

Lambourn Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109968
Local Authority	West Berkshire
Inspection number	310158
Inspection dates	28–29 January 2008
Reporting inspector	John Carnaghan

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	216
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr John Doulton
Headteacher	Mr Peter Shelton
Date of previous school inspection	13 October 2003
School address	Greenways Lambourn Hungerford RG17 7LJ
Telephone number	01488 71479
Fax number	01488 73723

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is of average size and serves an area with pockets of socio-economic disadvantage. Most pupils are of White British heritage and few speak English as an additional language. More than usual pupils have learning difficulties and disabilities. After a period of temporary leadership, the current headteacher was appointed in September 2006.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Lambourn Church of England Primary School provides a satisfactory standard of education. Reforms introduced by its new headteacher during the last year are starting to bring about improvements and there are indications in pupils' improving standards that these are being effective.

Few parents responded to the inspection questionnaire, but some recognised numerous strengths, one reporting, 'My daughter is learning in a constant, calm, fun and well-managed environment.' A small group of parents expressed concerns about behaviour, leadership and management and communication with the school. The inspectors found that on the contrary, behaviour was consistently good and sometimes outstanding.

When children enter school, their skills are below expectations. When they leave, their standards are below average. Their achievement is satisfactory, but there are variations between year groups. Good provision in the Foundation Stage ensures children make a good start to their education. Less effective, although satisfactory teaching ensures achievement in Years 1 to 6 is satisfactory. Current pupils' standards are showing clear evidence of improvement and are closer to the national average.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory but inconsistent. There are many strengths in lessons, including teachers' planning, good relationships and effective support offered by teaching assistants. However, pace is sometimes slow and such lessons do not challenge pupils sufficiently. Inconsistencies in lesson monitoring mean that the school has been slow to eliminate these variations. Teaching is good in the Foundation Stage. The curriculum is satisfactory, with good out-of-school activities that enrich pupils' experiences.

Pupils' personal development is good. They develop confidence, maturity and independence from an early age and they contribute considerably to the calm, positive atmosphere in the school and to their own learning. Care, support and guidance are satisfactory, overall. Pastoral care is good and pupils feel safe at school, knowing how to avoid potential dangers. Academic support and guidance is improving but has not yet had enough impact on achievement.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher is determinedly moving the school forwards. Close teamwork and shared goals ensure that plans for the future are effective and universally supported. However, the way the school evaluates its provision varies in quality and does not identify and promote needed improvements consistently. Governors are supportive and keen to develop their role as critical friends.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children arrive in the Foundation Stage with skills below that expected for their age. They benefit from a well organised curriculum and good teaching. The imaginative and stimulating environment encourages children to explore the world around them and develop independence. Good links between the Nursery and Reception classes ensure children's development proceeds smoothly. Achievement is good but many children fall short of national expectations in language, literacy and mathematical development by the end of the Foundation Stage, because of their low starting points. Staff have good relationships with parents and carers and there are effective arrangements to ensure a smooth transition into Year 1.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards by ensuring that teaching is consistently well-paced and challenging.
- Develop more rigorous self-evaluation procedures which clearly signpost what needs improvement, so that the school can promote higher standards more effectively.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of under-performance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Children start school with standards below those expected, with very low skills in literacy and numeracy. Pupils' standards when they leave school in Year 6 are below average, however, their achievement overall is satisfactory.

Good teaching in the Foundation Stage ensures that pupils rapidly adjust to school life and achieve well. They develop good social and learning skills that prepare them well for their continuing education. As they leave the Reception class, their standards are still below expectations.

Teaching and learning have some inconsistencies and this leads to variations to achievement. Pupils achieve best in the Foundation Stage and Years 5 and 6. Good support for disadvantaged pupils, especially positive interventions by teaching assistants, ensures that pupils who struggle with literacy and numeracy and those who do not speak English as a first language achieve satisfactorily. Pupils' achievement in mathematics in recent years has lagged behind other areas, but the school is acting vigorously and successfully addressing this weakness. Current standards indicate that the range of interventions that the school has introduced to boost standards are starting to raise attainment.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils look after one another well and their behaviour is good and sometimes outstanding. They are very clear about the importance of a good diet, including eating plenty of fruit and vegetables, and taking regular exercise to promote health. Pupils enjoy coming to school and form constructive relationships with staff and others. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Through carefully planned assemblies and celebrations of different events, pupils develop a good understanding of their own culture and learn to respect other people and cultures.

