

Robert Piggott CofE Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109993
Local Authority	Wokingham Borough Council
Inspection number	310169
Inspection date	12 March 2008
Reporting inspector	Christopher Parker

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	7-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	157
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Cynthia Coombes
Headteacher	Mrs Lesley Turville
Date of previous school inspection	1 December 2003
School address	School Hill Wargrave Reading RG10 8DY
Telephone number	0118 940 2645
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school. He investigated how well pupils are doing in mathematics; the effectiveness of care, guidance and support and the curriculum in promoting personal development and well-being; and how the leadership uses initiatives and awards to improve the school and raise standards. Evidence was gathered from the analysis of pupils' progress, scrutiny of samples of their work, observation of lessons, parents' questionnaires, discussions with the headteacher, chair of governors, the school counsellor, the school council and groups of pupils.

Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

The school is smaller than average. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. A very small number of pupils are eligible for free school meals. Few pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion with learning difficulties is similar to the national average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school. The pupils achieve well and their personal development is outstanding. The vast majority of parents are very pleased with all that the school offers and, particularly, its caring ethos.

Standards have risen steadily over the last three years. The results of national tests at the end of Year 6, in 2007, were significantly above average. Detailed analysis of the pupils' performance shows they did not make quite as good progress in mathematics as they did in English and science. The school has used the extensive data it keeps to investigate this variation in progress. Its analysis shows a small but growing number of pupils slipping behind in mathematics by the end of Year 4. Through Year 5 they make good progress and this group reduces in size, but last year, a few did not reach the standards they should by the end of Year 6. To raise standards further, the teachers have taken steps to provide more support for those pupils who may fall short of the expected level. For example, they have modified setting arrangements and provided individual support for a few of these pupils. In mathematics lessons, pupils concentrate on the often challenging problems set for them. Teachers probe the pupils' understanding by getting them to explain the strategies they have used to complete calculations and the thinking behind their solutions to problems. In mathematics, as in English and science, the more able pupils do well with over half reaching the higher level in national tests. This year, the school is on course to reach its challenging targets in mathematics.

The action taken by the headteacher and her leadership team to improve pupils' achievements in mathematics is a good illustration of how they respond positively to their own evaluations of the school's performance. As well as introducing a programme of support, teaching has improved as a result of rigorous monitoring and regular professional development. Much of the recent professional development is linked to the school's pursuit of the National Association for Able Children in Education Challenge Award. This has not only heightened awareness of the needs of able, gifted and talented pupils but also led to more demanding tasks being planned for all groups of pupils in a wide range of subjects. A number of parents commented how the school, 'provides work to challenge and stretch' pupils. When discussing their work, a group of pupils spoke very enthusiastically about many interesting tasks they had completed. They could find only a very few examples, in their books, of work they had not enjoyed. In these few instances, they had not found the task set for them demanding enough.

At the start of each lesson, the teachers tell the pupils what they have to do to be successful, and review, with them, progress towards the criteria they have set. The pupils' work is marked conscientiously and encouragingly but there are too few examples of teachers identifying clearly what pupils have to do to improve their next piece of work. Older pupils know, broadly, what they are expected to achieve by the end of Year 6. However, they are not given sufficiently clear guidance, through for example learning targets, about precisely what they have to do to move to the next stage in their learning.

Although academic guidance requires further improvement the school's care and support for personal development is excellent. Central to this very strong provision is the work of the school counsellor. The pupils speak very warmly about the help and support they are offered and how they have been helped to work with a 'circle of friends' to foster good relationships and build confidence.

Some parents also commented very appreciatively on the 'high quality care', and 'the great mentoring system' the school provides. A very small number of parents expressed concerns about behaviour. There was no evidence of misbehaviour in lessons where pupils work together harmoniously. Pupils say that misbehaviour is rare and is dealt with quickly by their teachers. They feel safe on the playground and are not aware of any bullying. They say that if children fall out, peer mediators and playground buddies are always available and, if necessary, they would turn immediately to the school counsellor or their teachers for help.

The very strong elements of care and support, combined with a wide range of opportunities in, for example, art and music provide an excellent platform for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. As a result, their personal development and well-being are outstanding. The Healthy Schools award has aided the pupils' excellent knowledge of staying fit and healthy. Many parents welcome the 'great selection of after school activities', which provide many opportunities to keep fit. The pupils run the Blue Banana healthy tuck shop. This, and the work of the school council, illustrates the many excellent ways the pupils contribute to the school community.

A few parents commented on some untidy areas of the school. Plans are already in place to redesign cloakrooms and storage areas to improve the situation. A similarly small number of parents expressed concerns about communications between home and school. However, letters are taken home by pupils, sent by email and on request sent to some parents by post. Newsletters are made available on the school website. The very positive response from the vast majority of parents indicates partnerships are good because they find, 'the headteacher and staff very approachable'.

The headteacher, leadership team and governors provide the school with clear direction. They have made good improvements in the last few years and the school is well placed to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop a consistent approach to marking the pupils' work that provides clear guidance.
- Ensure pupils know precisely what they have to be able to do to move to the next stage in their learning.

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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?	2
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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ 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

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
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?	2
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?	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	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

26 March 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Robert Piggott CofE Junior School, Reading, RG10 8DY

This letter is to tell you about the findings of the recent inspection and to thank you for taking the time to talk to me. You go to a good school and are able to learn in a very friendly atmosphere where the adults provide excellent care for you. Many of you have been helped by the school counsellor and warmly welcome her excellent support. You behave well and those of you I talked to said misbehaviour is rare and dealt with quickly by the teachers.

The teachers make lessons interesting and lively. They mark your work and some of you told me that you like the positive comments they make and appreciate those that help you to improve. At the moment, comments that help you to improve your next piece of work are not used often enough. I have asked the teachers to develop a more consistent approach to marking in this way. I have also asked them to give you better information, perhaps through learning targets, about precisely what you need to do to move to the next stage in your learning.

You are doing well in lessons. You concentrate on your work and make good progress in English and science. The teachers have been working to make sure you make as much progress in mathematics. In lessons, I saw how they are setting you problems that make you think hard about your answers. The steps they have taken are proving effective and you are now making as much progress in mathematics as you do in English and science.

The school provides a good curriculum with a wide range of opportunities for you both in and after school. Your involvement in many of these opportunities and the excellent support the school provides result in outstanding personal development.

I enjoyed being in your school. I hope that in the future, it is even more successful in helping you to do as well as you possibly can.

Yours sincerely

Christopher Parker

Lead Inspector