



Chesterton Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 123101
Local Authority Oxfordshire
Inspection number 292581
Inspection date 12 March 2007
Reporting inspector Charalambos Loizou

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Alchester Road
School category	Voluntary aided		Chesterton
Age range of pupils	5-11		Bicester OX26 1UN
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01869 252498
Number on roll (school)	96	Fax number	01869 244012
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Andy Hucker
		Headteacher	Mrs Carolyn Taylor
Date of previous school inspection	29 April 2002		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a small school situated in a generally advantaged village setting. The large majority of pupils come from outside the immediate area and most are from White British backgrounds. There is a very small proportion of pupils in the early stages of learning English. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is average. The number of pupils joining or leaving the school at different times is quite high. The school has links with the local church and community.

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 school where the pupils achieve well and reach well above average standards. Pupils form good friendships and develop into mature and responsible young people. They take an active role developing the school, 'We come up with some good ideas and help the teachers', was the comment from one pupil. One parent rightly commented on the inclusive caring and learning atmosphere and that his 'daughter really enjoys going to this school'. Elected school councillors look forward to representing the views of other pupils when they meet their counterparts from other schools. They discuss ideas, such as encouraging healthy food and drink at break-times. A large number of pupils participate in sports and games and demonstrate a good awareness of healthy living. The behaviour of nearly all pupils is good, though there are a few who occasionally behave less well. A few parents share this view. However, the vast majority of both parents and pupils are confident that the school deals very well with any misbehaviour, including any bullying.

Standards are high in science and well above average in English by the end of Year 6. Although standards are above average in mathematics, they should be higher. Assessments of pupils' performance in mathematics show that those of higher ability lack the confidence to apply their number and calculation skills to solve more advanced problems. Consequently, national test results show that the proportion of pupils achieving higher levels in mathematics is relatively small when compared with most schools.

Since the last inspection, the school has improved its curriculum. This is now good and contributes to the pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Good use is made of the community and local environment. For example, pupils develop their geography mapping skills well when exploring routes around the local village. Topic work, such as that on the food chain in Year 6, draws together pupils' good skills in science, literacy and information and communication technology (ICT). The pupils develop a good understanding of cultural diversity through the celebration of festivals and traditions from around the world. They reflect thoughtfully on spiritual and moral themes in assemblies and discussions and respect the views of others.

Children are given a good start in the Foundation Stage and achieve well because of good teaching. Reception children explore the world around them during stimulating activities such as growing runner beans or when making 'pop-up' moving pictures portraying traditional stories. Throughout the school, the teaching is good. Teachers and support staff are attentive to the pupils' individual needs. They use assessment to plan work that matches the needs of pupils in mixed-age classes. However, assessments are not regular enough to check how well the pupils are doing and to ensure that they all reach their expected targets. This partly accounts for fluctuating standards in previous years as some pupils just fell short of reaching higher levels in national tests, particularly in mathematics.

The care, guidance and support offered to pupils are good. Pupils say they feel safe and happy in school. Leadership and management are good. The headteacher is a good

leader and is well supported by governors and her colleagues. There are good priorities in the school development plan that aim to raise standards. The clear direction given to the school by the headteacher and governors demonstrate that there is good capacity to improve further. The leadership team and governors set high expectations which accounts for some modest assessments of teaching and learning and their impact on pupils' achievements. There has been good progress since the school's last inspection.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve standards in mathematics by ensuring that a greater proportion of pupils attain higher levels.
- Sharpen assessment so that teachers check the performance of pupils more often and ensure they all reach their targets.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards are well above average overall and pupils achieve well in relation to their starting points, including those who join the school at different times. The large majority of children entering the Reception year start with knowledge and skills that are in line with those expected for their age. The good quality care and stimulating teaching enables them to make good progress. The pupils reach above average standards in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 2. By the end of Year 6, they achieve high standards in science and well above average standards in English. Mathematics standards are above average and improving but, compared with English and science, fewer pupils reach higher levels. The small numbers taking national tests each year accounts for some fluctuations in standards. Challenging targets are set for all pupils, but teachers are not checking pupils' performance often enough to ensure they all reach these. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress and the majority reach the standards expected for their age.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being are good. Pupils enjoy school and this is reflected in their above average attendance. Pupils respect school rules and each other and come up with ideas that help improve the school and activities in the playground. Older pupils care for younger ones at break-times and friendships are well-established, so the pupils feel safe and secure. 'We like to organise games for others to join in,' said some when playing basketball at break-times. Behaviour is good and they work and play co-operatively. Although a very small number of pupils behave less well at times, there are good arrangements in place to ensure this does not affect the enjoyment and safety of others. Pupils have a good understanding of the importance of exercise and many take part in sports, games and clubs after school. Another pupil commented on how well the outdoor environment and adventure areas make sure that, 'there are lots to do, it's great'. Pupils conscientiously undertake responsibilities

