

Grazeley Parochial Church of England Aided Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110015
Local Authority	Wokingham Borough Council
Inspection number	310176
Inspection dates	21–22 May 2008
Reporting inspector	George Rayner

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	93
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Brain Clark
Headteacher	Mrs Jean Bateman
Date of previous school inspection	19 January 2004
School address	Mereoak Lane Grazeley Reading RG7 1JY
Telephone number	01189 883340
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This village school is much smaller than most schools, although it has grown significantly since the previous inspection. The great majority of pupils have White British heritage and none are at an early stage of learning to speak English. An average proportion of pupils have additional learning needs. These are mainly moderate difficulties in developing literacy and numeracy skills. The movement of pupils into and out of the school other than at the normal times is higher than in most schools.

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 satisfactory school. It has some good features, which impact particularly on the pupils' good personal development and well-being. Parents have high opinions of the school. They say that it makes full use of its small size to know and care for the pupils very well, so that they are very happy here, feel very secure and grow strongly in their personal qualities and confidence. Some aspects of pupils' personal development are outstanding. They say emphatically that they enjoy school and that special things are always happening, such as the hatching of some chicks during the inspection, which caused great excitement. Pupils show their enjoyment by their very good attendance and behaviour and enthusiastic willingness to join in with all that the school has to offer. Pupils have an extremely well-developed understanding of the importance of exercise and a balanced diet. They are very knowledgeable about how to keep themselves safe and care greatly for the welfare of their schoolmates. The 'playground friends' and peer mentors are exceptionally effective in guiding younger ones on how to play safely and happily together and resolving any disputes that arise. So much so that pupils report that, although adults are always on hand, they rarely have to go to them for help.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Whilst some lessons are good many are solid rather than sparkling. This, together with a good curriculum, leads to achievement that is satisfactory overall and good in some areas. Following improvements to teaching, progress is becoming good in English, so that pupils are reaching above average standards. Although satisfactory, progress is slower in mathematics and science and Year 6 standards are broadly average. Staff have correctly identified that lessons do not always give pupils enough opportunities to practise independently using their mathematical skills to solve problems, or to carry out their own scientific investigations. They are improving this, although the full impact is yet to be seen. In most lessons the most able pupils make satisfactory progress. Occasionally however, their progress slows when they are insufficiently challenged, due to teachers not always clearly enough identifying what is expected of them.

Leadership and management are satisfactory in their impact on pupils' achievement. The headteacher's good leadership is setting a clear direction for the school. There is considerable unity of purpose among all staff. Self-evaluation is giving a generally accurate picture of the school's quality and performance, although over-generous in a few respects. It is identifying appropriate improvement priorities. However, there is no system for pooling the findings from the monitoring of the different staff who carry this out. This makes it difficult to have a consistent approach to improving teaching and learning and to evaluate progress towards this. There has been good improvement in some areas, including provision for physical education (PE) and information and communication technology (ICT). It has been slower in other areas, for example in improving Foundation Stage outdoor provision, and the school has not sustained improved standards since the last inspection. The track record shows a satisfactory capacity for improvement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children make a satisfactory start in the Foundation Stage. In most years, they arrive with generally expected knowledge and skills for their age. They settle in quickly. One girl said that this is helped by being able to make friends with children from Year 1 who are also in the class. Staff have accurately identified weaknesses in the balance between adult-led activities and

opportunities for children to learn by playing and exploring. Following improvement, while still sometimes resulting in less purposeful activities, child-initiated work is now increasingly contributing to their independence. The small outdoor area still restricts opportunities for independent work and plans are in hand to improve this soon. Recent improvements to whole-school accommodation and resources are giving the Foundation Stage children more opportunities for physical activity. The impact is seen in their improving physical development, previously their weakest area. Children are now leaving Reception secure in all of their areas of learning. The adults are developing an improved system for checking each child's progress. This is helping them to be better at providing the appropriate learning experiences and support for all children.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in mathematics and science.
- Ensure that lesson plans always make clear the additional expectations of the most able pupils, so that they are well challenged.
- Improve systems for recording findings from monitoring, so that they contribute to shared improvement priorities and progress towards them can be checked.

