



St Andrews Church of England Primary School, Blunsdon

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 126301
Local Authority Swindon
Inspection number 293514
Inspection date 30 January 2007
Reporting inspector Lorna Brackstone

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Linley Road
School category	Foundation		Blunsdon
Age range of pupils	4-11		Swindon SN26 7AP
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01793 721423
Number on roll (school)	210	Fax number	01793 700748
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Vacant Position
		Headteacher	Jane Wheatley
Date of previous school inspection	13 January 2003		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This average-sized school serves the village of Blunsdon and the surrounding area of mainly privately owned homes. A below-average proportion of pupils is eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is below average. There is a small number of Japanese pupils who are at an early stage of English acquisition. When children enter Reception, they have a range of skills broadly in line with those usually found.

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 an outstanding school where all pupils receive an excellent education. It ensures that pupils achieve extremely well and that they attain exceptionally high standards in reading, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6. Whilst writing standards are good, they are not quite on a par with those in reading. The school prepares pupils very well for the next stage of their education.

The key to the school's success is the outstanding leadership and management. Many parents commented on the headteacher's exceptional leadership qualities and pupils are fully aware that she has great concern for them as individuals. One child wrote in a note to her headteacher, 'Thank you for always caring for us', and this seems to sum up what is at the heart of the school. The headteacher, with her extremely competent senior team and excellent staff, ensures that the pupils receive the very best deal at all times. The highest quality systems for tracking pupil progress are in place and this ensures that they have a consistent learning journey through the school. Based on an excellent understanding of exactly where each pupil is in their learning, teachers are very clear about what each pupil must do to improve their work. This is carefully shared and documented. This enables all the pupils to receive outstanding care, guidance and support in all aspects of school life.

Another reason for the success of the school is the consistently good, and often excellent, teaching which ensures pupils' outstanding progress. Most parents are 'very happy with the level of teaching' their children are receiving. One of the outstanding features of the teaching is the very effective use of resources, particularly teaching assistants who very effectively support specific individuals or groups who have been identified for additional help. Positive relationships between staff and pupils and among pupils ensure that the school environment is highly supportive of learning.

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are outstanding. Attendance is very good because, as several parents commented, their children 'look forward to school every day'. They are motivated by the excellent curriculum which is made relevant to them through the links made between the work in different subjects. The quality and standards in the Reception Year are good.

Partnerships make a very strong contribution to pupil achievement. Consultation with pupils, parents and governors is a very effective feature of the school. This, for example, was evident in the discussion and consultations that took place prior to the school day being changed. Links with outside agencies promote pupils' learning very well. A very good example of this is the translating service, provided by the school and sponsored by the local car manufacturer. The project to introduce modern foreign languages is also as a result of this close and productive partnership.

The school's self-evaluation is very thorough but the school is modest about its significant strengths. This is because it is continually striving to improve and has an excellent capacity to do so. For example, teachers already understand that they need to develop the pupils' writing skills further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing so that they match those in reading.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

The overall attainment of children when they start Reception is broadly typical. They make good progress and most exceed the standards expected by the time they start Year 1. From this strong foundation pupils make outstanding progress through the rest of the school to reach exceptional standards in English, mathematics and science. Although standards in writing are above the national average, the school is fully aware that they are very slightly weaker than reading skills, and this is being systematically addressed. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are very well supported and they make outstanding progress in relation to their prior attainment. The small group of Japanese pupils who use English as an additional language also make excellent progress because they receive the highest quality help and guidance.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils are extremely well prepared for the next stage of their education. Their outstanding standards of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) enable them to be confident and have high aspirations for the future. The very comprehensive multi-cultural aspects of school life, for example, the celebration of the Japanese New Year, ensure that pupils understand the diversity of modern-day living. Pupils are keen and eager to learn and really enjoy what the school has to offer. They know how to keep safe and secure and fully understand that exercise and balanced eating habits keep them fit and healthy. Pupils feel confident and self-assured because their opinions are valued through the class 'suggestion boxes' and school council work. Behaviour is exemplary and the very strong Christian ethos enables pupils to have an exceptionally good understanding of their responsibilities within their own community and further afield. For example, pupils award 'badges of courage' to their classmates on a weekly basis and they visit the residents of the neighbouring senior citizens home each week. The whole school very keenly contributes to fund-raising events for charities both at home and overseas.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

