

Sutton Benger Church of England Aided Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	126486
Local Authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	298917
Inspection dates	27–28 February 2007
Reporting inspector	Tom Winskill HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	138
School	
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Colin S Minto
Headteacher	S Lloyd
Date of previous school inspection	30 June 2005
School address	40 Chestnut Road Sutton Benger Chippenham SN15 4RP
Telephone number	01249 720407
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a small school serving the village of Sutton Benger, part of the urban area of Chippenham, and other nearby rural communities. When it was last inspected, the school was judged to require special measures.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures. The school provides a satisfactory and improving quality of education which has many strengths. Weaknesses in leadership and management, teaching and learning, and the curriculum identified at the last inspection have been eradicated. Standards are above average in the Foundation Stage and in Key Stages 1 and 2. Pupils' achievement, including that of pupils with learning difficulties, is satisfactory throughout the school. Many pupils are now beginning to achieve well as the quality of teaching and learning improves.

Teaching and learning continue to improve and are now satisfactory with some good features. This major step forward since the last inspection is as a result of concerted action by the headteacher and leadership team, together with good support from the local authority. Rigorous monitoring and evaluation of pupils' achievement and a relentless focus on tackling areas of weakness in teaching have brought about this improvement. Teaching staff have responded positively to this strong leadership. They have grown in confidence as their skills have developed and the school now has a dedicated, cohesive team of teachers and assistants which is keen and able to improve its practice further.

The curriculum has improved and is now good. It meets the needs of the pupils and provides a good range of opportunities for achievement and personal development. Pupils' personal development and well-being are good, with strengths in behaviour and spiritual development. Pupils greatly enjoy the range of opportunities offered by the curriculum, both within and beyond the classroom. Care, guidance and support are good and arrangements for safeguarding children are robust. Particular improvements have taken place in monitoring the academic progress of pupils in literacy and numeracy so that underachievement is identified and tackled quickly and effectively. Other than for literacy and numeracy, subject leadership does not track pupils' progress effectively or make clear the standards expected of pupils.

Leadership and management are satisfactory as pupils are achieving the standards expected of them. The headteacher has shown an unerring focus on tackling areas of weakness to bring the school from the parlous state described at the previous inspection to its current improving status. Her vision and determination, together with the highly effective support of the leadership team, are the key factors leading to the removal of special measures. The school improvement plan to guide and direct the next phase of development is at a very early stage of construction so medium and long term plans for improvement are not yet clear. Leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are satisfactory. School leaders and governors make good use of information gathered through the improved monitoring procedures to evaluate accurately all aspects of the school's work.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure the school improvement plan focuses on raising achievement and takes account of the views of teachers, governors, parents and pupils in order to best guide improvement in all aspects of the school's work.
- Monitor pupil progress in all subjects and ensure that teachers and pupils are clear about the standards they should achieve in order to make good or better progress.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement and standards are rising as a result of improvements in teaching and learning and curriculum planning. In Key Stage 2, standards are above average as shown by national test results in 2006. Overall, the results have improved, particularly in mathematics and science, and reversed a slight decline over the previous three years. Pupils make satisfactory progress from Key Stage 1 to 2 and no groups of pupils underachieve. At the end of Key Stage 1 in 2006, results of tests in reading, writing and mathematics show improvement, reversing the downward trend of the previous four years. Standards in reading and mathematics remain above average. Writing has improved and is now in line with the national average. Pupils make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1. In the Foundation Stage, standards achieved in 2006 were above average and show that the children made satisfactory progress. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make satisfactory progress, with stronger progress in reading and mathematics than in writing. The work currently being done in school indicates that standards are above average across the board and that the rate of progress made by pupils is accelerating.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual development is excellent as a result of the range of opportunities provided by the curriculum. For example, Year 5 and 6 pupils wrote passionately about different people who inspire them and pupils in Years 1 and 2 explored the story of the Creation through art and drama. Pupils' moral and social development is good as a result of the school's strong supportive ethos. Pupils are proud that they care for each other. Curriculum events, such as the celebration of the Chinese New Year, drama productions and visits, ensure that pupils' cultural development is good.

