

The Ridgeway Church of England (C) Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123151
Local Authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	292597
Inspection dates	28–29 June 2007
Reporting inspector	John Earish

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	
School	66
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Julie Jones
Headteacher	Mrs Ruth Franklin
Date of previous school inspection	26 February 2001
School address	West Street Childrey Wantage OX12 9UL
Telephone number	01235 751254
Fax number	01235 751857

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This very small primary school serves the rural community of Childrey and surrounding villages. Pupils come from relatively prosperous backgrounds with high levels of employment in skilled and professional occupations. Almost all of the pupils are of white British Heritage. Attainment when children start school varies year by year because of the very small numbers involved but is generally above that expected of four year olds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is much lower than that found nationally. The school is being led by a new headteacher.

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 which provides a good quality of education for its pupils. Some aspects of its work are outstanding. Parents agree and are overwhelmingly positive in their views of the school. One parent, representing the views of many, said, 'The school has always provided not only a good level of education but also socially and emotionally.' In consequence, pupils feel safe and thrive in this very caring and supportive environment.

Achievement is good because teaching and learning are good. Good provision in the Foundation Stage helps young children make good progress. They settle quickly and effortlessly into routines within the mixed aged class. By the time they enter Year 1 the majority have exceeded the expectation for the age. This good progress continues as they move through the school. By the time they leave, pupils reach standards that are well above average. A good start has been made in raising the levels of challenge further by increasing the opportunities for pupils to work independently on tasks that extend their reasoning and thinking skills. However, this is not yet consistent across all classes or subjects.

Leadership and management are good. Very good leadership by the new headteacher has built on the enthusiasm and optimism of pupils and staff. She has successfully addressed last year's dip in standards at Year 6 and has set out a new agenda for change with energy and zeal. The impact of leadership and management on pupils' achievement is good. The school is well managed and runs smoothly.

Personal development is outstanding. Pupils are very proud of the contribution they make to the school community through the school council. They behave extremely well and respect each other. Pupils' enjoyment is fostered through the good curriculum which provides an excellent range of enrichment and sporting activities given the very small size of the school. The positive impact of the school on pupils' all-round development is appreciated by most parents. One commented, 'I feel truly blessed having a school such as this.'

The care, guidance and support of pupils are good and the pastoral aspects are outstanding. Pupils are well cared for and feel secure and happy. There are exceptionally strong partnerships with the community, other agencies and the local secondary school to promote learners' well-being. The new systems for keeping track of pupils' progress are being used well to identify any underachievement and to put in place programmes of work and interventions to address this. Pupils are set targets to achieve, which are helpful and easy to understand. However, pupils do not yet have sufficient opportunities to assess their own work so they can develop a much clearer understanding of their next steps in learning.

The school's track record in evaluating its performance and the clear shared view of what needs to be done next mean that it has good capacity for further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase the level of challenge by providing more opportunities for pupils to become active and independent learners.
- Increase the opportunities for pupils to assess their own progress so they have a clearer understanding of what they must do to improve.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

All groups of pupils achieve well during their time at school. Children typically start school with skills and abilities that are above those normally expected of four year olds. They make good progress in the Foundation Stage and the majority exceed the levels for their age by the time they move into Year 1. Inspection evidence confirms that pupils in Year 6 have made good progress since their starting points in Year 2. In addition, pupils in the current Year 2 are reaching well above average standards. This is confirmation of the positive impact of the changes to the climate for learning brought about by the new headteacher. This has successfully addressed the dip in standards at Year 6 last year. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities receive well focused support and also make good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding. Pupils behave extremely well and show remarkable care and courtesy. They attend school very regularly. From an early age children learn to cooperate with each other and can be trusted to complete tasks on their own because they have a strong sense of personal responsibility and enjoy learning very much. Pupils are very aware of those who find themselves in less fortunate circumstances and raise considerable sums of money for local and national charities.

