



Chacombe Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 122018
Local Authority Northamptonshire
Inspection number 292294
Inspection date 7 February 2007
Reporting inspector Alison Cartlidge

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Thorpe Road
School category	Voluntary aided		Chacombe
Age range of pupils	4-11		Banbury OX17 2JA
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01295 710835
Number on roll (school)	94	Fax number	01295 710835
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mary Chapman
		Headteacher	K Flower
Date of previous school inspection	16 September 2002		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Most pupils are of White British heritage and come from the village and nearby town. The number of pupils taking free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is above average. Attainment on entry to the Reception class varies but is broadly average in most years. Pupils are taught in mixed age classes from Years 1 to 6.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school that provides particularly well for pupils' personal needs. A dedicated and caring team of governors and members of staff ensure that pupils are all made to feel welcome and valued. A strong focus on supporting pastoral needs, and close links with parents and outside agencies, contribute well to pupils' good personal development and well-being. Pupils gain a good understanding of how to stay safe and healthy and learn to support the community well.

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Children make a good start to their education in the Reception class where they are provided for well. The small class benefits from ample adult support, good teaching and meaningful activities. These ensure that children progress well and want to learn. By the end of the Reception Year most children are working securely at the levels expected for their age and several exceed them. In Years 1 to 6, sensitive support from teachers and teaching assistants ensures that pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities continue to do well. The progress of other pupils in these year groups is satisfactory. Teaching is satisfactory with some good features. Teachers make good use of information and communication technology to explain tasks to pupils, but do not ensure that their differing needs are met consistently. This affects the more able pupils most, and their progress slows when they are not challenged to do hard enough work.

By the end of Year 6 standards are average overall, although test results are below average in writing. The school has started to take appropriate action to improve achievement in this subject. In literacy lessons, teachers teach the skills pupils need and provide them with clear guidance on how they can do better. Progress in writing is too slow because there are too few opportunities for pupils to practise and extend writing skills when working in other subjects. This makes the otherwise broad curriculum satisfactory. There is a wealth of interesting additional activities to enrich the curriculum, including lessons in French, creative activities and educational visits. Whilst most pupils say that they like coming to school, older pupils are sometimes quietly inattentive and less enthusiastic when lessons do not capture their interest well enough.

Care, guidance and support are good. Teachers have good relationships with the pupils and this helps pupils to behave well. There are thorough systems for checking pupils' progress, although the school is aware of the need to ensure that information is consistently used to provide work of suitable challenge. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Members of staff carry out an immense amount of monitoring, but too many priorities reduce the effectiveness of action taken. Most parents are pleased that their children come to this school and agree that 'the school tries very hard to help all pupils.'

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide more purposeful writing opportunities across the curriculum.
- Improve teaching so that pupils of all abilities, especially the more able, are challenged to make good progress.

- Sharpen school development planning so that priorities are manageable and clearly focused on raising achievement.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Children make good progress in the Reception class because effective adult support and a variety of practical activities enable children to take a keen interest in their work. Most children are working comfortably within the levels expected for their age and they do especially well in personal, social and emotional development. They are independent, confident and get on well with each other. Pupils make satisfactory progress in Years 1 to 6 and by the end of Year 6, standards are broadly average. The school is successful in ensuring that most pupils reach the expected Level 4 in English, mathematics and science, although a below average number reach the higher Level 5. More able pupils do not always do well enough because they are not consistently challenged to complete hard work. Standards in writing lag behind reading because pupils have too few opportunities to write purposefully in subjects other than English. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities are included well in all lessons. Intensive support from well trained teaching assistants enables them to make good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The distinctive Christian character of the school helps pupils to be thoughtful and caring. In the Reception Year, children quickly develop good independence and make lots of friends. Good relationships are maintained throughout the school. Pupils support each other well and behave sensibly. Most pupils enjoy school, although they do not always take enough care with their written work. Rates of attendance are slightly below the national average because despite the school's active discouragement, some parents take their children on holiday during term-time.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The school council plays an important part in school life and pupils take responsibility willingly. For example, their ideas led to the development of a garden of remembrance in memory of a former pupil. They write thoughtful prayers for the school's prayer table and show good concern for the welfare of others by raising funds for charities. Pupils make a good contribution to the community. For example, they write regularly for the village newsletter, 'The Chacombe Chimes'. Pupils have a thorough understanding of how to stay safe and healthy. They enjoy sport and understand that exercise helps you to 'learn better'. Pupils are satisfactorily prepared for the next stage of education. They develop sound basic skills and benefit from 'enterprise weeks' when they learn about the world of work.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching is good in the Reception class. Work is challenging and helps children to acquire new skills quickly. The calm and sensitive approach of all adults helps children to make especially good progress in their personal, social and emotional development.

