

Sunningwell Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123161
Local Authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	292602
Inspection dates	14–15 February 2008
Reporting inspector	Mary Sinclair

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	77
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Bob Evans
Headteacher	Mr Simon Handley
Date of previous school inspection	11 November 2002
School address	Dark Lane Sunningwell Abingdon OX13 6RE
Telephone number	01865 739378
Fax number	01865 739378

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This small rural school has three mixed-age classes. Most pupils are of White British heritage. Very few pupils learn English as a second language. A minority of pupils are from service families. Pupil mobility is high. Although the school has no pupils with a statement of special educational need, the proportion of pupils with learning disabilities is broadly average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school provides its pupils with a satisfactory standard of education. It has a number of strengths, particularly in pastoral care and welfare and in aspects of pupils' personal development. Parents and carers comment upon the 'caring ethos and emphasis upon each child as an individual'. Adults in the school work together as a team and relate well to pupils, helping to promote the positive, welcoming atmosphere of which the school is justifiably proud. This enables pupils to enjoy school and feel safe because they have a real sense of belonging. One said, 'It feels like you're in a big family'. They value the opportunity to contribute to the school community through, for example, the school council. They accept responsibility for developing healthy lifestyles and work hard to develop the skills they need for later life.

The headteacher leads a committed staff team. Despite being a small school, leadership and management are well distributed and all contribute to the smooth running of the school. Teachers know their pupils well and make accurate assessments of their attainment. However, this information is not always used well enough to ensure that they provide activities to challenge pupils of all ages and abilities. A small but significant number of older and more able pupils find some of the work undemanding. This weakness offsets some of the strengths in teaching. Consequently, most pupils reach average standards and make satisfactory progress.

Pupils' progress is tracked and this information is used to set challenging targets and to identify pupils needing additional support. However, this data is not analysed to reveal variations in the progress made by different cohorts and groups of pupils. Consequently, underachieving groups are not always identified so that their needs can be addressed quickly. This slows their progress. Pupils value their involvement in setting curricular targets and assessing whether they have been achieved. However, they have too few opportunities to assess their progress within lessons.

The actions taken to address issues raised at the last inspection and the impact of recent initiatives to improve the curriculum demonstrate the school's satisfactory capacity to make the necessary improvements.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children quickly settle into class routines and understand what is expected of them. Adults provide good role models for children and this encourages them to relate well to each other. Adult-led activities engage children because teachers have a clear understanding of children's strengths and weaknesses. Children develop good skills in communication, language and literacy because the teaching of early reading is well structured and it receives good emphasis in the curriculum. Teachers give children opportunities to use classroom resources to initiate their own activities, but do not sufficiently suggest interesting starting points to stimulate purposeful independent learning. Recent improvements to the classroom and outdoor area have significantly increased the opportunities for active learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Analyse assessment data for groups of pupils so that underachievement can be identified and tackled promptly.

- Increase the challenge and pace of learning for more able pupils. Involve pupils in the assessment of their own work.

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

Attainment on entry to the school is broadly in line with expectations. The children make satisfactory progress and many reach the goals set for the end of the Foundation Stage. Pupils achieve satisfactorily overall from Year 1 to Year 6 but progress is not even through the school. Standards are broadly average at the end of Year 2 and pupils make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1. At the end of Year 6, overall standards fell below the national average in 2006, because of a decline in performance in writing and science. The school prioritised writing and this helped to improve overall standards to broadly average in 2007. This year, the school has allocated more teaching time to science and this is beginning to raise standards. However, some cohorts of pupils make more progress in some years than others. The current relatively strong Year 6 cohort is making good overall progress in Key Stage 2. Inspection evidence indicates that the current Year 5 pupils are making slower progress. The school does not have an accurate picture of their progress, however. This is because it is not analysing its own data to check how well different groups are doing.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Assemblies effectively reinforce the spiritual, moral and social values of the school community. Pupils welcome newcomers and show concern for the well-being of others. Older pupils enjoy helping the younger pupils at lunchtime. Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They contribute to the local community through their involvement in the parish church and the choir sings to senior citizens in the village hall. They also correspond with pupils in a school in Uganda. Pupils talk to an adult if they have any concerns and are confident that adults will sort out any issues quickly. They are keen to participate in sporting activities and show a good understanding of healthy living. Extra-curricular activities and out-of-school care are attended well because pupils enjoy the range of activities provided for them. Pupils' positive attitudes to work and their satisfactory skills in literacy and numeracy ensure that they are adequately prepared for the next stages of their learning.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching is satisfactory with many strengths. Teachers work hard to create interesting lessons using a variety of teaching methods. They devise tasks and ways of recording that engage pupils and pupils respond by trying hard to learn. Interactive whiteboards are used well to support the teaching of key concepts. Teachers use questioning effectively to gauge pupils' understanding and to challenge them to develop their ideas. However, planning is not always incisive enough to identify what needs to be taught to ensure a good pace to learning for all

