. Excellent relationships are evident and children soon settle well into school life. Very good partnerships with parents plus a thoughtfully planned induction are effective in developing children's confidence. Children build well on their pre-school experience and make very good progress in their personal and social development and their achievement overall is good. Even so, planning for the Foundation Stage curriculum is satisfactory. There is a strong focus on teacher led activities and within the classroom there are limited resources to support children's spontaneous play and independent learning. The impact of the newly completed building work providing an additional room means that extra space will be available for children in the Foundation Stage and Year 1. Planning to resource the new Foundation Stage provision, plus improved access to an outdoor curriculum, is soon to be addressed. Leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are satisfactory overall.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve standards in writing.
- Ensure that targets set are suitably challenging and that all pupils know what they are in order to aid their achievement.

- Ensure that resources are sufficient to support the planned delivery of an effective Foundation Stage curriculum.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

When children start school, their skills and abilities across all the areas of learning are broadly in line with what might be expected for their age. All pupils achieve well during their time in school, including those who have learning difficulties, and standards attained are above average overall. Data on pupils' attainment over past years shows that standards in English, mathematics and science have been variable; however, this reflects the small year groups and their different abilities year on year. For example, in 2006 the results of the Year 6 national tests dropped and were below average overall. English was an issue in particular and below average standards in writing were also a concern for pupils in Year 2. However, in 2007 the results improved and were above average in Year 2. In Year 6, standards were average in English, above average in mathematics and very high in science particularly at the higher level. The results in science reflect the pupils' enjoyment and the subject coordinator's expertise. English, and particularly writing, remains an issue for the school because standards are not as high as they could be. However, work to improve pupils' achievement and standards in English is ongoing.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils speak very positively about their school. They feel valued and supported and as a result, are proud of their school community. It is this awareness of community that is evident at all times of the school day. Pupils take care of each other; their behaviour is excellent and the relationships they establish with others are outstanding. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. Pupils willingly take on responsibilities to help others, for example, as a buddy or as a member of the school council. They take seriously what they have to do and are justly proud of what they achieve. For example, council members visited the kitchens of the school that prepares their school meals and discussed a concern they had with the cook. Pupils say that their meals have now improved. It is no surprise then that pupils have a very good understanding of how to lead a healthy life style; they are equally knowledgeable about the importance of keeping safe. Pupils also develop the skills they need for later life very well through a range of different and interesting activities. For example, members of the local community talk to older pupils about their work to provide them with opportunities to think about their future career choices. Pupils have also enjoyed linking with the church to fundraise for a project in Ghana. This contributed particularly well to their greater understanding of communities and cultures that are different from their own.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Pupils say that learning is fun. They clearly enjoy their lessons and this in turn helps to promote their good achievement. The good teaching in school is characterised by effective planning that meets pupils' different needs in the mixed-age classes. Teachers' questioning of pupils in lessons is also a strength because it encourages them to think carefully about what they are learning. In an outstanding lesson observed during the inspection, very good use was made of

the plenary to promote pupils' reasoning skills. In this mathematics lesson, pupils also understood that they could learn from their mistakes and so their self-esteem was immediately boosted. All teachers make effective use of their teaching assistants who in turn provide good support for the pupils they work with. Pupils say that it is through the discussions they have with staff and the marking of their work, that they are helped to understand how they can improve. Quality displays of annotated work showing what makes their work of high quality, contributes well to pupils' learning and achievement.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Pupils benefit from a good and varied programme of activities balanced with an effective range of enrichment activities. Invited visitors share their expertise in areas such as personal health, drugs awareness, keeping safe and sporting activities. Good use is made of local facilities such as the village hall for gymnastics and dance plus other local facilities for swimming. Other opportunities, such as the Year 5 and 6 residential visit, provide valuable experiences to develop pupils' independent skills and self-sufficiency. Such activities promote teamwork, safety awareness and an appreciation of the environment. The emphasis on the development of pupils' skills in literacy and numeracy across the curriculum is aiding pupils' achievement well and this reflects an appropriate focus on improving standards in writing. The school's work to improve provision in information and communication technology has also been effective and pupils' skills are similarly well developed.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Very positive links are in place with families to underpin the high quality provision for pupils' welfare. Similarly very good partnerships with other agencies ensure that support is effective when it is needed. Child protection and safeguarding arrangements meet all statutory requirements and pupils' pastoral care is outstanding. Guidance for pupils' academic development is good. The tracking of pupils' progress is robust and based on clear assessments of pupils' attainment. Targets are set for pupils to support their development and achievement. For example, older pupils are clear how their targets to improve their handwriting reflect the 'Scribe awards'. Other pupils have targets for other aspects of their work. However, even though most know that they have them they are not all clear what their targets are.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher provides a very strong lead for the school and is very ably supported by the senior teacher. Other leaders and managers are developing well in their roles. For example, the English coordinator is working effectively with other staff to improve their subject expertise. All staff and governors are involved in the school's self-evaluation and they have correctly identified key areas for the school's improvement. One area for development is the setting of targets that are aspirational to aid further improvement in standards. Although procedures for target setting are thorough and systematic, final targets set for pupils are not consistently challenging enough. For example, targets set for the 2007 Year 6 cohort were exceeded and evidence from tracking of pupils' progress shows that they are set to be exceeded again in

future years. Similarly pupils' end of year individual targets are often surpassed and future targets do not always reflect progress made as an indicator of future potential.

The governors continue to provide effective support of the school and work well with staff to keep a good overview of the school's performance. Very good financial planning is a characteristic of the good leadership and management and this, combined with strong community support, has enabled the alterations to be made to the school building. Good progress has been made since the last inspection and the school demonstrates good capacity for further improvement. The school provides good value for money.

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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?	2
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	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

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	1
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?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
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?	2
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	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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

Annex B

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

13 November 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of West Meon Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary
School, Petersfield, GU32 1LF

I would like to thank you all for making us feel so welcome during our visit to your school. We really enjoyed meeting you, visiting your lessons and finding out about what you do. It was very clear just how much you enjoy coming to school. Both you and your parents appreciate how hard the staff work to support you in your learning and to help you achieve your best. I have said that West Meon Church of England School is a good school because:

- you work hard in lessons and your behaviour is excellent
- your teachers and other staff know each of you very well and know how to help you learn so you make good progress
- your teachers work hard to ensure you have interesting lessons and that you can take part in a wide range of exciting activities both in and out of school
- you feel safe in school and know how to get help
- you have an very good headteacher who ensures you are all very well cared for.

Every school can make some things better and this is what I have asked your teachers to do now:

- continue to help you to improve your work in English and particularly your writing
- set you higher targets and make sure you all know and use them so that you can make even better progress
- provide better resources for the children in the Reception class and plan for them to have more opportunities to choose when they play as well as learn.

I hope that Class 3 has now settled into their new classroom and that you are all enjoying having the extra space in school. Thank you again for your welcome and I wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Elisabeth Linley HMI