

Shrivenham Church of England Controlled School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123158
Local Authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	292600
Inspection dates	12–13 July 2007
Reporting inspector	Vanessa Ward

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	144
School	
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs M Disney
Headteacher	Mrs S Currie
Date of previous school inspection	3 July 2001
School address	High Street Shrivenham Swindon SN6 8AA
Telephone number	01793 782406
Fax number	01793 782495

Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Shrivenham CE Primary School is smaller than average. It serves Shrivenham and several surrounding villages. Many pupils come from socially advantaged backgrounds. Most of the pupils are of White British heritage. Other pupils come from a range of ethnic backgrounds. A few pupils speak English as an additional language, but none is currently at the early stages of learning English. Fewer pupils than in most schools are entitled to free school meals. More pupils than usual join and leave the school after the Reception year. There have been several changes of staff in the past two years.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Shrivenham CE Primary School provides a satisfactory quality of education which is currently improving. It has strengths in the care, guidance and support it provides for pupils. The level of individual care contributes to the pupils' good personal development and well-being. Pupils enjoy coming to school and their attendance is above average. They take on responsibilities conscientiously. They have good knowledge of healthy lifestyles and enjoy taking part in many sports.

The majority of children enter the Foundation Stage with skills which are better than most four-year-olds. Good teaching and a stimulating curriculum give them a good start to their education and enable them to make good progress. Through Years 1 to 6, progress varies and has been influenced by frequent staff changes and pupils who enter and leave the school after the Reception Year. Progress is currently satisfactory and is improving, due to the actions taken by the senior staff. Following analysis of past test results, the school has correctly focused on improving the achievement of more able pupils and raising standards in mathematics and reading. The most recent national test results indicate that these initiatives are proving successful. By the end of Year 6, standards in English, mathematics and science are above average and achievement is satisfactory. Standards in writing are considerably lower than those for reading. The school recognises that standards in writing should be higher and has begun working to raise them by introducing more activities designed to stimulate pupils' imaginations. It acknowledges that this initiative needs to be strengthened. Teaching and the curriculum are satisfactory and have some strengths. The curriculum is enriched well by clubs, educational visits and visitors to school, and all of this adds to pupils' enjoyment of learning. Whilst there are strengths within teaching, these examples of good practice are not applied consistently in all lessons. This means that when tasks do not provide enough challenge for pupils, they make less progress than they should.

The headteacher is ambitious to improve the school. She works well with staff and governors to evaluate the school's strengths and weaknesses, and to devise suitable action to bring about improvement. Account is taken of the views of parents and pupils. Subject leaders work hard to raise standards in their subjects, but they have insufficient time to improve teaching and learning by monitoring the quality throughout the school. Governors support and challenge the school well. Improvements since the previous inspection, together with more recent successful initiatives to raise standards, indicate that the school has good capacity to improve.