Pupils greatly value having extra responsibility and they enjoy helping others. For example, they act as playground buddies and older pupils have been trained as play leaders and organise competitions and events at playtime. They participate in a very good number of extra-curricular activities despite the small size of the school. This is further evidence that they are happy, content and enjoy school. They are very well informed about the importance of a healthy lifestyle and staying safe. They are enthusiastic about healthy eating and are very aware of the importance of drinking plenty of water and taking regular exercise. Pupils rapidly acquire literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills that will equip them very well for later life and learning.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of the teaching and learning is good and ensures good progress. Lessons are well planned to meet the needs of the different ability groups within each class. Several parents wrote praising the teachers for setting work within the mixed age classes that was at 'an appropriate level rather than what is normally expected for the age groups'. However, whilst most activities provide good challenge, there are sometimes missed opportunities for pupils to work independently and become active, independent learners. Learning support assistants work very well with class teachers to provide good support for those who need extra help.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum in the Foundation Stage provides well for children's development in all areas of learning. Outside learning for these children has been improved since the last inspection

and is now of good quality. Throughout the school, provision for the development of basic skills is good and ensures that pupils make good progress. The outstanding range of enrichment and sporting activities, given the very small size of the school, is very much appreciated by the pupils, who are very proud of their sporting achievements. This makes a considerable contribution to their personal development. Links are being made between subjects to make learning more interesting and purposeful, drawing on pupils' different skills, particularly in ICT. The school recognises that more work needs to be done on these aspects before they are firmly established.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care, guidance and support of pupils are good and the pastoral aspects are outstanding. Pupils are adamant they feel safe and are well cared for. This is due to the outstanding support for pupils' welfare and the very clear moral and social guidance they are given. Procedures for child protection and ensuring pupils' welfare are securely in place, and there are good systems to identify pupils who need additional help. Pupils with learning difficulties are given good support and guidance in achieving the challenging targets in their individual education plans. Pupils know their targets in English and mathematics and find them useful. However, they do not yet have sufficient opportunities to assess the success of their own learning, to help them develop a clearer understanding of what they need to do next to improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The new headteacher provides very good leadership and inspires a passion and joy for learning. Clear systems for appraising the school's work have correctly identified key priorities for development and provide a useful framework for action. These are manageable and well directed to where they are needed most. The number of staff is small which means that each teacher has considerable responsibilities for leading developments in more than one subject. This has been recognised by the new headteacher who is reorganising responsibilities so staff can have more time to monitor their subject areas. Governance is good. The new chair of governors has a very good knowledge and understanding of the issues facing the school and provides good leadership for the governing body. It is to the school's credit that it manages to provide an exciting and enjoyable curriculum despite the limitations of the school buildings. The headteacher and governors have agreed plans to provide a new classroom, school hall and headteacher's study and work begins at the end of the term.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	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?	1
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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
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	1

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	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

11 July 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Ridgeway Church of England (C) Primary School, Wantage, OX12 9UL

Thank you very much for making me so welcome when I visited your school recently. I was really impressed with your friendliness, very good behaviour and your very sensible and helpful attitudes towards each other. I think that you are given a good education which prepares you well for the next stage of your learning.

I liked your school because it is a happy place to be, where everyone is friendly and welcoming. I was particularly impressed with the way that all of the adults care for you and are always there whenever you need help or advice. You were particularly excited on the second day of my visit because you had got through to the final of the Area Athletic Championships against much larger schools. By the time you read this the finals will have taken place. I hope you did well!

There are some things I think will make your school even better. I have asked your teachers to think about ways of giving you more opportunities to become active and independent learners. We also want you to have more opportunities to assess for yourselves how well you are getting on with your work so that you have a much clearer understanding of what you need to improve.

The school is very well led by your new headteacher and she gets lots of help from all the staff. Together they are working hard to make things even better for you. You can all help by continuing to work hard and to meet the targets set for you. I am sure that you are ready for this challenge!

I know that you will continue to work hard and I am sure that you will help your teachers to make your school even better. I hope that you have great success in the future.

Best wishes,

John Earish, Lead Inspector