Throughout the school, teachers are hard-working and conscientious. They get on well with pupils and use praise effectively to boost self-esteem and to encourage good behaviour. Teachers make good use of interactive whiteboards to introduce new skills and to explain work. In Years 1 to 6, planning is detailed but teachers do not always expect enough of all pupils. This slows progress, particularly for the more able pupils. Teachers maintain the interest of pupils in most lessons, although there are occasions when older pupils become inattentive if tasks do not involve them enough. Skilled teaching assistants give pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities good support, helping them make good progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

A good curriculum for children in the Reception Year focuses well on developing children's personal and social skills. This is effective in helping them to settle quickly. In Years 1 to 6, the curriculum builds steadily on what pupils have already learnt, although planning does not always take enough account of the needs of more able pupils. There are too few opportunities for pupils to improve their progress in writing when studying other subjects. The provision for pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is good and these pupils have their needs met well.

Enrichment of the curriculum is good. Pupils like being able to learn French because 'it will help us when we start at the secondary school.' Visits and visitors successfully extend pupils' experience of the wider world. Creativity is fostered very imaginatively, and pupils produce some high quality artwork. There are a good number of clubs including those run by sports specialists. These help to teach pupils the importance of healthy lifestyles and exercise.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care of pupils is at the heart of the school's work. Members of staff treat all pupils as part of the 'school family'. They know the pupils well, and as a result, pupils are confident that any worries they may have will be dealt with quickly. When necessary, the school works well with outside agencies and parents to safeguard the health, safety and well-being of the pupils.

There have been recent improvements in the quality of academic support. Good marking helps all pupils know how well they are doing. There is good support for pupils with

learning difficulties or disabilities. They are identified quickly and set clear targets for improvement. Teachers have developed the process for setting targets for other pupils so that they are clearer about how work can be improved. Pupils' progress is being carefully assessed but this information is not always used rigorously enough to plan challenging work, particularly for the more able pupils.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

There is a very strong commitment to providing pupils with a good education and members of staff work very hard towards this aim. There is a track record of steady improvement and a satisfactory capacity to improve. The monitoring of teaching and learning is carried out comprehensively and there is a vast amount of information about how well the school is doing. Members of staff are successful in promoting good personal development and are fully aware that more needs to be done to ensure that all pupils achieve equally well. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is led and managed well, enabling these pupils to make good progress. There is a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses through accurate self-assessment, although the small team of staff identify too many priorities for development at a time. As a result, actions taken do not always have enough impact on improving provision and standards. Governance is satisfactory. Governors are enthusiastic and have a good understanding of how they can develop their roles further by becoming more proactive.

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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	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	3
How well learners enjoy their education	3
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?	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?	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 welcoming us to your school and for sharing your work with us. We are pleased that most of you enjoy coming to this school, which provides you with a satisfactory education.

- Here are some other things about you and your school:
- You learn quickly in the Reception class.
- You are good at helping others by raising money and taking part in local events.
- Teachers explain what you need to do clearly and help you to behave well.
- You enjoy the additional activities such as visits, visitors and clubs.
- All adults in school are kind and caring.
- Your headteacher, other teachers and governors are working together well and know how to make your school even better.
- Your parents and carers are pleased that you come to this school.

What we have asked your school to do now:

- Help you to improve your writing by giving you more opportunity to practise in other subjects.
- Always give those of you who are more able hard enough work.
- Make sure that teachers try to improve just a few things at a time that will help you to do better.

How you could help:

- Make sure that you all attend school regularly and take more care with your writing.

We thoroughly enjoyed talking with you about your work and watching you learn. We wish you all well for the future. We hope you continue to help your teachers by listening carefully and trying your best.