

## Finmere Church of England Primary School

### Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	123104
<b>Local Authority</b>	Oxfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	292582
<b>Inspection date</b>	8 May 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Olson Davis

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	46
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Pam Tresise
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ms Lynne Bowen
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	29 October 2001
<b>School address</b>	Mere Road Finmere Buckingham MK18 4AR
<b>Telephone number</b>	01280 848459
<b>Fax number</b>	01280 848459

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

This school is smaller than average and serves a generally advantaged area. No pupils are eligible for free school meals. The vast majority of pupils are from White British background. One in ten pupils is from a minority ethnic group. The largest group is from the Traveller community. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities (LDD) is lower than the national average. The number of pupils who leave or join the school other than at the usual admission time is above average. Pupils are taught in mixed age classes. The school had an acting headteacher from September 2006 to April 2007 to cover the maternity leave of the permanent headteacher.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

The school provides a good standard of education. Under the effective leadership of the headteacher, the school is an inclusive community where children make good progress in their learning. All pupils, including those from different minority ethnic groups and those of different abilities, feel welcomed and want to learn. The headteacher and the governors provide a clear direction to the work of the school, ensuring that all adults work closely as a team to do their best for the pupils. Good partnerships with parents, the local community, other small schools and local secondary schools enrich the curriculum and provide benefits for pupils' learning.

Good provision for care, guidance and support has established a strong ethos of care and respect for others. Adults know the pupils well. Relationships are good and the buddy system, where older pupils look after younger pupils, effectively promotes a 'family' atmosphere in school. As a result, pupils feel safe and valued. Pupils' personal development is good. They behave well and have positive attitudes in class and around the school. Pupils are well motivated by interesting activities provided by teachers. They enjoy learning and are keen to do well in their work. However, attendance is only satisfactory because of the prolonged absence of a few pupils. Pupils make a good contribution to the school community. This is seen in the good links with the church and the village and in the range of charities for which pupils raise money. Parents are right to believe that the school caters well for their children's social and academic progress. One commented, 'Finmere provides an ideal setting for my children's education. They have all been happy there. They are well cared for and are given opportunities relevant for their learning.'

Children make a good start in the Foundation Stage because of good provision. As they get older, they continue to achieve well and attain above average standards overall by Year 6. This is the result of good teaching, good provision for vulnerable pupils and a good curriculum. Standards in writing are not as high as in reading, mathematics and science. This is because there are not enough opportunities for pupils to apply their writing skills in different subjects across the curriculum.

Leadership and management are good. Governance is outstanding. Governors are very supportive but also challenge the school to do its best for pupils through their own very effective monitoring processes. Self-evaluation is good and provides an accurate picture of the school that has helped to steer it well in its work. Issues from the previous inspection have been successfully tackled along with other improvement initiatives, such as improving the provision for the Foundation Stage. This demonstrates that the school has a good capacity to improve.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing by providing more opportunities for pupils to practise their writing skills for 'real' purposes across the curriculum.
- Improve attendance by strengthening school procedures for checking up on absences.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Standards are above average and achievement is good. Children enter the school with standards that are broadly in line with what is expected, although these vary from year to year because of the small size of the cohort. Children make good progress in the Foundation Stage to reach

the learning goals expected for them. They do particularly well in their mathematical development and personal, social and emotional development. Standards by Year 2 and Year 6 are usually above average and pupils make good progress throughout the school. Standards in writing, however, are not as high as in reading, mathematics and science. Fewer than expected pupils attain the highest levels in writing at the end of Year 2 and at the end of Year 6. This is because pupils are not given enough opportunities to write purposefully in other subjects in order to develop their skills. Pupils make good progress in information and communication technology (ICT) because of improved provision. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, as well as those from minority ethnic backgrounds, make good progress because their needs are well planned for and met in the classroom.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils enjoy school and show good attitudes to learning and to each other. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The many opportunities for quiet reflection in assemblies, during visits to the church, and within the curriculum contribute well to pupils' growing spiritual awareness. They have a clear sense of right and wrong and are responsive to wider moral and social issues. For example, the school council raises money for charities, most recently to save endangered species. The school's work in geography and religious education contributes to pupils' appreciation of other cultures as well as fostering an understanding of the diversity of cultures within our society. Pupils know about the benefits of good diet and exercise. They take the responsibilities they are given to contribute to the community seriously, be it as monitors, buddies, or as members of the school council, and carry them out well. Attendance is satisfactory. The steps taken by the school to promote good attendance are beginning to have a positive impact. However, there are still families who take their children away for prolonged periods and this has an adverse effect on the school's attendance figures.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching and learning are good throughout the school. Pupils enjoy their work because teachers and teaching assistants give them interesting activities matched closely to their abilities. Teachers make the purpose of the lesson clear so that pupils know what to expect. They manage their classes well. Relationships are good and teachers set high expectations of work and behaviour for their pupils. As a result, classrooms are calm, purposeful places where pupils behave well and try to do their best. Learning is often enlivened by the effective use of interactive whiteboards, engaging pupils' interest and stimulating discussion. This has been a successful focus area for teachers in improving the quality of teaching and learning. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly but comments in books are not often linked to the purpose of the lesson or to pupils' targets. As a result, individual pupils are not always aware of the next steps in their learning.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum meets the pupils' needs well. Pupils' good basic skills and good social skills prepare them well for the next stage of their education and for the world of work. There is a

