

Yardley Gobion Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122007
Local Authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	292290
Inspection date	17 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Lois Furness

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	128
School	
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Graham Sibley
Headteacher	Carolyn Gleeson
Date of previous school inspection	4 February 2002
School address	School Lane Yardley Gobion Towcester NN12 7UL
Telephone number	01908 542261
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This much smaller than average primary school serves an area of below average social deprivation. The majority of pupils are White British, although four minority ethnic groups are also represented. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is above average as is the proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational need. In 2005, the school achieved the bronze Healthy School Award and the Effective Early Learning Quality Mark for the Foundation Stage, which was renewed again in 2006.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

School effectiveness is satisfactory, but this is rapidly improving as a result of improved teaching which is now good throughout the school. By Year 6, standards are broadly average in English, mathematics and science and achievement is satisfactory. The headteacher knew that standards in the 2006 tests were not high enough and over the last year there has been a successful focus on improving the quality of teaching. Assessment information is used more carefully to plan work to meet the needs of pupils. Marking is good and teachers provide pupils with useful information about how they can improve. This work has had a good effect, particularly in mathematics and writing which were identified as weaker aspects of pupils' performance. More pupils are now attaining at least the expected levels for their age in these subjects, with more reaching the higher level. However, more time is needed for the influence of the school's strategies to improve writing, to be seen throughout the school. Also, more able pupils are not yet consistently given work that challenges them. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are supported well and make good progress.

Children are provided with a good start to their education in Reception because of the good curriculum and good teaching. Children make good progress and attain the goals expected for their age with a significant minority exceeding them. However, although children confidently know letter sounds, a weaker aspect of boys' attainment is knowledge of the names of letters.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. They enjoy school and this is shown in their good attendance and good behaviour. They readily take on responsibilities such as being school council members or playtime buddies. Pupils' enjoyment is fostered by a good curriculum. The theme days and the range of interesting extra activities that are provided are appreciated. Parents value the school's work and as one parent typically said, 'Yardley Gobion School provides a caring environment where children feel safe and valued'. Pupils are well looked after, and say that adults in school will always help them if they have a concern. They have a good understanding of how to keep healthy and safe as a result of the good care, guidance and support they receive.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher, key subject leaders and governors have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses through good analysis of assessment information, effective checking of lessons and careful scrutiny of pupils' work. The positive influence of this can be seen in the good quality teaching. However, although analysis of assessment information is detailed, at the moment it is very time-consuming. The leadership is unable to check regularly and efficiently if pupils' progress is good enough. Monitoring and evaluation are thorough, but the school's self-evaluation of its overall effectiveness is based on its potential rather than its present-day position. However, good capacity for further improvement stems from the successful work the school has undertaken to improve information and communication technology (ICT), and the more recent improvements in writing and mathematics.

What the school should do to improve further

- Embed the strategies for raising standards in writing.
- Ensure more able pupils consistently receive work that challenges them.
- Develop a tracking system which allows the leadership to check quickly and regularly if pupils' progress is good enough. A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is

judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Children get a good start in Reception where achievement is good. By the time they enter Year 1, they are working securely within the levels expected for their age in most areas of learning, with a significant minority exceeding these levels. However, a weaker aspect of attainment is boys' knowledge of the names of letters.

By the end of Year 2 and Year 6, standards are broadly average which shows that progress is satisfactory, as is achievement. In 2006, the leadership identified weaknesses in writing throughout the school and in mathematics in Years 3 to 6. Decisive action was taken, including enlisting support from the local authority (LA). This has improved standards in these subjects well, notably so in mathematics. This improvement is a result of more effective teaching. However, the leadership is not complacent and knows that to attain higher standards consistently, more able pupils need to be challenged further. Also the strategies introduced to improve writing are not yet embedded in the school's work. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress because of the effective and sensitive support they receive.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy school and behaviour is good. Pupils are very welcoming to visitors, greeting them with smiles and 'hellos'. These positive attitudes are confirmed by the good attendance of pupils. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is generally good. However, knowledge of multicultural Britain is less well established. Pupils have a good understanding of right and wrong and show care and consideration for each other. They are effectively involved in the school, local and wider community. For example, the school council has been involved in improving playground facilities; 'buddies' help pupils who are lonely; and money is regularly raised for different charities.

