



# Derry Hill Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 126400  
**Local Authority** Wiltshire  
**Inspection number** 293550  
**Inspection date** 11 December 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Lorna Brackstone

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Church Road
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided		Derry Hill
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4-11		Calne SN11 9NN
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01249 812139
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	200	<b>Fax number</b>	01249 812139
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Michael Buckland
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Sheryl Staton
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	4 March 2002		

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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

## **Description of the school**

This is an average size village school serving the local community. With the number of local children declining, the available spaces are being taken by families from Calne and Chippenham who have chosen to send their children here. Attainment on entry was above expectations but, as these demographic changes have occurred, it is now as expected for this age group. The number of children with learning difficulties or disabilities is below average.

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This is a good school with some excellent features. The exceptionally high expectations of the headteacher ensure that the school is well led, with pupils receiving good quality teaching and a well balanced curriculum. This enables pupils to achieve well from their starting points and to attain above average standards in English, mathematics and science. Writing skills are average but slightly weaker than pupils' skills in other areas and the school is working hard to further improve achievement in this area. Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good. Pupils love coming to school and this is reflected in their good attendance rates. Behaviour is excellent and this is a positive outcome of the way that all staff, as one parent said, 'seem to engender the respect and affection of the children with just the right mix of discipline and humour'. Children get off to a great start because of the good provision for them in Reception.

Care, support and guidance are good. The school enables the pupils to feel safe because they are well looked after. They have an excellent understanding of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle. They keep fit through taking regular exercise and know that they must drink plenty of water to 'keep their brains working'. Pupils have an extensive range of targets to work towards and this gives them a good understanding of what they are aiming to achieve. However, marking does not always provide pupils with suggestions on how they can improve their work and how well they are doing on a day-to-day basis.

Pupils are active members of their school community and are involved in school council initiatives and act as 'playground buddies'. Their involvement in the wider community is less well developed. They have good literacy and numeracy skills but they have limited opportunities to make the best use of these in working together to solve everyday problems. A lack of links with businesses in the local community restricts their preparation for the future.

The key roles played by the subject leaders and the high quality involvement of the governors support the good leadership and management of the school. Parents are encouraged by the 'visibility and approachability' of the headteacher. There is a focus on standards and 'the consistent team work and dedication of the staff is always apparent'. The school leaders have some modesty about some of its strengths but have an accurate knowledge of the areas still requiring improvement and have a good capacity to do so. As several parents explained, 'Derry Hill School is a very special place to be' and 'my children are thriving there'.

### What the school should do to improve further

- continue to improve standards in writing by ensuring that the pupils understand letter sounds and are motivated to write at length
- improve the quality of marking so that pupils get clear guidance on how they can do better in their work

- develop links with the local community so that pupils get a better understanding of the world of work and learn how to adapt their skills through problem-solving and collaboration.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Children achieve well. Progress is good in the Reception class and this is successfully built on through the school. The pupils in the 2005 Year 6 group achieved exceptionally high standards from an entry point that was above expectations. In national tests in 2006, Year 6 pupils achieved good standards from a broadly typical starting point into school. Standards in mathematics and science are above average. Whilst pupils also attain good standards in English, their skills in reading are stronger than those in writing. This is because their knowledge and understanding of letter sounds and working on extended pieces of writing have been less developed in the past. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities progress well and achievement is good in relation to their individual targets.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

The confident way in which the Reception and Year 1 and 2 children performed the 'Wriggley Nativity' illustrated how quickly their personal and social skills are developed. Pupils grow in confidence as they move through the school. This is evident when talking to Year 5 and 6 who, for example, are quite happy about staying away from home when they participate in the popular residential trips to Braeside and Kingswood.

The anticipation of 'Fun Friday' each week, when chocolate or crisps can be brought to school for tuck and the excellent knowledge of balanced diets clearly demonstrate that pupils understand the importance of eating healthily. Extremely eager participation in a range of sporting activities, such as football, cricket and swimming, also confirms that they know very well about how to keep fit.

The pupils' social and moral awareness is developed well through fund-raising events, involvement in the school council and participating in monitoring duties. Pupils' involvement within the school community is good. They are confident that their views are always heard and their concerns dealt with quickly. They fund-raise for a variety of different charities and entertain elderly citizens at Christmas. However, their awareness of roles and responsibilities within the wider community, and opportunities to use skills such as problem-solving and to work collaboratively, could be developed further.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

Positive relationships between pupils and their teachers ensure that learning is enjoyable. Teachers share with their class what they intend them to learn during each lesson. This helps the children evaluate their learning at the end of the session. The teachers ask lots of questions to keep the pupils motivated and pupils respond well to the different levels of challenge set. Resources are used well to maintain pupils' interest. This was evident in the run-up to Christmas when lessons had a seasonal theme. For example, 'A Christmas Carol' was used well in a literacy lesson to illustrate a key skill in reading. Pupils' books are looked at regularly and written comments are encouraging and supportive. However, pupils are not provided with sufficient information on how they can improve their work on a day-to-day basis.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 2

Interesting work helps pupils of all abilities enjoy learning and make good progress. Children get a good start in the Reception Year because the activities are well matched to their needs and the outdoor area is used as an integral part of the school day. Links between subjects have been recently made and this means that pupils' skills are developing across the curriculum. A greater focus has been given to systematically developing a secure understanding of letter sounds. Teachers have also started to introduce more drama and role play to help motivate the pupils to write more. The curriculum is enriched by visits and visitors and special theme days that are linked to learning. For example, an Ancient Egyptian day helped the pupils to gain an understanding of what it was like to live during this time. The school is focusing on the development of pupils' independence and extending their investigative skills within subjects. There is a good range of clubs and visits which supports pupils' good personal and academic development well.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 2

Pupils thrive and grow in confidence in the caring and supportive environment. The staff take all reasonable steps to make sure that pupils are kept safe. They know each individual and children feel very well supported both by teachers and assistants. Pupils work towards whole-school, class and individual targets and this ensures that they make good progress. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities are well supported but their individual education plans are too general and this means that their progress cannot always be measured easily.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The outstanding leadership of the headteacher is reflected in the calm atmosphere in the school and the sustained focus on improvement. Teaching is monitored rigorously, good practice is shared and information gained is used to support training needs where necessary. There are thorough systems to monitor and track pupil progress and this ensures that specific groups are given additional support. The roles of subject leaders have developed well and they are fully involved in school self-evaluation. Governors bring a range of skills and experience and this helps them challenge the work of the school and support its ongoing development.

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## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	2
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	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
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	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2

<sup>1</sup> 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

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
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	2
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	2
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. I was very interested in seeing you at work in your classrooms and really enjoyed watching the younger children perform the 'Wriggley Nativity'. A special thanks to the group of pupils I met who told me all about life at Derry Hill.

Your school provides you with a good education. You feel safe and cared for because the school looks after you well and gives you good support with your learning. You make good progress and, by Year 6, reach standards that are above average. You behave extremely well and enjoy your learning because teaching is good and the curriculum is interesting. You are proud of all the sporting activities you are involved in and particularly enjoy the special enrichment days which help you learn more about the past. The adults in charge of the school are leading and managing the school well. Your headteacher is very determined to always give you the very best education.

This is what I have suggested to help the school become even better:

- help you to improve your writing so that this is as good as your skills in reading and number
- make sure that when your work is marked, you get suggestions on how you can improve
- help you to take a more active part in the wider community and develop the skills you will need for the world of work by doing more problem-solving activities and working together in teams. As you can see, you have your part to play. I wish you lots of luck for the future.