Most parents are very supportive of the school, describing it as 'well organised and caring'. A small minority of parents expressed concern about the school's management of the challenging behaviour of a few pupils, but the school provides well for these pupils, seeking outside help whenever necessary. Behaviour in the school is good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing throughout the school, focusing particularly on pupils' imaginative writing.
- Increase the proportion of good teaching, ensuring that all pupils are challenged to achieve well.
- Ensure that subject leaders have sufficient opportunities to improve teaching and learning in their subjects.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards are above average and achievement is satisfactory given the pupils' starting points. Year groups are small and this means that variations in the performance of one or two pupils can have a significant impact on statistics. This accounts for fluctuating results at both Years 2 and 6. In the past two years, staffing changes appear to have had a negative impact on pupils' progress in some classes. Staffing is now more settled and pupils' progress is beginning to accelerate. The school's own tracking indicates that current standards in Year 6 are above average in English, mathematics and science, although reading is much better than writing. The school has begun to take steps to improve standards in writing. The introduction of a scheme to teach letter names and sounds is proving successful and has improved pupils' reading scores. It is having a very positive effect on writing in the Foundation Stage, but has yet to impact fully on results at the higher level at Year 2. Assessment information shows that there is no variation in the attainment of different groups of pupils. This includes boys, girls, higher attaining pupils, those with learning difficulties and disabilities, pupils from different ethnic backgrounds and those who join the school after the Reception Year. The school has recently increased its use of assessment data and refined the processes by which it tracks pupils' progress and then intervenes to support those who could do better. This is providing teachers with more precise targets for pupils' progress and is contributing to improving achievement.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They have a comprehensive understanding of a balanced diet and many eat healthily in school. They say that they gained a lot from the recent Healthy Eating Week and really enjoyed all of the activities, especially tasting apple crisps and exercising before school each day. Pupils take part in lots of sports, both within the curriculum and after school. They particularly enjoy competitive sports against pupils from other schools. They say they feel safe in school and know what to do if they have a problem. Pupils value opportunities to discuss any concerns in class. They are confident that any issues of bullying will be sorted out quickly by the staff. One child commented 'We don't tolerate bullying here'. The school's focus on literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) is improving pupils' basic skills. They learn many skills that will help them in later life through raising money for charities, links with a local business and involvement in Fairtrade and recycling. The school is working to increase pupils' awareness of and responsibility for the school environment. The school council takes its responsibilities seriously and is proud of the part it played in establishing the healthy eating tuck shop. Pupils are conscientious and caring about being playground friends and feel that they fulfil a valuable role.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory, with some strengths. Teachers work well with teaching assistants, who contribute significantly to pupils' learning. Pupils speak positively about the opportunities they are given at the end of lessons to review how much progress they think they have made. They are confident that if they find work too hard, the teachers will 'explain it a different way to help us understand'. Sometimes teachers share with pupils what they are to learn and this makes the teacher's expectations very clear. Too little is sometimes demanded of pupils because the pace of the lesson is too slow. At other times, such as in a Year 6 mathematics lesson, where ICT was used well to help pupils measure angles, pupils were very focused, interested and made good progress. At times when lessons are less stimulating, pupils become restless and lose interest. The tasks given to pupils do not always challenge them sufficiently to enable them to achieve well. It is this variability in teaching that makes teaching and learning satisfactory rather than good.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory and has several strengths. Educational visits, visitors to school and clubs all enrich pupils' learning. The curriculum contributes well to pupils' personal development. The school has started to revise its curriculum in order to make it more creative and to increase the links between subjects. A recent visit to explore the theme of spies and saboteurs resulted in some very imaginative writing. The use of ICT is also being increased in order to contribute to the writing initiative. The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is rich and stimulating and provides a good balance between adult-led activities and those that the children choose for themselves. The school is reviewing its curriculum in Year 1, to make the transition from the Foundation Stage more supportive of pupils' academic and personal development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good and contribute well to pupils' personal and academic development. Secure procedures are in place to ensure pupils' safety, protection and well-being. The school's policy for rewards and sanctions is understood by pupils, who feel that it is fair. Support for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is good, and the school is developing its provision for higher attaining pupils. The school has good links with other schools and agencies and uses these well to benefit pupils. Pupils know their targets and say that they enjoy discussing their progress with their teacher. The school has plans to increase pupils' involvement in this process and to help them gain greater understanding of how they learn best. Careful thought is given to the induction of pupils into Reception, and for those who join the school in later years. Pupils leaving Year 6 are prepared well for their transfer to secondary school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher, ably supported by her new deputy, has an accurate understanding of where the school needs to improve. Recent initiatives to raise standards and accelerate progress are having a positive impact, but the school acknowledges that this work needs to continue if pupils are to achieve their full potential. The monitoring of teaching by the headteacher is thorough and gives helpful development points, but recent staffing problems have meant that less time has been available for this work. Subject leaders analyse results and provide support for staff, but they have insufficient opportunity to improve teaching and learning in their subjects through such activities as lesson observation and modelling good practice. Governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities, understand the school's strengths and weaknesses and are thoroughly involved in school initiatives. They provide good support and challenge for the headteacher.

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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?	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	2
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	2
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	3

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?	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.

Annex A

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	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

23 July 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Shrivenham Church of England Controlled School, Swindon, SN6 8AA

Thank you for making me feel welcome when I visited your school. I enjoyed talking to you and hearing about the things you enjoy in school.

All the staff look after you very well and this helps you feel safe and happy in school. You carry out your jobs as playground friends very well. I am glad that you feel that your school council is successful. Your interest in leading a healthy lifestyle, supporting Fairtrade and recycling are all good things to learn about.

Your teachers often give you interesting things to do. You told me that you enjoy lots of subjects. I could see how much you enjoy Mathematics and how it helps you to practise adding up really quickly. I have asked your teachers to make sure that they always give you work that is hard enough for you, so that you make more progress.

Your school gives you a satisfactory education and this is improving because of the hard work of your headteacher, teachers and governors. Children in the Reception class get a good start to their school life. By the time you reach the end of Year 6, most of you are doing better in English, mathematics and science than children in other schools. However, your writing is not as good as your reading. The school has already started to help you to improve and I have asked them to carry on with this. Your teachers help each other in teaching their different subjects, and I have asked them to do more of this so that their teaching will be even better.

You can help with these things by working really hard and doing your best.

I hope you carry on enjoying your school.

Best wishes

Vanessa Ward

Lead Inspector