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

Pupils achieve satisfactorily and their overall standards are broadly average by the end of Year 6. Pupils are able to write in a variety of styles, to meet the needs of a range of tasks. For example, they include considerable detail in their descriptive pieces, as seen when Year 5 and Year 6 described sharks in awe-inspiring ways. Most pupils become competent in basic mathematical skills, but have difficulty in independently using them to solve problems. Pupils' basic scientific knowledge is sound, but their investigative skills are more limited. For example, pupils find it difficult to draw general conclusions by observing experiments. Because their needs are carefully identified and effectively provided for, pupils with moderate learning difficulties make as much progress as their classmates.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. One said that the nicest thing about the school is that, 'It is like a happy family and we all care for each other'. Pupils say that, while behaviour is very good, just occasionally, they might forget to be considerate for others when their excitement overtakes them. The school councillors are proud that the adults listen to their good ideas, often resulting in improvements such as the introduction of 'fruit weeks'. Pupils initiate and very enthusiastically take part in activities to raise money for good causes, including one which recently provided a shower block for an orphanage in India. They say they would welcome more pupils from different ethnic groups, as this would be a more natural way to learn about their cultures. Nevertheless, they have a good interest and awareness in other cultures and respect these. Although pupils prepare themselves well for their futures in many ways, this aspect of their personal development is satisfactory, because it is limited by their progress in independently using numeracy skills in practical ways.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teachers plan well-organised lessons, so that time is usually used purposefully. They often plan enjoyable activities and succeed in generating good relationships, so that pupils are willing learners. Occasionally though, activities are more mundane, giving pupils less opportunity for open-ended exploration. Teachers and teaching assistants, work together effectively to ensure that pupils who find it difficult to learn at the same rate as others are able to keep up with the pace of work. They often plan additional tasks for the more able pupils, but do not always identify what additionally is expected of them, so that good challenge does not always result. Teachers boost pupils' confidence by marking in encouraging ways, while often giving them guidance on how to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

In addition to the required activities, pupils study French in Years 3 to 6. Pupils have the opportunity to learn to play a range of musical instruments and participate successfully in music festivals. Since the last inspection, accommodation, resources and planning for PE and ICT have been significantly improved, so that progress is good in these subjects and both make an effective contribution to pupils' personal development. For its size, the school provides a very good range of clubs in a variety of sporting and cultural activities. Pupils show their appreciation in their enthusiastic attendance of these. They also like the exciting visits in each year, particularly the residential trip for Years 5 and 6, which they say is enjoyable and a valuable first step to learning to be independent away from home. Links between subjects are increasingly providing motivation opportunities for pupils to use their skills for 'real' tasks in different contexts, but not yet to the fullest extent in all subjects.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. Procedures for ensuring health, safety and child protection are well organised and diligently carried out. Staff are well trained for this and in first aid. Information about the needs of pupils who find learning difficult is carefully compiled and their progress is closely monitored. This is done in close consultation with pupils and their families, to ensure that provision is meeting all their needs. External agencies are consulted whenever necessary to ensure that pupils who require additional help receive it. For example, an effective link with the relevant advisory service ensures that pupils from Traveller families are fully included when they attend the school. Improvements to systems for tracking pupils' progress are making them increasingly effective in quickly providing help for any in danger of falling behind their expected progress. The adults are aware that pupils are not yet fully enough involved in their own target setting and assessment. Plans are in hand to tackle this.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Subject leaders are giving their colleagues accurate guidance on how to improve the teaching of each subject. Although most are involved in systematic monitoring of the impact of this by lesson observation, not all are. Their feedback from lesson observations is mainly informal and verbal. This makes it more difficult to agree specific improvement priorities and to remember them, so that progress towards achieving them can be gauged. The governors provide good support for the school and challenge the leaders when necessary. They regularly visit to monitor the school's work and were prominent in finding funds for the recent building works that have revolutionised PE provision.

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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	3
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	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
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	1
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?	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	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	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

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

09 June 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Grazeley Parochial Church of England Aided Primary School, Reading, RG7 1JY

Thank you for welcoming me to your school recently. I enjoyed meeting you. I am grateful for the help you gave, by talking to me and showing me your work. I was able to see that yours is a satisfactory school. Some things are good. Your school is smaller than most others. One of you told me that this helps you to be like a happy family. You are cheerful, very well behaved and willing to join in. Some of you told me that you really enjoy the clubs. The adults are very proud of you and I can see that they care for you very well and always try to do their very best for you. Your own personal qualities mean that you help them greatly in doing this.

You make satisfactory progress in your learning. Your progress is good in English. I enjoyed reading some of the interesting things that you write. You are not quite as strong in mathematics and science. Your teachers have worked out that they need to give you more practice in using what you learn to tackle mathematics problems and to find things out for yourselves in science. They are already beginning to do this and I have asked them to make sure that it quickly helps you to become as good in these subjects as in English. It is clear that you are making full use of the computers and new hall, so that your progress in ICT and PE is good.

I have asked the adults to do two more things. The first is to make sure that they are always certain about what they expect the most able pupils to be able to do. This will help them always to bring out the very best from those pupils. The second is to make sure that they always share their ideas on how the teaching could be even better. This will help them to check that any improvements that are needed are being made.

Very well done to you all and very best wishes for your future lives.

Yours sincerely

George Rayner

Lead Inspector