



# Cumnor Church of England School (Voluntary Controlled)

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 123146  
**Local Authority** Oxfordshire  
**Inspection number** 292596  
**Inspection dates** 12–13 September 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Sean O'Toole

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 address</b>	Oxford Road
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled		Cumnor
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11		Oxford OX2 9PQ
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01865 862337
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	204	<b>Fax number</b>	01865 865591
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Mr A Down
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs C Lynch-Blosse
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	12 November 2001		

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4–11	12–13 September 2006	292596

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

The majority of pupils benefit from pre-school educational provision and start with secure language and social skills. A below average proportion of pupils has learning difficulties. In the last two years, there has been significant staff turnover, including the appointment of a new headteacher. The school holds awards for its ecological work and for the promotion of healthy lifestyles.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Parents quite rightly believe that Cumnor Primary lives up to its mission statement, 'A school that shines creates children that sparkle.' This good school meets the needs of its pupils well. The headteacher, staff and governors work together effectively to create a purposeful environment in which children thrive.

Teaching and learning are good although some lessons are too long and this leads to slow pace. The support provided for those with learning difficulties by teaching assistants is particularly effective but and in some cases there is insufficient challenge for the more able. Children start school with good skills and knowledge. Staff in the Reception class build on these attributes extremely well and promote rapid progress and good success. In the rest of the school, achievement is mostly good. However, in Years 1 and 2, the quality of writing in subjects other than English should be better. By the end of Year 6, standards are above average. This year's test results show a substantial improvement in English, following the school's new approaches to promoting writing. Although not quite as high as in the previous year, the test results in mathematics and science remain above average. Pupils' good level of competence in basic skills equips them well for their futures.

At the heart of the school is the notion that every child matters. The pupils' personal development and well-being is outstanding. They clearly enjoy school and make the most of opportunities. Attendance is good. The school's outstanding links with local and international communities enhance pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and contribute much to their understanding of citizenship. Pupils have an excellent understanding of healthy living and respond very well to guidance about keeping themselves safe. They are proud of their success in influencing decision making in the school. Several pupils said, 'This is a very friendly school, and we all get on well together.' This comment is borne out by the good standards of behaviour.

These strengths are underpinned by good leadership and management which provide a firm steer in ensuring consistent teaching. There is a clear understanding of what needs to be done to improve although the school's long term plans do not include sufficiently well-defined targets. Making good use of monitoring, the perceptive headteacher has lifted performance through reorganising teaching groups, improving the provision for those with learning difficulties and raising expectations of the teaching. These improvements illustrate the school's good capacity to improve.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Raise the quality of writing across the curriculum in Years 1 and 2
- Make better use of time to increase the pace of lessons and set more challenging work for brighter pupils
- Sharpen up the school's long term plans and include well focused and measurable targets.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

This school does not rest on its laurels. Pupils' work and test results show that standards are above average and these good levels have been maintained over several years. Test results at the end of Year 6 have risen steadily; previous relative weaknesses in English have been tackled and pupils are now working at a good standard due to well focused teaching. Although standards at the end of Year 2 are above average there has been a decline in recent years which is being reversed by changes to the curriculum and teaching. Nonetheless, more work is needed to promote writing across the curriculum.

Achievement is good. Children thrive and make rapid progress in the Foundation Stage. They are especially successful in personal, social and emotional development. More able pupils work hard but the tasks set for them sometimes lack challenge. Pupils with learning difficulties now receive carefully focused support and they achieve well. As one boy said, 'I get lots of help and I'm now getting better at reading and maths.'

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

### **Grade: 1**

Because the school nurtures and affirms individuals, pupils grow in confidence and develop good personal and social skills. Their outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development enables them to understand and value different traditions and beliefs and to show respect for others. Their enthusiasm for and participation in drama, sport and music, from their own and worldwide cultures, extend their appreciation of their role in the local and wider communities.

Parents and pupils commented that because, 'This is a happy school and everyone is treated as an individual, learning is fun.' Pupils really enjoy school and their attendance is good. They are considerate and thoughtful, behave well and play an important part in decision making. Year 4's survey of school meals has led to new menus and an excellent understanding of healthy lifestyles. Pupils see the relevance of acquiring skills in English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) in order to be successful now and in the future. They take responsibility seriously and are always keen to help and support others. One younger child said, 'I feel really safe here because the older ones look after me.'