Pupils are well served by their active school council which manages its own budget. They make a good contribution to the wider community, for example, through charity fundraising and their involvement with the church. Pupils have a good understanding of healthy living through their science and personal, social, health and education. They exercise vigorously in their two hours of physical education and in a range of activities, including dance, before and after school. They are safe in school and are confident that bullying, on the rare occasions that occurs, is dealt with effectively. Their behaviour is excellent and pupils approach their work with diligence and enthusiasm. Pupils are well prepared for life after Sutton Benger because they are developing problem solving skills and working well in teams. In addition, pupils in Years 5 and 6 visit local secondary schools to help prepare for transfer.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Although pupils, including children in the Foundation Stage, are making good progress in lessons, this rate of progress has not yet been in place for enough time to bring about improved longer term achievement. Teaching and learning therefore are satisfactory rather than good. All teaching and learning seen was of good quality. This represents particular improvement in learning for pupils in Years 1 to 4 where teaching and learning previously was weak. Planning is much improved as teachers use assessment information to help plan activities which are well

matched to pupils' abilities and aptitudes. Teaching assistants are deployed effectively to help pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, and others, to make good progress. Teachers make good use of learning objectives so that pupils clearly understand what they are trying to achieve. Marking celebrates success and indicates where pupils can improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is much improved as a result of good whole-school planning to produce an imaginative curriculum framework. It is not outstanding as individual subject planning is not fully developed. The whole-school curriculum is based on developing skills in areas such as literacy, numeracy, information and communication technology (ICT), creativity and problem solving. As a result, the school provides interesting activities which engage and inspire the pupils effectively. For example, Year 5 and 6 pupils used a spreadsheet to help plan a budget for a charity fundraising activity. They were completely absorbed in their teams trying to solve real life problems and this helped them make good progress in applying numeracy and ICT skills. The range of activities outside the classroom, such as the visit to Salisbury Cathedral and field work to study the history and geography of the village, enhance the curriculum well. Pupils enjoy the opportunity to swim and take part in French lessons. Teachers are linking curriculum areas effectively. For example, a geographical study of the village led to some pupils in Years 2 and 3 applying and improving their literacy skills by writing letters to the council proposing improvements to the local area. The quality of the Foundation Stage curriculum is good as the development of the outdoor area enables children to benefit from a much wider range of activities. In addition, there are more planned opportunities for writing to ensure children's progress is not slowed when they leave the Reception class.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support have been improved as academic guidance for pupils is now good. There are clear targets both for whole classes and individual pupils to improve their learning. These help pupils to focus on what they need to do to improve the quality of their work. A major improvement since the last inspection is the way that pupils' progress is tracked and monitored effectively in reading, writing and mathematics. The use of learning targets and tracking pupil progress are at an early stage of development in other subjects. Pupils who need extra help are supported effectively in the classroom or take part in small group or individual activities to help them make at least satisfactory and, increasingly, good progress. Pupils are well cared for by staff and, as a result, relationships with adults are good. Communication between parents and class teachers is good.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher provides strong leadership and is well supported by the leadership team, which makes an invaluable contribution to the development and implementation of improvement plans. School leaders ensure that improvement is well directed at eliminating the weaknesses identified through good analysis and evaluation. Changes to the curriculum and to teaching and learning, are well planned and rigorously implemented and evaluated. As a result, good

practice is firmly embedded in these areas, providing the school with a strong foundation on which to build further improvement.

Self-evaluation is good because the school has a sharply honed understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. Monitoring of performance is satisfactory rather than good because the high quality procedures for assessing and tracking pupils' progress in literacy, numeracy and in the Foundation Stage are not as well developed in other subjects. Subject leadership has begun well and is satisfactory as subject leaders are evaluating the quality of the pupils' work and developing improvement plans. The governing body fulfils its statutory duties satisfactorily. It has good procedures for gathering information and holding the school to account.

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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	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

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
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	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	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

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?	2
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?	3
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	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

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

In June 2005, your school was inspected and a number of problems were found. I have visited the school several times since then to check that it has been improving. I am delighted to tell you that the school is now doing as well as it should. This is because your headteacher has tackled the problems and has sorted them out. She is also making sure that your teachers are doing a good job. They are providing you with interesting work to help you make good progress in lessons. They check how well you are doing in English and mathematics, although not in other subjects.

Many of you achieve high standards. The school needs to plan how it can help more of you to do well. Your behaviour in school is excellent. I am impressed with the way you always try your best in your work. You have a good school council which represents your views very well. You get on well with each other and your teachers. You enjoy the different activities the school puts on for you.

I have asked the school to make the following improvements.

- Make sure plans for the next couple of years are well thought out so that pupils can achieve even more highly. I have asked the school to take note of your views as it makes these plans for the future.
- Check how well you are doing in all subjects as well as English and mathematics. You need to know what standards you should achieve in all your different subjects.

Thank you to all of those pupils who have talked to me during my visits and made me welcome in your school.