The very supportive relationships that are enjoyed between staff and pupils underpin the extremely effective teaching and learning. Pupils know they have to work hard because teachers have very high expectations and want them to achieve as well as

they can. Teachers plan lessons to carefully match the needs of all the pupils and very clearly identify the purpose of each session. This enables the pupils to evaluate what they have learnt and what they need to do to improve. The pace of learning is exceptionally good and pupils are very well motivated through the use of high quality visual resources such as interactive whiteboards and other interesting teaching aids. Pupils who find learning difficult are extremely well supported by teaching assistants. A highly effective specialist translator ensures that the pupils who use English as an additional language are fully involved in lessons. This was well illustrated when a class joke about 'money not growing on trees' was translated to a Japanese pupil who was then able to join in with the laughter.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The extremely rich curriculum is very well balanced and exceptionally relevant to the needs of all pupils. The curriculum makes a significant contribution to their personal development and enables them to fully enjoy all aspects of school life. Learning is brought to life because close links are made between subjects. For example, the study of Henri Matisse brought art, history and English together and this really enhanced the level of pupils' achievement. The school is extremely good at encouraging all pupils to apply core skills of literacy and numeracy across a range of subjects. The whole-school weekly 'Creative Hour' not only enables pupils of different ages to work together as a whole-school community but also provides an excellent opportunity for developing a range of new skills. As one pupil explained, they 'really enjoy making fun things and it is nice to work with younger children'. Curriculum planning is also very well adjusted to meet the needs of pupils with significant learning difficulties and disabilities. For instance, they take part in real-life situations, such as shopping trips, and this helps them to develop the necessary communication skills for the future. The very well attended extra-curricular clubs provide pupils with an excellent range of different activities, thus providing them with a taster of hobbies they may wish to pursue in the future.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Pupils are known extremely well to all staff, both in personal and academic terms. Procedures for keeping pupils safe and ensuring their well-being are exceptional. Relationships between staff and pupils are of the highest quality and communication between them is outstanding. This is why the pupils feel that they can approach any adult with a problem or a concern.

The 'child-friendly' targets, that are shared with all the pupils in the key subject areas provide support and guidance on how they can improve their work. The involvement of parents in promoting and emphasising the targets helps to maintain the close support networks between home and school.

There is an exceptionally high level of personal care and academic support provided for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. Individual education plans have

manageable targets that are reviewed regularly. Those pupils who use English as an additional language are also looked after extremely well and given the best possible support with their work. Their parents are also given very good guidance and support, including the translation of reports and, if requested, the services of a translator at consultation evenings

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

All aspects of the school have improved since the last inspection because of the excellent leadership and management of the headteacher. She has created an exceptionally strong team who are fully committed to providing the very best for all those involved in the school. The headteacher is extremely well supported by key staff. They share her vision and determination to maintain high quality achievement within an ethos based upon mutual care and respect. Systematic and well-organised management systems for monitoring and evaluating the school's work confirm the exceptional achievement but also identify writing as a relative area for development. For example, they have recognised that pupils need to have a greater awareness of writing for a wider range of purposes and this is being tackled through specific sessions for skills development and through ensuring there are plenty of opportunities to extend writing skills through topic work. This has already started to improve pupils' confidence and awareness of their writing capabilities. Governors are well trained, knowledgeable and informed. They give generously of their time and expertise to support all aspects of the school's work.

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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?	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	2
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	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?	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	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 very much for making me so welcome at your school. It was very interesting seeing you working and concentrating very hard in your classrooms. I really enjoyed meeting the group of pupils that came to talk to me and I would like to say a special thank you to them.

Your school provides you with an excellent education. You feel safe and cared for because the school looks after you extremely well and gives you the highest quality support with your learning. You make outstanding progress and, by Year 6, reach standards that are exceptionally high. In English, you achieve particularly well in reading, but don't do quite so well in writing. I have asked the school to help you to do better in writing. You behave extremely well and enjoy your learning because teaching is excellent and the curriculum is made very interesting.

You are proud of all the after-school activities you are involved in and particularly enjoy the visits out of school which help you with your learning. I was very impressed with your detailed knowledge about keeping fit and eating healthily.

The adults in charge of the school are leading and managing the school exceptionally well. Your headteacher is very determined to always give you the very best education.

Once again, thank you for your help. Keep doing your best and working with the adults to make sure that St Andrew's Primary remains an outstanding school.