

Ampfield Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116268
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	294573
Inspection date	25 September 2007
Reporting inspector	Hilary Bonser

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	46
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Julian Jones
Headteacher	Mrs Jayne Stratton
Date of previous school inspection	29 June 2005
School address	Knapp Lane Ampfield Romsey Hampshire SO51 9BT
Telephone number	01794 368219
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The school is much smaller than most primary schools. Pupils come from a variety of backgrounds. Many of them join the school in Years 3 to 6. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is slightly higher than usual. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is below average and very few are at an early stage of learning English. The school is emerging from a turbulent period following a decline in numbers, which has now been reversed, considerable uncertainty over its future and a high turnover of staff. In the previous inspection, the school was judged to have serious weaknesses. The current class teachers have been appointed over the last 18 months and the headteacher has been in post since January 2007.

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 school that has improved rapidly over the last two terms. It now provides a satisfactory standard of education with a number of good features. The school's previous designation of having serious weaknesses no longer applies. After a difficult period in the school's history, it has entered an exciting phase under the strong leadership of the current headteacher that has enthused pupils, parents, staff and governors alike. It is characterised by high expectations of pupils and staff, good teaching, a more exciting curriculum, rigorous assessment and very close attention to the learning needs of each pupil.

Considerable improvements have been made to the learning environment of the school that have increased pupils' interest and enjoyment in their work. Improvements in the curriculum, especially the many enrichment activities, and the good care, support and guidance given to pupils add considerably to their personal development and keenness to learn. They form very good relationships and enjoy coming to school. The good partnership with parents and close links with other schools and agencies support pupils' learning and positive attitudes well. Parents and pupils now justifiably hold the school in high regard. Comments such as, 'There has been an astonishing positive change - in a relatively short time', and 'I've noticed a huge improvement in my son's learning - he's more confident and loves coming to school', are typical of many parents' responses.

The school has responded well to the issues from the last inspection. It identifies its strengths, its areas for development and what is needed to remedy them accurately. Standards have begun to rise and are broadly average. Significant improvements in the quality of teaching have increased the pace of learning. Consequently, boys and girls of all abilities now make good progress in most lessons. However, overall achievement has only improved to satisfactory because some pupils are still making up ground and gaps in their learning arising from previous unsatisfactory teaching. Younger pupils have begun to build well on the good start they now receive in the Foundation Stage.

The school is very aware that standards, especially in mathematics and writing, are not high enough and that there are still some inconsistencies in the pace of lessons and match of work to pupils' needs. These issues are being tackled through sharper, more focused teaching, careful grouping of pupils, additional support and personal learning programmes. An accurate and rigorous process for assessing and tracking pupils' progress facilitates this and the setting of realistically challenging targets. The increasing effect of the improvements already made on pupils' progress, good leadership and management, together with the skills and commitment of the new staff team show that the school is well placed to make further progress.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Standards on entry to the school are broadly average. Following good improvements in provision last term, children make good progress in relation to their individual starting points in all areas of their learning. Overall standards were just above those expected at the end of the last school year, giving children a better start than previously as they moved into Year 1. Although it is still early in the term, good induction arrangements and good care and support are helping children to gain confidence quickly and settle well and happily into the routines and expectations of the class. Teaching and learning are good. A good variety of stimulating, well-pitched

activities keeps the children interested, involved and keen to learn. The teacher knows exactly how to move each child on in their learning through good daily assessments. The inviting classroom and resources are organised in a way that promotes children's independence well. The lack of a suitable outside area currently limits children's opportunities for outdoor learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Fully implement plans to raise standards in mathematics and writing.
- Remove the remaining inconsistencies in teaching to help pupils make equally good progress in all lessons.

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

In Years 1 to 6, boys and girls of all abilities and backgrounds make good progress in lessons as a result of good teaching and very good attention to individual needs. This has significantly reduced the previous underachievement. Standards are currently broadly average in English and mathematics. This shows an improvement since the last inspection as a result of effective school action. The introduction of a consistently well taught structured phonics programme is helping pupils to make good progress in their early reading and writing skills. In mathematics, careful planning enables pupils to build more effectively on previous learning and achieve satisfactorily. Nevertheless, there is still scope for further improvement as not enough pupils are reaching the higher levels in writing and mathematics, as the 2007 national tests show, especially for Year 2. Good provision and careful identification of gifted and talented pupils and those with learning difficulties helps them make good progress towards their targets.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The successful emphasis the school places on its Christian ethos and on all aspects of pupils' development contributes significantly to their good personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils behave well and enjoy school, and benefit from their very good relationships with each other and all staff. This is reflected in the above average attendance. Pupils make an increasing contribution to school life through the school council and recent opportunities for responsibilities such as playground and 'activate' leaders. Pupils say they feel safe because bullying is very rare and they are confident that the adults in school care for them and help them to resolve any concerns. They are very well aware of what to do to enjoy a healthy lifestyle and are keen to take part in the many physical and sporting activities now available to them. Pupils are prepared satisfactorily for their future lives in the light of their present level of basic skills and the increased opportunities for them to develop independence and initiative.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The significant improvement in teachers' skills and confidence is reflected in pupils' increasing rate of progress. Teachers are keen to try out new approaches as in mathematics, where a