Pupils understand the need to eat healthily and take regular exercise. As one pupil said, 'Eating five a day (fruit and vegetables) is the healthy way!' Pupils are aware of dangers in their everyday lives and behave safely in and around school. The standards they reach in literacy, numeracy and ICT ensure that they are suitably prepared for the next stage of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning have improved and are now good. However, this improved teaching has not had sufficient time to fully influence pupils' achievement and standards throughout the school. A strong feature, is the way praise is used effectively to identify good behaviour and good work. The purpose of the lesson is shared clearly with pupils so they know what is expected of them. Also pupils are given good advice about how to succeed with their work. Pupils say, 'This is useful and helps us to learn better.' The good reminder of thinking about vocabulary, connectives, openers and punctuation (V C O P) is helping pupils to improve their writing skills. In most lessons, tasks are set at different levels of difficulty but they do not consistently

challenge the more able pupils. In the Reception, carefully structured and interesting activities are provided. Progress, however, is relatively slower in relation to language and literacy skills because children's knowledge of letter names, is not developed quickly enough.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Although the curriculum is adapted well to the interests of pupils, work remains to be done to fully meet the needs of more able pupils. There is a good emphasis on literacy and numeracy and also on the use of ICT to support learning. Learning is made more interesting by good links between subjects, often through the use of theme days such as a 'healthy living day' and a 'Viking day'. In Reception, there is a good balance between teacher-led activities and those which children choose for themselves. A good programme to promote pupils' personal development is in place, which has enabled the school to gain the national bronze Healthy School Award. Consequently, pupils show a good understanding of how to live a healthy lifestyle.

Curriculum enrichment is good and is extended through a range of additional activities, such as French, sport, music and computer clubs. Many visitors and visits, including a residential for older pupils, contribute effectively to pupils' learning, personal development and their enjoyment of school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides a safe and protective environment for pupils to succeed. Safeguarding procedures and risk assessments are securely in place. Parents are confident that their children are safe and well cared for. Pupils say that they feel able to talk to staff if they have a problem and confirm that the rare incidences of unkindness are dealt with quickly. Older pupils support vulnerable ones as 'playtime buddies' and the 'Buddy Bench' is something that pupils appreciate.

The small size of the school means that staff know pupils very well. Despite the unwieldy tracking system, teachers use assessment information effectively to provide targeted support when and where it is needed. Pupils comment, 'We get regular tips about how to improve our work.' In this way, pupils are made aware of the level they are working at, their targets and how to improve. Support provided for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is good.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher, supported by key subject leaders, is driving forward improvement effectively. The success with which the school tackled the identified weaknesses in teaching and learning illustrates this well. However, there is no complacency and the leadership is constantly looking for ways to improve pupils' learning. Recognising that there are weaknesses in the progress of more able pupils, support has been given. However, there has not been enough time for this to fully influence standards. Governors fulfil their role well. Although supportive, they are prepared to ask challenging questions about aspects of the school which need improving.

Monitoring and evaluation are thorough and rigorous. Regular checking of teaching and learning takes place but the paper system for tracking pupils' progress is unwieldy. The new computerised system is not fully in place, and there are gaps in the information it provides about pupils'

progress. This means the leadership is unable to identify efficiently if pupils' progress is as good as it should be.

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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?	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	2
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	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	3

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?	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.

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	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	3
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

17 May 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Yardley Gobion C of E Primary School, Towcester, NN12 7UL

Thank you for making me so welcome when I came to visit your school recently. I enjoyed talking to some of you. You have a satisfactory school that is getting better and better.

I think that those of you in Reception get a good start to school life. You settle quickly and make good progress. However, I have suggested that, although you are good at knowing the sounds of letters, some of you need more help in knowing letter names. By Year 6, you attain standards that are similar to those attained in most schools. However, I think, and your headteacher agrees, that you could do better. She has been working with your teachers to improve teaching which is now good. I think that some of you could do harder work, but it was good to know that in mathematics you often get challenges which you find interesting and fun. I particularly like the way the teachers are telling you how you can improve. I know you find this very helpful, and I was very pleased to see how much better you are becoming in writing. The use of vocabulary, connectives, openers and punctuation (V C O P) is certainly helping to make writing more interesting. So keep up the good work and improve your writing even further.

Particular strengths are your good behaviour and enjoyment of school. I know you find theme days, such as healthy living day and Viking day, fun. It is good to know you attend regularly and willingly help your teachers to improve the school by being school council members, for example. I was especially glad to know you feel safe and adults are always willing to help you. I think those of you who are playtime buddies do a really good job. I agree that at times everyone feels lonely and needs help. I was also pleased you know the importance of eating sensibly and keeping safe.

Your headteacher, teachers and governors are clear about how to make the school better and have already made good improvements. However, I think your headteacher needs to be able to check more easily if you are all learning as well as you should.

Thank you again for your help, and please work with your teachers to make your school a better place to be.

Yours faithfully

Lois Furness Lead inspector