



Silverstone Church of England Junior School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 121990
Local Authority Northamptonshire
Inspection number 292284
Inspection date 7 November 2006
Reporting inspector John Eadie

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

Type of school	Junior	School address	Green Lane
School category	Voluntary controlled		Silverstone
Age range of pupils	7–11		Towcester NN12 8ES
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01327 857381
Number on roll (school)	86	Fax number	01327 857381
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Sheila King
		Headteacher	Junie Letts
Date of previous school inspection	1 October 2001		

Age group	Inspection date	Inspection number
7–11	7 November 2006	292284

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average school. It has been federated with the village infant school for two years and the schools share a headteacher and governing body although they still have separate budgets. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage and all speak English as their first language. Boys outnumber girls by almost two to one.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good and, as parents said, 'hugely improving' school. The key to the success of the school is good leadership and management. Partly as a result of the federation, the school has developed a fresh vision for its future. A further benefit of the federation is a sharing of expertise and systems between the two schools. The consequence of this unified approach is improved pupils' progress, as it is ensuring consistency of practice. There are now policies shared between the two schools, for example, the improvement of assessment and handwriting. The headteacher, who took up her post when the federation was formed, has been instrumental in initiating these improvements. Pupils are achieving well, making good progress and reaching above average standards by the time they leave. Although boys heavily outnumber girls, there is no difference in their achievement or in the way they are treated. Every effort is made to ensure that girls are not sidelined. The major reason for the good progress is good teaching. Lessons are often exciting and pupils say they particularly like 'the challenge teachers give us'. Pupils work keenly in class and say they really enjoy school. The curriculum is satisfactory but the school is working hard to improve it and is adapting it well to meet the needs of the pupils. However, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to practise their literacy, numeracy and, particularly, their information and communication technology (ICT) skills in other subjects. A strength in the curriculum is the range of visits, visitors and extra-curricular activities. These all increase pupils' interest and involvement and have a positive effect on their achievement. Pupils' personal development and well-being are good, owing to the good care, support and guidance provided. They behave well, are considerate to each other and very polite to visitors. Pupils are well aware of what constitutes a healthy and safe lifestyle and why they need to follow it. Healthy eating and exercise are part of their everyday lives. Pupils make a good contribution both to the school and to the wider community. As parents said, 'The school is part and heart of the village community'. A good example of this is the wellattended coffee afternoons for parents and villagers, where pupils run stalls as well as being involved in the organisation. This helps to prepare them for their future life and they are leaving the school as mature and confident young people. Academic guidance and support have improved since the previous inspection. The school has made a good start to tracking pupils' progress and setting them targets to improve their work. However, although these systems are beginning to have an influence on improving pupils' achievement, they are in their early stages. At present, pupils are not sufficiently involved in the process, particularly the evaluation of their own learning, both in lessons and over a longer time span.

What the school should do to improve further

- Strengthen the links between subjects to develop pupils' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills.
- Give pupils more opportunities to evaluate the success of their own learning so that they know more clearly how to improve their work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well and reach above average standards by the time they leave. The school has begun keeping careful records and these show that most pupils made significantly better than expected progress last year. Although data comparing pupils' progress with pupils nationally indicate that progress is satisfactory, these data are only available up to 2005 and standards in the tests in 2006 rose significantly. The biggest improvement was in mathematics, which has been the weakest subject at the school for some time. Standards in this subject are now much more in line with those in English and this exemplifies the work done in the school to raise standards. Pupils with learning difficulties make good progress, owing to the good levels of support that they receive.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupil's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Their spiritual development is reinforced by the close links with the church and by meaningful assemblies. Despite some interesting displays from other cultures, there is little to show that pupils are aware that they live in a culturally diverse society. Residential visits for pupils from all year groups develop their social skills and provide opportunities to extend learning in a variety of subjects. There are many examples of pupils taking responsibility for, and looking after, others. For example, during wet playtimes the older pupils look after the younger ones. Older pupils also enjoy visiting the infant school to take part in shared reading. The school is a harmonious community where pupils and adults share mutual respect and very good relationships. Behaviour is good, and very good in some lessons, and pupils are clearly learning a well-defined moral code. Pupils are proud to be members of the newly formed school council. They are convinced they can make a difference and talk about their role in helping to improve the school. They enjoy raising money for charities, being aware of those less fortunate than themselves.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The 'very dedicated staff', as parents described them, have created a calm and orderly learning environment, with good relationships at its heart. These relationships lead to pupils being keen to please and to work hard. There is an atmosphere of purposeful endeavour in many lessons, whilst the theme of enjoyment is very much in evidence. Although teachers usually provide suitable work for the range of pupils' abilities, there are times when some pupils find tasks too easy whilst others find them too hard. Teaching assistants work well supporting groups in lessons and particularly well when

