

Cherhill CofE School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	126313
Local Authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	293520
Inspection dates	15–16 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Eileen Chadwick

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	184
School	
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alan Carter
Headteacher	Terry Hall
Date of previous school inspection	3 July 2001
School address	Middle Lane Cherhill Calne SN11 8XX
Telephone number	01249 812100
Fax number	01249 811331

Age group	4–11
Inspection dates	15–16 May 2007
Inspection number	293520

© 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

This average sized primary school serves the village of Cherhill, other neighbouring villages and areas further afield. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is below average. The proportion with learning difficulties and disabilities is average. Pupils' attainment on entry is average although wide-ranging. The current headteacher was appointed in January 2007 after an unsettled period of senior leadership. The school has achieved the silver Eco Award

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school with strengths in pupils' personal development, well-being and behaviour. Strong provision in Reception gives children a good start to their education. The new headteacher is leading the school very capably. She is building good teamwork amongst staff, harnessing their talents and creating effective systems for raising standards and achievement. Parents appreciate the clear leadership she is bringing to the school and the changes being made. The school has a secure knowledge of its strengths and clear plans to tackle weaker areas.

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory but progress varies between year groups. In Reception, good teaching leads to children's good progress. Consequently, standards exceed expectations in all areas at the start of Year 1. Satisfactory teaching and progress in Years 1 and 2 lead to above average standards in reading and writing by Year 2, although standards are only average in mathematics. In mathematics, most pupils make satisfactory progress but more capable pupils underachieve because the work they are given is often too easy. Standards in Year 2 in reading and writing have begun to improve recently. Pupils make satisfactory progress overall in Years 3 to 6, but by Year 6, standards are still only average in English, whereas they are above average in mathematics. The school is working hard to improve writing throughout the school. However, it is fully aware that pupils' written work is limited by spelling weaknesses and the pupils' vocabulary, which is not as imaginative as it might be.

The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory. Teachers manage pupils well and have good relationships with them. However, the level of challenge provided for different groups is inconsistent, especially for the more capable. Teachers are now receiving support and help to improve their teaching. Morale is high and staff show a willingness to adapt and implement changes designed to improve pupils' achievement.

The personal development and well-being of pupils are good. Pupils enjoy their lessons and this is reflected in their good attendance. The curriculum is satisfactory. It is enriched by a wide range of activities outside normal school hours and by interesting visits. There are good opportunities for pupils to develop their musical talents. However, pupils do not have enough opportunity for developing their creativity through writing or for writing at length. The care, support and guidance of pupils are satisfactory. Pupils are well cared for, feel safe and develop a good understanding of how to keep healthy and safe. Academic assessment has been substantially improved recently. However, there is still work to be done to make sure pupils' learning fully builds on what they already know.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher is a strong and experienced leader. Accurate self-evaluation has produced the right priorities for improving pupils' achievement. Procedures are now in place to improve pupils' achievement and these are already having some impact. Middle managers are being trained for their roles but their contribution to securing improvement is not yet fully effective, for example in checking their colleagues' work.

What the school should do to improve further

-
- Raise standards in mathematics in Years 1 and 2 by making sure more capable pupils are consistently given challenging work.

- Raise standards in writing by improving spelling and vocabulary and increasing opportunities for pupils to write imaginatively and at length.
- Improve the quality of teaching by using assessment more effectively to plan work so learning activities consistently build on what pupils already know.
- Develop the roles of middle managers so they thoroughly check teaching and learning in order to identify how pupils' achievement might be raised. 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

Pupils' overall achievement is satisfactory. Their attainment on entry is broadly average and, by Year 6, they reach average standards in English and above average standards in mathematics.

Children make good progress in Reception and standards are above those expected for their age, including in literacy and numeracy. Pupils' overall progress in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory. By Year 2, pupils reach above average standards in reading and writing but only average standards in mathematics. In mathematics, the proportion working at the higher levels is too low. Standards have started to improve in literacy over the last two years due to improved reading and better assessment systems. However, in mathematics more capable pupils underachieve because too much teaching is aimed at the average.

In Years 3 to 6, pupils' progress in relation to their starting points is satisfactory. The school is working hard to improve writing and is fully aware that weaknesses in spelling and unadventurous vocabulary choices prevent standards in English rising more quickly. Results in English, mathematics and science national tests for Year 6 pupils were consistently high until 2006 when they dropped to average, results that more accurately match the standards seen by inspectors. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make satisfactory progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy school and are keen to learn. Consequently, the attendance rate is above average. One parent commented about her son, 'He's hardly ever away and if he's been poorly he just can't wait to get back to school'. Pupils generally concentrate well during lessons. However, their attention sometimes wanes when the pace of lessons is rather slow and their work is too easy. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils enjoy each other's company, work and play together amicably and know the difference between right and wrong. They respond well when given responsibility, for example the active school council identified the need to improve the playground equipment and have taken the initiative to raise the necessary funds.