The school council takes its role seriously and its actions have helped to initiate changes, such as the introduction of friendship benches and concern boxes. Pupils make a positive contribution to the wider community through various fund raising events and involvement in specific projects, like the Lambourn Carnival. Their future economic well being is well supported by pupils' good personal and social skills, but is limited by their achievement in literacy and mathematics. Attendance levels are broadly average.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching is inconsistent. Most teachers have secure subject knowledge and employ a range of different teaching methods to engage pupils in their learning. In lessons where this is the case, pupils are eager to learn and responsive to teachers' demands. In a stimulating numeracy lesson, the teacher set a good pace and asked questions effectively of different groups in order to help all pupils understand and use a sequence of numbers.

Relationships are positive and teachers encourage pupils to support each other in their learning. Most use praise effectively to boost self-esteem. Work is marked regularly and written comments often help the pupils to know what they should do to improve.

Intensive support from the local authority, and a rigorous response by the school to weaknesses identified by 2007 national assessments, are improving teaching and learning. Experienced teaching assistants work in very close partnership with teachers and make an important contribution to the quality of pupils' learning.

In a few lessons, teachers spend too long talking to the whole class and miss opportunities to extend pupils by setting challenging time targets. In these lessons, pupils lose some motivation and their progress slows.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school offers a balanced selection of subjects that meet requirements. The well-run programme of personal, social and health education promotes pupils' good personal development. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 benefit from a well-planned French course. The school is currently trialling the International Primary Curriculum, which is starting to introduce a broader, more stimulating range of topics.

The curriculum is enhanced by the variety of interesting and informative visits, and older pupils have opportunities to take part in residential trips. Visitors such as theatre groups also enrich the curriculum. Pupils appreciate the range of sporting, and other clubs that are offered after school and participation rates are good.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Teachers and support staff know pupils' social needs well and conscientiously provide for their welfare. The high quality of support is a key factor in pupils' good personal development. Policies and procedures to protect pupils are rigorous, made clear to all staff and carefully implemented. Vulnerable pupils, including those with a variety of learning difficulties and disabilities, are well supported and the school works effectively in partnership with a wide range of agencies to meet all pupils' needs.

Procedures to track pupils' progress over time and provide individual and group targets in literacy and numeracy are sound. The use of target setting is relatively new and not yet having a significant impact on improving standards.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher has a good grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses and has initiated a number of reforms since his appointment. These are starting to work. The introduction of the Intensive Support Programme (ISP), strongly supported by the local authority, is slowly improving standards. It also assures equality of opportunity for all pupils. The piloting and introduction of curriculum reforms are also beneficial.

The quality of the school's self-evaluation is variable because the monitoring of teaching and learning is informal and lacks rigour, so inconsistencies in teaching remain. These inconsistencies are holding back better standards and achievement. Visiting local authority officers have worked with the school to thoroughly monitor the ISP initiative. Staff work as a close team to promote pupils' well-being and a better school. The school improvement plan accurately identifies what needs to be done and the best methods of going about it. The changes of leadership prior to the current headteacher's appointment slowed the rate of improvements, hence both improvement since the last inspection and capacity for the future, based on this track record, are satisfactory.

Governors support the school strongly. They challenge the school where appropriate and have a strong input into planning for the future. However, they do not always fully hold the school to account.

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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	3

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 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	3
The behaviour of learners	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

11 February 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Lambourn Church of England Primary School, Hungerford, RG17 7LJ

Thank you very much for welcoming the inspectors when we recently visited your school and for all the help you gave us during the inspection.

Your school provides a satisfactory education. You told us that Lambourn is a happy and friendly school and we agree. Your good behaviour and how well you get on with everybody is certainly one of the strongest things about the school and contributes to your good personal development. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers help you achieve satisfactorily and while your standards at the end of Year 6 are below average they are getting better.

The school takes great care of you and you are complimented when you do well, but teachers need to give you more guidance on how to improve your work. The mix of subjects you study is satisfactory but could be more exciting and the school is working to improve this. The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. Your teachers are working hard to make improvements and your standards are just starting to improve. We have asked the school to pay attention to two areas which need improving:

- making teaching more enjoyable and challenging to help you make quicker progress and reach higher standards
- check up on what it is doing more thoroughly so you get better chances to progress.

Once again, many thanks for all your help. It was a pleasure meeting you.

With all best wishes

John Carnaghan

Lead Inspector