

Forest and Sandridge Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	126402
Local Authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	293551
Inspection dates	20–21 March 2007
Reporting inspector	Joyce Cox

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	197
School	
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Stuart Andrews
Headteacher	Anna Coombs
Date of previous school inspection	1 March 2002
School address	Sandridge Common Melksham SN12 7QS
Telephone number	01225 703394
Fax number	01225 703394

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a slightly smaller than average size, popular primary school. The majority of the pupils are White British and a very small number are from minority ethnic backgrounds, including a few who speak English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties, including those with a statement of special educational need, is average. Children start in the Reception class with knowledge and skills that are broadly average but their speaking and listening skills are below the expected level. The school has experienced a large turnover of staff since its previous inspection. The current headteacher was appointed as substantive headteacher from April 2006 and the deputy headteacher started her new role in January 2007. As part of the school's continuous commitment to improvement, it has secured many awards for its work, including full 'Healthy Schools' status, and Investors in People. Foundation Stage staff are currently working towards attaining the Bristol Standard for their early years provision.

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 a satisfactory and improving standard of education. This matches the school's own view. Since the previous inspection, the school's development has been hampered by many changes in leadership and staffing. These changes have slowed some pupils' progress, resulting in falling standards at the end of Year 2. The future is now much brighter for the school. The good leadership of the new headteacher, supported effectively by the local authority, has turned the school around in a relatively short period of time. Parents unanimously support the school and appreciate all that the headteacher has achieved. One parent, summing up the views of many, wrote, 'The headteacher has done a wonderful job with the school. She has improved so much for the staff and children'. Good links with other schools and agencies have led to enhanced curriculum experiences, with French available for all Key Stage 2 pupils. Careful analysis has identified accurately why some pupils were underachieving in the past. Challenging targets have now been set to ensure that most pupils, and in particular the more able, reach standards of which they are capable. A reorganisation of staffing, new appointments and much improved assessment of pupils' achievement have improved the quality of teaching across the school and particularly in Key Stage 1. Foundation Stage children receive a satisfactory start to their education and attain the expected levels on entry to Year 1. Progress is now at least satisfactory in all classes, resulting in average standards by the time Year 6 pupils leave. The school has identified correctly that the next step is to build on its new systems for tracking pupils' progress to make sure pupils, and in particular more able pupils, make consistently good progress and reach higher standards. Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Most pupils behave well and have good relations with adults and each other. They feel happy and safe at school. Parents appreciate the good pastoral care and pupils now have targets to help them improve their work. However these targets are very new and this, coupled with inconsistencies in teachers' marking, means that pupils are not as clear as they should be about how they can improve their work. The curriculum is satisfactory and is considerably enriched by a very good range of extra-curricular clubs and special events. Subject leaders have made a satisfactory start in leading their subjects but, as many of them are very new to their roles, they have yet to have a strong influence on improving standards and achievement. Governors provide a good level of support and a satisfactory level of challenge. The school has made satisfactory improvement since its previous inspection. The headteacher's swiftness in putting in good systems to improve the school, coupled with staff's increased realisation of the important part they have to play in the school's effectiveness and improving the pupils' achievements, means that the school has a good capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- ensure more able pupils have sufficiently challenging work
- develop the role of subject leaders so that they are fully involved in raising standards and achievement in their subjects
- give pupils a clear understanding of how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

From an average starting point, Reception children are making satisfactory progress and are likely to attain the expected levels on entry to Year 1. They make good progress in their personal

