



# Oliver Tomkins Church of England Infant School

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 126443  
**Local Authority** Swindon  
**Inspection number** 293559  
**Inspection date** 23 January 2007  
**Reporting inspector** David Curtis

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>	Infant	<b>School address</b>	Beaumaris Road
<b>School category</b>	Community		Toothill
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3-7		Swindon SN5 8LW
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01793 870471
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	211	<b>Fax number</b>	01793 878577
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Julian White
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Rhian Cockwell
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	7 October 2002		

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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

## **Description of the school**

The school is slightly smaller than the average size primary school. It has a nursery, with 26 children attending each morning and another 26 each afternoon. The school is the only Voluntary Aided Church of England Infant School in the borough. Most pupils are White British, with a small proportion from minority ethnic families. None are at the early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is below average. Children start the nursery at levels of attainment lower than expected.

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

'A fantastic school! Both of my youngest children love going to school and so do I. I love to help out in the school and to see teachers and children really enjoying it.' These comments by one parent are a glowing endorsement of this good school. Good leadership and management, coupled with the school's very strong promotion of its Christian values, are at the heart of its success. It is a school that analyses rigorously its own performance so that it identifies clearly its strengths and areas for improvement. The determination, as the chair of governors put it, 'to provide our children with the very best', shows that the school has the good capacity to improve.

Because of good teaching and learning, children's achievement is good from the day they start in the Nursery. Good achievement continues in Years 1 and 2 and standards are above average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. The provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good. Children thrive in an exciting learning environment. The teaching of key skills in reading, writing and number is strong. In Years 1 and 2, this good teaching of key skills continues. There are strengths in lesson planning, especially in meeting the wide range of learning needs in each class. Teachers do not always set clear enough expectations as to how much work pupils should do in lessons. Teaching assistants are very effective in working with groups and supporting individuals. At the start of lessons when the teacher is teaching the whole class, there are missed opportunities for teaching assistants to help with day-to-day assessment of pupils' learning.

Pupils play a very important role in the school's success. Because of good care, guidance and support, their personal development and well-being are good. The excellent promotion and involvement of pupils in the school's focus on Christian values means that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils enjoy school, as is shown by their good attendance. Behaviour is good. Pupils work particularly well when working in pairs. In lessons, girls are reluctant to become involved in question and answer sessions which the boys tend to dominate. The school council has played an important part in making the playground an exciting place to be at lunchtime. The council is very ambitious, although their desire for a hot tub is a step too far, even for their very supportive headteacher! Pupils are prepared particularly well, socially and academically, for their future lives.

The recent thrust to improve the tracking of pupils' progress has been a positive development. However, it is not firmly embedded across the school. Subject managers are not involved sufficiently in inputting and analysing data. The setting of targets for pupils and feedback from marking is moving forward at a good pace but is still not firmly established consistently across the school.

### What the school should do to improve further

- ensure that in lessons, pupils have a clear understanding of the amount of work they should do

- embed the use of assessment, including the tracking of pupils' progress by all subject managers, and develop the role of teaching assistants in day-to-day assessment at the start of lessons
- encourage girls to take a more active role in class discussions.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Achievement in the Foundation Stage is good. A rich and stimulating learning environment linked to good teaching of key skills contributes to children's good progress. By the end of Reception, children reach standards in all six areas of learning which meet expectations for their age.

Good achievement in Years 1 and 2 means that by the end of Year 2, standards are above average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. A significant feature is that boys do significantly better than boys nationally. The school has successfully addressed the issue of previous underachievement by girls and there is no significant difference in the current Year 2, except in speaking and listening. In lessons, girls are very passive listeners and they do not readily offer answers or contribute to discussions. Singing in assembly was of a high standard. Pupils' work on display in art and design is of a good standard.

Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities make good progress because of the high quality support they get from teachers and teaching assistants.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Children love school from the day they start Nursery. In the Foundation Stage, rooms are full of smiling, happy children who take great delight in learning. They respond willingly and readily when working with adults but show equal interest and enthusiasm for those activities they choose themselves.