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Pupils rise to challenges. When talking about their work they often bubble over with enthusiasm especially when describing extended homework topics. One group

commented, 'We are never bored here because the teachers make learning interesting and there are lots of things to make and do.'

Teachers understand how pupils learn and adapt lessons to include a good balance of activities, enabling pupils to make good progress. Thorough preparation and the good use of resources underpin most lessons. Sparkling teaching in the Foundation Stage inspires confidence and well crafted questions stimulate the children's reasoning and imagination. Support staff make a very good contribution to the self esteem of those with learning difficulties, prompting and encouraging them with helpful comments.

Occasionally lessons are too long and the pace of learning drifts. In these lessons pupils do not produce as much work as they should. More able pupils are not always challenged sufficiently. Marking is accurate and most includes comments to help pupils to improve. In some classes the lack of specific targets means pupils are not sure about the next steps in learning.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The good curriculum meets the needs of individuals well and includes opportunities for pupils to take responsibility, use their initiative and learn effectively. Although teachers are developing links between subjects more remains to be done to extend opportunities for writing in subjects such as history and geography in Years 1 and 2. One girl said, 'I love history and it is a shame we only study it every other term.' The exciting and practical curriculum in the Foundation Stage promotes effective learning.

Pupils enthusiastically attend the good programme of extra-curricular activities, visits and events. The good provision of personal and social education helps them to grasp the importance of stable relationships and to learn about the benefits and potentially damaging effects of drugs. Strong links with a local special school, nursery and church, as well as international links with other schools, enhance the curriculum. Parents also provide support in specialist fields such as comparative religions.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Care, guidance and support are good. Parents and pupils enthuse about this friendly and happy school. One parent summed up the views of the vast majority, 'All of the staff show great commitment to the children.' The care shown for those with learning difficulties is of high quality and ensures that everyone can join in all aspects of school life.

Monitoring of pupils' academic progress is satisfactory. The teachers know their pupils well and assess them regularly although this information is not always used to pinpoint the next steps in learning. A careful check is kept on pupils' personal development, and opportunities for pupils to take responsibility and make decisions enhance their social skills. Parents comment that their children are prepared very well for the next stage of their education. One pupil said, 'Although I never want to leave this school I know I will be alright because the teachers here have helped me to grow up.'

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

The school has a modest view of its effectiveness and the headteacher and senior team are very self critical. Drawing on information from test results, observations of teaching and analysis of planning they have accurately identified the most important areas for development at the school. Within a year, the headteacher has improved communication with parents, sharpened up some aspects of teaching and set in place robust systems to ensure that learning is more consistent. One result has been the good improvement to standards in English. Subject leaders also play an effective part. Their current work on developing the curriculum is beginning to improve links between subjects although more remains to be done to extend opportunities for writing.

The school's comprehensive long term plan sets the scene for further developments although it lacks a critical edge in identifying measurable targets linked to the pupils' performance. The effective governors are involved in monitoring some aspects of teaching and have established a good system of performance management. However, they do not have a sharp enough focus on checking how well the school meets its priorities. Good financial procedures, the efficient use of staff and resources and effective teaching all stem from the staff's belief in and commitment to meeting the needs of individuals.



## 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>	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
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.

## 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	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 for all the help you gave us when we came to visit your school. We enjoyed our visit very much, especially talking to you and looking at your work. We agree that yours is a good school.

We were very impressed with the friendly way in which you play together and care for everyone. I am sure your teachers and parents are very proud of you and of the way in which you are polite, well behaved and good mannered. From all the excited conversations we had with you it was clear that you enjoy school and are very fond of your teachers.

It was good to see that during lessons you worked hard, listened to other children and made lots of helpful comments. We agree with you that your teachers are good at making most lessons interesting. Other adults who help in lessons are very good at supporting children who find some learning difficult. Your test results are usually better than those we see in most schools and it was especially pleasing to see how successful Year 6 pupils were in English in last year's tests.

We have asked the governors and staff to make the school even more successful by:

- helping pupils in Years 1 and 2 to write more in subjects like history and geography
- making lessons a bit shorter and more challenging
- making sure that the school's plans are clearer and sharper.

Mrs Dawson and I are sure that you will do your best to help. We wish you well in the future and hope that you will always be as happy in school as you are now.

Yours sincerely

Sean O'Toole(Lead inspector)