



St Vigor and St John Church of England Primary School

Inspection Report

Better
education
and care

Unique Reference Number 123861
Local Authority Somerset
Inspection number 292819
Inspection dates 6–7 February 2007
Reporting inspector David Clegg

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Wells Road
School category	Voluntary aided		Chilcompton
Age range of pupils	4–11		Radstock BA3 4EX
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01761 233847
Number on roll (school)	211	Fax number	01761 233795
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Kim Curtis
		Headteacher	Rosemary Bailey
Date of previous school inspection	21 May 2001		

Age group 4–11	Inspection dates 6–7 February 2007	Inspection number 292819
--------------------------	----------------------------------------------	------------------------------------

© Crown copyright 2007

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is of average size. There is an average proportion of pupils with learning difficulties. The great majority of pupils are White British.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is a remarkable school that provides an outstanding education. At the heart of the school is a deep understanding of how children learn, underpinned by a clear view of what pupils should be taught to equip them for the present day and for the future. This clarity of purpose emanates from the headteacher but is shared by all staff. It guides the work of the school and underpins its success.

In both academic and personal terms, pupils achieve very well. Children make a flying start in the Reception class where the foundations are laid for their future success. As they move up the school pupils acquire exceptionally good literacy and numeracy skills from a broadly average starting point. Exceptionally high standards are reached in mathematics, science and English, although in the latter, reading is stronger than writing. However, pupils also attain high standards in subjects such as art, history, geography, drama and information and communication technology (ICT).

Pupils work very hard, apply themselves extremely well and rise to the challenges the school offers. Pupils relish the experiences the school gives them, knowing they are safe and well looked after. They feel confident and secure and welcome the opportunities they have to make a significant contribution to the school and the local community. They have a good grasp of the key components of a healthy lifestyle. Perhaps the most remarkable feature of pupils' achievement is that they have a very firm grasp of how to learn. This is because the school takes great time and trouble to teach them how to develop important ways of learning. Consequently, pupils have great insights into themselves as learners. They know what they are learning, understand what they are achieving and know what they have to do to do better. Because the work they are given is often posed as a genuine enquiry, pupils become very adept at applying their learning skills. They plan what to do, use what they already know and work productively with others in many different situations. It is this combination that makes teaching and learning outstanding. The curriculum is a wonderful seamless range of exciting, challenging and imaginative activities. These are supplemented by the popular 'focus weeks' that give pupils time to really study a theme in depth. ICT is used in diverse ways, from creating an animation to boost literacy in Year 2 through researching information to working directly from purpose-designed websites.

The quality of care is very high and the support given to all pupils is enormously beneficial and makes a significant contribution to their achievements. Academic guidance is particularly strong because it is fundamental to the school's understanding of what is important. Pupils get good quality feedback from teachers' marking, discussions with their teachers and from their own reflections on how well they are doing.

Creative and imaginative leadership underpin the work of the school. The intellectual rigour of the head and deputy gives the school a well-honed sense of purpose and direction. All teachers are signed up to the vision and the teamwork is highly productive.

The sharp analysis of information, coupled with equally sharp observations of what is happening, results in measured and successful responses to any areas needing attention.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing even further to bring them closer to those in reading.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

All pupils, including those with learning difficulties, do extremely well. By the time they leave, pupils attain standards that are well above the national average. The terrific start made by children in the Reception class is built on very effectively in other year groups.

Standards in reading and mathematics are exceptionally high, with a very high proportion of pupils reaching above-average standards. The results in end-of-Year 6 tests show exceptionally high standards in English. Standards in writing are not quite as high as in reading but are still above the national average. The school has identified relative weaknesses in spelling and sentence formation but is already putting in place actions to tackle this relative weakness. In science, the results in end-of-Year 6 tests are also exceptionally high and way above those often found.

Beyond the very good results and high standards in basic skills, however, what really stands out is the pupils' remarkable ability to apply their skills and understanding. This is evident in their research, enquiry and investigative work. It is pupils' application of learning strategies allied with very high levels of skills that is the really outstanding achievement, evident throughout the school.

In all year groups, much of the work in art, history and geography is better than usually found. Similarly, the quality of work in drama is very good and is successfully used to explore and reflect upon aspects of literature and to develop pupils' imagination.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils have a wonderful preparation for life in the future. This results from the meshing of opportunities that very successfully help them to acquire excellent personal attributes that will stand them in great stead in the future. Their insights into themselves as learners are quite extraordinary. One parent summarised this in her comment about her child in Reception 'having great self-belief in her learning abilities'. Pupils have a great enthusiasm for learning and a sharp understanding of the key learning processes. Their social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is equally outstanding. Pupils are immersed in the arts. A Year 6 boy spoke matter-of-factly of 'choreographing a dance routine with friends', and drama, music and art all play a central role in pupils' experience of school. It is key factor in both their sense of achievement and enjoyment.