Enjoyment of school continues in Years 1 and 2. Pupils are friendly, polite and welcoming. They readily engage in conversation at lunchtime and are very proud to give a conducted tour of the playground. They talk confidently about healthy eating and the need to keep fit and healthy. They handle equipment and tools safely. In assemblies, they reflect quietly and calmly on the Christian values they are taught. These values are shown clearly in their day-to-day lives in the school. Pupils take a full part in school life through the school council. In lessons, they are enthusiastic and keen to learn, although boys dominate discussion and question-and-answer sessions. Girls are too passive and do not contribute as much as they could. Pupils are proud of their fundraising for charity.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

In the Foundation Stage, teachers plan an exciting range of activities for children. Activities which are taught by teachers, nursery nurses and teaching assistants show a very good focus on the teaching of key skills. Those activities which children choose for themselves foster independence and have a strong impact on children's good personal, social and emotional development.

In Years 1 and 2, all lessons begin with the teacher sharing what is to be learned with pupils. Planning is very good and is aimed at meeting the wide range of learning needs within a class. Interactive whiteboards are used successfully for explanation and demonstration of new skills and ideas. In some lessons, pupils do not do as much work as they might because teachers do not provide clear enough expectations as to what pupils should achieve.

Teaching assistants are very effective in supporting groups during lessons and make a strong contribution to pupils' good achievement. At the start of lessons, teachers do not use them sufficiently to help with day-to-day assessment, for example in monitoring and assessing which pupils ask and answer questions.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 2

The good curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is enhanced by very good resources, including a secure outdoor play area. The curriculum focuses strongly on the development of key skills, through careful and detailed planning.

For pupils in Years 1 and 2, the curriculum meets all statutory requirements. It is strengthened, for example, through the specialist teaching of dance by a visiting teacher. The curriculum ensures that key skills are taught effectively and that pupils use these skills successfully in other subjects. The initiative to strengthen planning through the use of 'must, should and could' targets within each subject still needs embedding across the school. Pupils benefit from the good range of educational visits, visitors to the school and extra-curricular activities provided.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 2

The support for pupils' spiritual development is especially strong through the school's very effective promotion of its Christian values. For children in the Foundation Stage and pupils in Years 1 and 2, all statutory requirements in relation to child protection and safeguarding children are fully in place. Support for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is good.

The current initiative to improve teachers' marking so that it tells pupils how well they are doing is moving ahead at a good pace. There is firm evidence to show that pupils

are starting to assess their own learning at the end of lessons. Using green, orange or red, they let teachers know whether they feel they have met, partly met or not met what was expected of them. At present, this initiative is not firmly established in all lessons.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

This is a school that knows itself really well. Led by the very effective headteacher, supported by her deputy, the school is rigorous in its analysis of its performance. Governors play a strong part in holding the school to account. They are prepared and willing to question how well the school is performing. Areas identified for improvement form the basis of a detailed and thorough school improvement plan. One weakness in the plan is that where raising standards is an action point, there are no measurable targets identified.

Subject managers play an increasing role in monitoring teaching and learning in their subjects in order to identify strengths and weaknesses. At present, their role in using and analysing data to identify strengths and weaknesses in pupils' achievement is underdeveloped. As a result, potential underachievement is not identified consistently.

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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	1
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	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	2
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	2
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 when I came to your school. I particularly enjoyed the cakes given to me which children in the Nursery made. I enjoyed my lunch with you and the tour of the playground. I apologise again to Year 2 because I did not return my empty water cup to the hatch at the end of lunch!

I am delighted to tell you that you go to a good school. You play a very important part in that because of your good behaviour and your enjoyment of school. There were lots of really good things that I saw and these are some of them:

- by the time you get to Year 2, your work is much better than for many children of your age
- you come to school regularly and you get on well with each other and the adults
- in lessons, you like the interactive whiteboards and times when you discuss things in pairs
- you enjoy your after-school clubs
- all adults look after you very well so that you feel safe and happy
- your school is well led and managed and everyone wants you to do your very best.

There are a few things which I think would make your school even better:

- teachers need to tell you how much work you should do in lessons
- all teachers and teaching assistants need to know that you are working as hard as you can and not falling behind in your work
- Girls, you need to join in discussions and question-and-answer sessions more than you already do.

Thank you again for a lovely day at your school.