pupils in mixed-age classes. Sometimes older and more able pupils spend too long consolidating that which they already know. Behaviour management is positive and effective. Pupils with moderate learning difficulties receive well-focused support from teaching assistants and this helps them to make satisfactory progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school's curriculum plan supports the provision of both breadth and balance in pupils' learning. The sequencing of units of work helps to secure progression for pupils in mixed-age classes. Additional programmes provide well-structured support for pupils who are underachieving or who have specific needs. The curriculum introduces pupils to two modern foreign languages. Information and communication technology is used effectively to support learning on other subjects. Provision for problem solving and investigative work is satisfactory. The school has recently purchased a spinney to support learning across the curriculum. The school is tailoring its science curriculum to exploit the opportunities that it provides for investigative work. Teachers plan visits to promote learning in specific aspects of the curriculum, but the school does not offer pupils a residential visit. For its size, the school provides a good range of after-school clubs.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Health and safety and child protection procedures are robust. Strong links are forged with parents and carers and the school works well with outside agencies to support vulnerable pupils. Behaviour management is consistent and effective. Pupils with dyslexia and moderate learning difficulties receive good support and their progress is monitored closely. Pupils have been given good support to identify appropriate curricular targets, but have not been guided to assess their learning in lessons, to help them develop a better understanding of how well they are doing.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher with his staff and governors, have secured some good improvements, including extensions to the building and outdoor play area for the Foundation Stage pupils. The monitoring of teaching prompted training to develop questioning skills. Weaknesses in the pupils' writing have been identified and addressed. Clear procedures have been established for the accurate identification of pupils with learning difficulties. Pupils' progress is tracked and used to set challenging targets to raise standards. Nonetheless, more remains to be done. Although leaders acknowledge that pupils' rates of progress have been influenced by class groupings, insufficient action has not been taken to address this issue. Self-evaluation has not been sufficiently rigorous to indicate precisely where action needs to be targeted to bring about improvement. This is because the school has not developed systems to track how well different cohorts and groups are doing over time to indicate precisely where and why underachievement occurs. Coordinators have few opportunities to evaluate the impact of the curriculum on pupils' progress so that they can identify precisely where improvement is needed. The school development plan identifies some, but not all, of the key areas that the school needs to address. Its success criteria

are not sufficiently focused upon improving outcomes. Governors are committed and supportive, but do not make sufficient use of data to challenge the school to drive up standards.

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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	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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

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?	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?	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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	3
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

29 February 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Sunningwell Church of England Primary School, Abingdon, OX13 6RE

This letter is to tell you about the findings of the recent inspection and to thank you for taking the time to talk to me about your school. I visited lessons, looked at some of your work and talked to some of the adults in your school. As a result, I have decided that your school is a satisfactory school, with strengths in the way it cares for you. You behave well and look after one another. You enjoy your lessons and are keen to learn. To help you learn even better I have asked your headteacher to find out more about which groups of pupils are not achieving as well as they should. This is so that the school can make the changes needed so that you can make better progress and reach higher standards.

Some of you said that you enjoy lessons but others thought the work was too easy. I also noticed this when in your classes so I have asked the teachers to make sure that the tasks they set are just right for you. Then you will all have to think and try hard in your lessons. You told me that you enjoy deciding when you have met your targets so I have asked your teachers to help you to assess for yourselves what you have learned in lessons. This will help everyone to spot when you are ready for a new task.

I am sure that you will do all you can to help to make these improvements to your school.

Yours sincerely

Mary Sinclair Lead Inspector