Pupils feel safe, are safety conscious and care for others. They enjoy a good range of physical activities and understand the importance of healthy eating. The school Eco Committee has helped pupils to understand the need for energy conservation and recycling. Pupils make a strong contribution to the community and are keen fund raisers for a range of good causes. Pupils make satisfactory progress in literacy and numeracy and, as a result, they are soundly prepared for their future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall; there are many good features but across different year groups there are significant pockets of weakness. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour well, know what they expect pupils to learn and explain tasks clearly. Consequently, pupils are usually confident about tackling their work. Good teaching enables children to do well in the Foundation Stage and some lessons are also well taught in the older classes. In the good lessons, teachers make learning enjoyable and skilfully match pupils' work to their learning needs. However, good teaching is not sufficiently widespread across Years 1 to 6. Weaknesses in teaching prevent pupils from making the progress they should. These include the pace of learning which slows when teachers talk for too long, questions that do not probe pupils' understanding sufficiently and work that is too easy being given to more capable pupils who then mark time. Assessment procedures have recently improved and are now satisfactory. Consequently, teachers are now much more aware of the progress pupils are making, including those who need extra support to make up lost ground. However, the use of assessment for planning the next steps in pupils' learning is variable. In particular, work does not consistently build well on the previous learning of the most capable pupils and expectations are not high enough.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

In Reception provision is good. There is a good balance between teacher-directed activities and purposeful play with high quality opportunities for pupils to learn through talking. In Years 1 to 6, the curriculum is broad and good features include the wide range of extra-curricular activities, especially in sport. Visits, visitors and links with other schools enrich pupils' learning well, for example specialist teaching staff from the local secondary school provide weekly French lessons for pupils in Years 5 and 6. Cross-curricular links are developing well, notably between literacy, science and geography in Year 2, where good quality work was seen based on the story 'The Lighthouse Keeper's Lunch'. Planning has recently been improved so that work programmes build more systematically over a period of time and this is improving the pupils' depth of understanding. Pupils have satisfactory opportunities for writing for a range of purposes in English and other subjects. However, not enough time is given to promoting creative writing or encouraging pupils to write at length.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Pupils feel safe and secure, and know that staff will listen if there are any problems. Parents are justifiably confident that pupils are well looked after at school. Child protection and safety procedures are thorough. All pupils in Years 3 to 6 have successfully achieved First Aid certificates following recent training. Effective links with outside agencies help vulnerable pupils. Good arrangements support the induction of children into Reception and pupils' transfer at the end of Year 6. The ways in which academic progress is facilitated and guided are improving because of more rigorous systems to track individual achievement. However, not all staff use the information gathered to make sure that pupils achieve as well as they should. The school has now ensured that pupils have targets in English and mathematics. However, pupils' awareness of their targets is variable and this restricts the impact on pupils' achievement.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher has a very clear vision and high expectations for the school. This is now a school in which everyone is working together to improve the achievement of pupils. The headteacher is successfully building on the work of the previous temporary headteacher and that provided by local authority's intensive support programme. Staff are delighted with the opportunities for them to develop and improve their teaching, made possible by much improved management systems.

Self-evaluation procedures are becoming more secure. The school has identified its most pressing priorities accurately. The headteacher has a systematic programme for checking the quality of teaching. The process of self-evaluation is beginning to involve other staff although the school is fully aware that systems for evaluating the impact of provision on pupils' achievement are not yet consistent. Middle managers are now being given the opportunity to monitor and manage their areas of responsibility. However, the school realises there is a way to go before the subject leaders are effective in monitoring the quality of teaching in their subjects and have a secure overview of the whole school picture.

The leadership provided by the governing body is satisfactory. The chair of governors is knowledgeable and provides a good lead to other governors. Governors are receiving training for their roles so they can provide the right level of challenge. Money has been recently well spent on new technology, reading and library resources. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory, mainly due to accelerated progress since the headteacher's arrival. This shows the school has a satisfactory capacity to improve further.

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.

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
--	-----------------------

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?	3
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	3
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	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 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	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?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

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	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

16 May 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Cherhill CofE School, Cherhill, Calne SN11 8XX

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school recently. You certainly seem to enjoy school and it was good to hear about all the extra activities in which you are involved. We think your school gives you a sound education and is working hard to make it even better than this. This is what we thought about your school:

- You behave well and are keen to learn.
- Those of you in Reception get off to a really good start.
- You understand the importance of eating healthily and keeping safe and fit.
- You take on responsibilities willingly and carry them out properly.
- The teachers and staff take good care of you while you are in school.
- Your headteacher leads the school well and the governors and staff are very keen to make it even better.

Here are the things we are asking the school to change:

- Make sure those of you who are capable reach higher standards in mathematics in Year 2.
- In writing, help you improve your spelling, give you more opportunities to use your imagination, learn new words and make your writing longer.
- Make sure your work is never too easy or hard.
- Help teachers in charge of subjects to be more involved in checking up on how well you are learning.

You can help your teachers by making sure you continue to work hard at improving your reading and writing and mathematics.

Thank you again for being so helpful.

Yours sincerely Eileen Chadwick

Lead inspector