and social skills due to the encouragement they receive to develop independence, for example in the many opportunities to select their own resources. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 and Year 6 achieve well in many lessons due to improved teaching, but overall achievement is satisfactory. Standards are average throughout the school and pupils' achievement is improving steadily. More able pupils are not challenged sufficiently in some lessons and could achieve more. The school's good focus on supporting pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities gives these pupils increased confidence and enthusiasm for learning and they achieve as well as their peers.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development, including moral and social development is good and the school rightly judges this to be a strength. Spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils have a good understanding of their social responsibilities, both within school and in the community; for example, they quietly and efficiently collect class registers and look after pupils who may be upset in the playground. They have a clear understanding of right and wrong, although, whilst the behaviour and attitudes of the majority of pupils both in class and in the playground are good, a very small number of older boys are still struggling to follow the example of the rest. Attendance is good and pupils enjoy school. Pupils leave with satisfactory basic skills to help them in their next school and with their future economic well-being. They are relaxed and open in the way they relate to visitors and say that they feel safe and are free from problems such as bullying and discrimination. They appreciate the need to keep fit and eat healthy food, proudly showing off the healthy content of their lunches and joining in enthusiastically in the early morning 'Forest fitness' exercise sessions.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The headteacher has put many strategies in place to improve teaching and learning which are beginning to be effective, particularly in Key Stage 1 where Year 2 pupils say that learning is fun and exciting and they learn a lot. An area to improve is the way in which teachers challenge more able pupils. In some lessons throughout the school, these pupils receive the same work as everyone else, which restricts their achievement. Dividing the Year 6 class into three groups for literacy and numeracy means that pupils' different abilities are catered for more readily and the more able pupils are successfully challenged to attain higher levels. Relationships are good and talented teaching assistants in all classes support pupils effectively.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. A particular strength is the way healthy living is promoted, for example in the time given to swimming and the emphasis on eating well. The school also has a good emphasis on broadening the international dimension of learning, by giving French lessons and being accepted for the International School Award. The curriculum does not routinely provide enough opportunities for pupils to use and apply skills in ICT, write at length in different subjects and undertake scientific investigations. Children in the Foundation Stage receive a satisfactory curriculum and enjoy learning through a range of practical activities both indoors

and outdoors. A very good range of valuable additional activities, such as science club, robotics and tag rugby, enriches pupils' learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Staff know pupils very well and provide good pastoral support. Risk assessments are in place where needed and staff are appropriately trained in child protection issues. Learners who have additional needs are identified early and effective arrangements put in place to keep them engaged. The same is true for pupils who are at the early stages of learning English. The school makes the most of good links with parents and other agencies to ensure pupils' welfare. One parent writes that the headteacher is 'ensuring that each child with individual needs is happy and achieves well'. The academic guidance and support given to pupils is satisfactory. Pupils have targets for improvement, but few can recall what they are. Whilst there are good examples where marking shows pupils how to improve their work, this is not always the case.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher provides good leadership and has quickly formed an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. She has set a clear direction for improvement. She has gained the respect and total support of the staff, pupils, parents and governors. One parent, echoing the views of many others, writes, 'Since the headteacher's arrival, the school has become a much more vibrant place, which embraces new activities and projects'. Now that there is a more settled staff, the headteacher has rightly identified improving subject leadership as a priority. To achieve this, she has reallocated responsibilities for each subject so that all teachers have leadership roles. However, in some cases, these are too recent for them to have had significant impact on learners' achievement. Further training and development are planned. The school has a clear plan of action to improve its effectiveness. Governors are supportive and play an increasing role in keeping a check on pupils' standards and achievement.

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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
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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
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	2
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

- Thank you very much for making us so welcome when we came to inspect your school recently. We enjoyed joining some of you for lunch, talking with you and seeing you at work and play. This letter is to tell you what we think is good about your school and how it could be even better. We particularly like these things: -
- your good behaviour and your enthusiasm for lessons and other activities
- the good relationships you have with one another and with the staff
- the interesting and extremely wide range of extra-curricular activities that you enjoy
- the caring way in which you are looked after and supported by adults in the school
- the fact you are so aware of the importance of eating healthily and taking lots of exercise, for example joining in so enthusiastically with Forest fitness. These are the things we have suggested those in charge do to make your school even better: -
- give you work that will challenge you more and make you think more
- have staff help the headteacher to make your work even better in all subjects
- make sure you know how well you are doing in your work and how to improve it. It was great to learn that you are happy and that your parents are so very pleased with the school. Your headteacher, governors and teachers have good plans for the future of the school. You can play your part by continuing to work hard and look after each other. We wish you all the very best for the future.