Pupils make an enormous contribution to the school through the school council, and becoming 'leading learner' or playground leader. The 'democracy week' provided pupils with real insights into the political process to the extent that a Year 6 pupil was very clear about her responsibility 'not to waste her vote'.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

An outstanding feature of the teaching is the emphasis that all staff give to teaching pupils how to learn. At the heart of all lessons is the determination to equip pupils with skills, knowledge and understanding that will serve them well long after the particular lesson is over. This means that the teaching is always focused on reminding pupils how they can optimise their learning and is why the quality of learning is outstanding.

Lessons are well planned to meet the needs of all pupils. The careful planning and the use of learning assistants mean that pupils of all abilities are working at their optimum. As the pupils themselves often said, 'We are stretched and challenged'. Pupils always know what they are learning or trying to achieve. Because much of their work is presented as challenges, investigations or enquiries, pupils are highly motivated and have high levels of concentration and perseverance.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

'The range of opportunities offered is brilliant' was an entirely justifiable comment by one parent. The curriculum provides a wide range of rich and expansive experiences that presents pupils with opportunities to plan, do and think. Hence the careful balance between learning important skills and developing equally important personal qualities. The curriculum encompasses all manner of opportunities, many of which go well beyond the school. The involvement through pen friends and teacher exchanges with a school in Ghana, together with the work around FairTrade, gives pupils experiences way beyond their immediate environment. The engagement with work in citizenship and rights and responsibilities contributes to pupils' personal development and is made real through their involvement in deciding how the school operates. There are substantial links with several local businesses. The provision for music is outstanding, with the majority of pupils involved in playing instruments and performing. Artists make regular visits to share expertise and work alongside pupils to give them more insight into creative processes.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The exceptional quality of academic guidance is another key feature of the school's success. As part of the pupils' keen sense of themselves as learners they have a very

sharp idea of what they are achieving and what they need to do next. This is communicated to pupils through establishing their learning targets, feedback by teachers focusing around pupils' individual learning logs and insightful marking that moves learning on.

Pupils are well looked after. Staff know them well and the close and genuine partnership with parents ensures regular and helpful communications between home and school. Procedures for keeping pupils safe are up to date and robust. The overwhelming majority of parents appreciate what the school does and what it offers. Their confidence was summed by the comment that 'all the staff are completely devoted to the education progress and welfare of the children'.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Teachers and staff are inspired by the way the school is led and managed. There is a passionate determination that comes from the headteacher, shared by all staff, to give pupils the best possible start in life. The procedures to ensure high quality education are rigorous and demanding, but staff rise to the challenge. A palpable sense of mission pervades the school. There is a constant desire to seek improvement and the school's great capacity to succeed is evidenced by the vast strides made in the last few years. There is a well-established and rigorous cycle of improvement. This includes regular checks on teaching, close scrutiny of pupils' work and a sharp analysis of assessment information. This attention to detail ensures the priorities for improvement are well founded and accurate. The school is then relentless in taking action to address these and evaluate the impact of what it has done. The school has a tried and tested recipe for success.

Governors play a full and active part in the life of the school. They are well organised and knowledgeable about the school. The way they are organised ensures that they work alongside members of staff in teams and on committees. This produces a good sense of partnership and gives governors a good level of knowledge and the wherewithal to challenge the school.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

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	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
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

Thank you for welcoming my colleague, Mrs Franklin, and I to your school when we visited recently. We thoroughly enjoyed being with you and can fully understand why you spoke so enthusiastically about the school. It certainly provides you with an outstandingly good education. Everything about your school is exceptionally good. We think you all work very hard and play very hard, mainly because you have so many interesting things to do. You are learning so much about life that is going to help you when you move to your next school. All the adults in the school take a great deal of care to make sure you are safe and secure and you clearly enjoying spending your days with them.

We were very impressed with the way you are taught to learn. The lessons you are taught about planning your work, working together and keeping going are valuable ones that will help in the future. The work you do in subjects such as English, mathematics and science (and all the others) is very good. You are all very good at reading and we have asked the school to keep trying to make sure that writing becomes just as good.

Once again, many thanks for taking the time and trouble to talk to us. Keep working hard and best wishes for your future.