greater emphasis on investigational work and problem-solving is already increasing pupils' interest in the subject. Teachers make good use of drama, oral work and 'talk partners' to help pupils improve the quality of their writing. They make clear to pupils what they are expected to learn, and plan varied, interesting tasks that engage and motivate them. As a result, pupils concentrate, learn well and enjoy their lessons. At the end of a lively, very well taught phonics session for Year 1 and 2 pupils, one of them remarked, 'I want to do some more!' Teachers make good use of assessment information to adjust their planning and to provide the right kind of support to help pupils meet the high expectations of their progress. In a small minority of satisfactory lessons, the pace is rather slow, the tasks and questioning are not matched closely enough to individual needs and this limits pupils' progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school provides a broad, relevant curriculum that meets all requirements. It has been enriched considerably over the last two terms by a wide range of visits, visitors and clubs. There are now good opportunities for sports activities as a result of better links with local schools. There is an increasing emphasis now on planning creative and cross-curricular activities following the success of 'Woodland Week'. These improvements contribute well to pupils' personal development and enjoyment of school, although it is too soon to see their full effect on achievement. As yet there are not enough opportunities for pupils to apply and practise their writing and computer skills in other subjects. A good example of how the school responds to the particular needs of its pupils is the flexible grouping that is being refined across year groups to increase the rate of learning in English and mathematics.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

All staff know the pupils and their individual needs very well. The support given is effective in promoting pupils' personal development and good progress. The needs of new pupils joining the school are assessed and responded to quickly, minimising any disruption to their learning. Procedures to safeguard the health, safety and well-being of pupils are up-to-date and thorough. More accurate assessments and rigorous tracking of pupils' progress mean that teachers have a clear picture of what each pupil needs to learn next. They use this information very well in marking and in setting individual targets so that pupils know exactly how to improve their work. It is also shared well with parents, for example, through the home-school link books, so that they know how they can support their child. Parents and pupils alike are very appreciative of the good support they receive. As one parent explained, 'I feel part of her education and involved'.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher provides strong leadership. She has a very clear sense of direction that is focused fully on improving standards in all areas of pupils' development. She has shared this very effectively with staff, governors, parents and pupils, securing their commitment to a common purpose. As the chair of governors commented, 'We all know where we're going now'. She has inspired an enthusiasm in the new team of teachers. High quality training is helping them to meet the high expectations she has of them, with its strong emphasis on shared

responsibility and supportive teamwork. This is reflected in the improvements already made in teaching and learning, standards and progress, although it is too early to see the full impact of these on pupils' achievement over time. The recently appointed key stage and curriculum leaders are beginning to make a good contribution to these. Training is in place for teaching assistants to extend their skills in supporting pupils' learning. An accurate process of self-evaluation in which teachers are involved takes good account of the views of governors, parents and pupils. Governors are very supportive of the school and are developing their monitoring activities well.

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Annex A

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?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
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?	2
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?	2

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?	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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	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

8 October 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Ampfield Church of England Primary School, Hampshire, SO51 9BT

I am writing to let you know what I found out when I visited your school. Thank you for taking part in the inspection. I really enjoyed seeing you at work and at playtime and talking to you. There are many things I like about your currently satisfactory, but rapidly improving school.

I liked these the most:

- you behave well, work hard, enjoy school and make good progress in most of your lessons
- your headteacher runs the school very well
- the school looks after each of you very carefully and all of the adults connected with it do all they can to help you
- the school is now providing many more interesting and exciting things for you to do
- you understand the importance of eating the right things and taking plenty of exercise
- I agree with you that your teachers are good at making lessons interesting and helping you to improve.

I have asked your teachers to help you do even better in mathematics and writing and to make sure that all your lessons are as good as the best of them.

Thank you again. Yours sincerely

Hilary Bonser

Lead inspector