they remove groups to give them extra help or to reduce the size of teaching groups. This is very effective, for example in allowing teachers to involve their whole class in drama as an aid to their teaching.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum has recently been amended to better meet the needs of the pupils and to make it more lively and interesting. However, few opportunities are planned for pupils to practise their basic skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT in other subjects. For example, pupils do not often use ICT skills in subjects such as mathematics or science. There are times when planning does not take sufficient account of individual needs and some pupils do not progress as well as they could. An appropriate programme for personal development ensures pupils are made aware of the need for a healthy and safe lifestyle. The curriculum is enriched well through trips to places of interest, residential visits and inter-school sports competitions which help pupils gain additional social skills as well as aiding their learning. These are supported well by a good number of extra-curricular activities such as sports, music, drama and art. Good links with the community, the local church, other nearby primary and secondary schools and the Silverstone Circuit extend pupils' learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school is a happy, friendly place where pupils know they are safe. They feel confident they can ask an adult for help or advice when necessary. The staff know the pupils well and they have a high level of commitment to ensuring the school is a safe, welcoming and well maintained environment. Child protection procedures are rigorous. Pupils' confidence in the good care that is taken of them spills over into their work and daily life in school. The new systems of assessment and tracking are very detailed and are beginning to improve pupils' achievement. However, pupils are not sufficiently involved in the process of evaluating and checking on their progress and they do not always know clearly how well they are doing. One of the projects of the federated schools was to produce a consistent marking system. This is proving successful and, as pupils said, 'It helps us improve our work'.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school evaluates its performance thoroughly and accurately. This has been part of the reason behind the improving pupils' achievement. This process involves parents, pupils, staff and governors. The results of questionnaires that the school carries out show that parents have improving and very positive views of the school. One typical comment was, 'Children are happy and benefit from a safe and caring environment'. Governors are very involved in many aspects of school life and know its strengths and areas for development well. The management structure has recently been modified

so that some responsibilities are carried across the two federated schools. The resulting consistency of approach has brought significant benefit to the pupils, in particular making the transition between the schools almost seamless. It has also allowed expertise from one school to be used across the two schools. This is one of the reasons behind pupils' improving achievement. Procedures for monitoring teaching and learning are generally thorough and effective. However, they do not always identify ways in which teachers could improve their practice. This means that managers cannot check whether teachers have addressed weaknesses when they next monitor. Good progress has been made since the previous inspection, for example in the improved systems for assessment and marking. This, with the evident drive to continue to improve, shows that the school is well placed to move forward. This school provides good value for money.

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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
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?	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?	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	2

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?	3
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?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
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	2
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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

- Thank you so much for your welcome when we visited your school. We were very impressed with how polite and friendly you all were. Many of you told us how proud you are of your school and you are right to be proud, as it is a good school. These are the best things about your school
- Your headteacher, staff and governors know clearly how to improve the school and have good plans to do this.
- You work hard, make good progress and achieve good standards in your work.
- Your teachers make your lessons interesting by planning a variety of work for you to do, and other adults help you to learn well.
- You behave well, particularly in lessons, and are developing into sensible and confident young people.
- All adults look after you well and you are being kept safe.
- There are a good number of visits, visitors and other activities which make the curriculum more interesting. This is what we have suggested might be improved
- You are not using the skills you are learning in English, mathematics and ICT enough in other subjects.
- You don't always know how well you are doing and how you can improve your work.