strong emphasis on developing pupils' speaking, listening and numeracy skills, which leads to good progress in these areas. However, pupils do not have enough opportunities to practise their writing skills within a 'real' context in different subjects. Teachers make good links between subjects to make learning more interesting and relevant. Pupils benefit from the exciting opportunities for first-hand experience within the curriculum, including the extensive use the school makes of the outdoor 'Forest School'. The personal, social, health and citizenship education programme contributes effectively to pupils' growing understanding of being healthy and staying safe. Specialist music tuition, theme days such as 'French Day' and 'Science Day', visits and visitors enrich pupils' experiences, their learning and their enjoyment. Planning for children in the Foundation Stage is good and ensures that they make good progress in all areas of learning.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Parents are particularly appreciative of this aspect of the school's work. There are robust procedures for child protection, health and safety, and for assessing risks. These are applied scrupulously by all adults in school. The school works well with outside agencies to ensure that vulnerable pupils are supported well. The school's good induction procedures help children as they enter the Foundation Stage, or join the school during the school year, to settle quickly and to make a smooth transition as they move up the school. Pupils with learning difficulties are well supported by teaching assistants as they work successfully towards the challenging targets in their individual education plans. Assessment data is used well to give advice to individual pupils to help them raise the standard of their work. However, pupils' targets in writing are not specific enough for them to know what exactly they need to do to make their work better.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The headteacher leads and manages the school well. She successfully focuses the whole school community on promoting pupils' personal development and on maintaining good standards. School improvement is good because staff work closely as a team. The school involves parents, pupils and outside agencies well in this process. School leaders know the school well. The school improvement plan accurately identifies the key areas for improvement, including the need to improve standards in writing. Teaching performance is well monitored and careful checks are made to ensure that advice has been taken up. However, not all subject leaders are currently involved in monitoring the teaching in their subjects. This limits their impact on improving the quality of teaching and learning. Governors carry out their roles diligently. They have an excellent understanding of the school's strategic development through their very close monitoring of the school. They maintained good standards in school during the headteachers' maternity leave by careful planning and judicious deployment of staff.

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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	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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	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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	1
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**

22 May 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Finmere Church of England Primary School, Buckingham, MK18 4AR

Thank you for making me welcome when I visited your school recently. I appreciated the help you gave me when I looked at you working and when you shared your ideas about the school. I took careful note of what you and your parents had to say about the school.

Here are some of the many things that I think are good about your school:

- the work in the school Foundation Stage is well organised and gives you a good start in school
- you work hard and get on well with each other; the older pupils care well for the younger pupils
- you enjoy school and behave well in lessons and around the school
- your teachers are skilful and help you to learn well in your lessons; the adults in school look after you well and you say that you feel safe in school
- you take lots of exercise and know about healthy eating
- your headteacher, staff and governors run the school well and are continually trying to make your school even better for you.

I have asked the staff and governors to carry on working on those areas that they have started. These include trying to get some children to come to school more often. You can help with this by making sure that you come to school when you should. Some of you need more help to improve your writing. I have asked the teachers to give you more opportunities to use the writing skills they teach you.

I hope that you will help your teachers as they try to make your school even better for you.

Yours sincerely

Olson Davis

Lead Inspector