to represent the views of others as school councillors. Visits to the local village and surrounding areas help pupils to develop a good understanding of their place in the local and wider community.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good throughout the school. Teachers are diligent in their planning and provide clear objectives in lessons that are shared with pupils so they are clear about what is expected of them. Support staff are very good at helping those with learning difficulties or disabilities. Particularly effective support is provided for the pupils who have learning difficulties, and is helping to accelerate their progress in reading and writing. Tasks in lessons are well matched to the different age groups in each class. In the Foundation Stage, good use is made of role-play, art and physical activities in both indoor and outdoor areas. This stimulates learning and successfully develops the children's knowledge of the world around them. In Years 1 to 6, teachers make accurate assessments of the pupils' performance and work, but these are not being undertaken often enough to ensure that all pupils are on course to reach their learning targets.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good, and this is a significant improvement since the school's last inspection. It is designed well to meet the needs and interests of pupils in mixed-age classes. However, there are too few opportunities for pupils of higher ability to apply their calculation skills to problem-solving in mathematics. There are good opportunities provided for pupils to extend their reading and writing across subjects. Good and well-established links with other schools provide a wide range of enrichment activities during and outside school times. The quality and range of pupils' work displayed is of good quality and demonstrates how well the staff value the pupils' efforts. Pupils participate in a large number of visits that enhance their learning and these incorporate active and practical work. For example, when Year 4 pupils took part in the 'Solar Racer Project', they designed and built their own solar powered vehicles.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. Teachers, support staff and governors who help in school respond thoughtfully and sensitively to the pupils' all round needs and development. There is a good system for behaviour management which is applied consistently by all adults. Good health and safety routines and child protection arrangements ensure that pupils are safe and secure in a clean and carefully maintained environment.

The school's system for tracking and assessing pupils' progress, and for setting realistic and challenging targets, is raising standards. However, assessments and checks are not regular enough, so it is difficult for teachers to intervene soon enough if pupils are falling behind. Teachers' marking is consistent. Their comments help pupils to improve their work. Teaching assistants provide very good support for pupils with learning difficulties, disabilities, or those learning English as an additional language.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The clear shared vision of the headteacher and deputy headteacher is guiding the school forward well. Self-evaluation and planning for improvement take good account of pupils', staff and parents' views. Accurate analyses of pupils' performance and the quality of teaching are improving standards, and there has been good progress since the last inspection in developing ICT and the curriculum. The staff work well as a team and subject leaders ensure that teachers' planning is monitored closely. The leadership team and staff recognise that more could be done to check pupils' performance regularly so they are better prepared to intervene if pupils need a boost. Governors provide good support. Many are frequent visitors and help in school and lessons. Very skilled support staff are deployed well, with particularly effective support provided for pupils who have learning difficulties or are in the early stages of learning English.

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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?	2
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	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?	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.

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 very much for welcoming me to your school. You were all very friendly and helpful, and I enjoyed my day very much.

Yours is a good school. There are many good things, and I have listed below the things that I was pleased with most.

- You are well behaved and try hard in lessons.
- Your teachers are helping you to do well and to reach good standards.
- You enjoy school and I was really pleased with the quality of your work that is displayed around the school. Well done.
- Your parents are pleased with you and your teachers.
- The staff take good care of you and make sure you are all safe and happy.
- Your headteacher, staff and governors manage the school well and work hard to give you extra things to do during and after school.

I have asked your teachers to:

- help some of you improve your mathematics work, especially when solving problems independently so you can reach even higher standards
- make sure that they check how you are doing more often to make sure you all reach your targets.

Well done, and I wish you all the very best.

Yours faithfully,

Charalambos Loizou

Lead Inspector