

Padbury Church of England School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110413
Local Authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	310293
Inspection date	8 December 2008
Reporting inspector	Alan Jarvis

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	11
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Julie Wrigley
Headteacher	Mrs Judith Foster (acting)
Date of previous school inspection	13 September 2004
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Main Street Padbury Buckingham MK18 2AP
Telephone number	01280 813 070
Fax number	01280 813 070

Age group	4–9
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors. They evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and particularly investigated the following.

- Why do pupils make the progress they do in reading, writing and mathematics?
- How well do pupils develop as individuals?
- How well do the governors fulfil their statutory duties?
- How effective is the Early Years Foundation Stage?

Parts of some lessons were observed, parents' questionnaires and a sample of pupils' work were examined, and school information, including self-evaluation and the tracking of pupils' progress, was scrutinised. Other aspects of the school were not examined in detail, but the inspectors 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 the report.

Description of the school

All pupils are of White British origin in this very small school. Currently there are pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and Year 1. Parents can choose for their children to stay on until the end of Year 4. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is currently below average, but can be much higher in some years. No pupil is eligible for free school meals. An acting headteacher has overseen the work of the school since September 2008, when the assistant headteacher and class teacher also joined. The teachers teach pupils in the EYFS and Year 1 as one class. The school has gained the Active Sport Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

'My son is very happy and loves coming to school' and 'The staff instil a strong sense of self-worth and respect for others' are typical of parental comments. Overall, the school provides a good quality of education within a very strong Christian ethos. Pupils achieve well academically and develop outstandingly well as individuals.

In light of the small numbers on roll, the standards attained in recent years are not the best indicators of how well pupils achieve. For example, in the last two years there have been pupils in Year 2 who have undertaken national curriculum assessments. The results show that in some years standards are very high while in others they are very low. The reason for this wide variation is the similarly wide range in pupils' abilities. Therefore, the headteacher and governors rightly focus on measuring the progress that individual pupils make from their very different starting points and use this as the key indicator of how well pupils achieve in literacy and numeracy.

Currently, standards in Year 1 are above those expected for pupils of a similar age. The school's data and work in books show these pupils are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics from their starting point in September. This is helping to prepare them well for later learning and stems from the consistently good teaching and an effective curriculum. Pupils' excellent behaviour and attitudes to learning also contribute. The teachers take great pains, in a class that also contains Reception age children, to provide interesting and challenging activities that are well matched to each pupil's learning needs. For example, extra challenge is provided for any pupil who is especially gifted or talented and additional support is focused on any pupil with additional learning needs. The small class size and the teachers' excellent understanding of each pupil's stage of development and next steps in learning help the good learning. As one parent wrote, 'My son comes home full of excitement from the day's activities and says this is because his teachers help him all the time.' Singing is often used to great effect to stimulate learning and sustain a consistently good pace. For example, songs such as 'Where would we be without the famous five' and 'Snowflakes are falling softly' were used to help pupils focus on their five senses and think about telling words they might use when writing an acrostic about SNOW FLAKES. Good targets for the class to aspire to complement the positive and encouraging way pupils' work is marked. Pupils' individual targets are constantly refined through discussion, so they are very clear about how to improve.

Pupils' academic progress is good, and the staff and governors have identified ways that achievement and standards can be improved through refinements to teaching and the curriculum. Work on this has already started. For example, in literacy pupils are being taught more systematically to recognise the link between letters and sounds. This helps to improve their word recognition and spelling and so to raise standards in reading and writing. In addition, many parents come weekly to help pupils read. More opportunities for guided writing and for pupils to write at length to consolidate their newly learnt skills have been introduced. In mathematics there is a weekly focus on developing number skills to deepen learning. Pupils' books show that this is starting to pay off, especially in reading and writing. However, more needs to be done to ensure that pupils make outstanding progress overall.

Pupils develop outstandingly as individuals because the staff care for them so very well. The clear expectations of behaviour ensure that bullying, racist incidents and exclusions are almost unknown. As a result, pupils feel extremely happy, safe and worry-free. They have an extremely good understanding of how to stay healthy and safe. This is helped by the hot, nutritious meals

available three times a week, the fresh fruit they eat and the encouragement to drink fresh water. A very good link to a specialist sports college enriches the provision for physical development. This and the wide range of sporting activities and extra-curricular clubs ensure they have a very good awareness of the importance of active exercise. Pupils' excellent attitudes to learning and their independence are fostered by the weekly enrichment sessions which pupils themselves plan. Recent activities have included Irish dancing and rock 'n' roll, a disco, making toys and camping out. Their confidence and self-esteem are also highly developed through the many school performances they participate in, such as 'Padbury's got talent', the school fete and harvest festival. In these, all pupils have to play their part. Attendance is consistently and exceptionally high. Parents understand the importance of regular attendance and play a key role in sustaining this. The school abounds with good-quality work across the curriculum, in which pupils are able to demonstrate their feelings and the choices they make. Behaviour is excellent. This is underpinned by the first-class system of encouraging values such as honesty, respect, humility, responsibility, tolerance and peace that are a hallmark of the school's very strong ethos for learning. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is also outstanding. This is boosted by the extremely close links with St Mary the Virgin Church in Padbury, the splendid assemblies in which pupils sing joyously and the very good attention given to developing pupils' understanding of Christianity and other faiths.

The outstanding governors are passionate about increasing pupils' progress and promoting the many strengths of the school to parents. Their stability and excellent work over recent years have been keys to the school sustaining its good effectiveness since the last inspection. They have successfully tackled a number of key challenges facing this very small school. For example, they have found it difficult to recruit and retain a permanent headteacher. However, they have ensured that a number of effective acting headteachers have helped the school continue to develop and run well. Although several teachers have joined and left in recent years, pupils' progress has not suffered. This is because they have worked closely with the acting headteachers to sustain good-quality teaching and learning. Despite high costs, the governors' rigorous oversight of the budget has ensured good value for money in securing the school's good effectiveness. This is illustrated by the way a significant deficit in the budget has been cleared and money allocated to provide cost-effective staffing levels and increased numbers of computers. Governors are rigorously involved in formulating and evaluating the school development plan. They help set challenging targets for the school's performance, visit the school to support staff and effectively act as critical friends. This has ensured that developments are prioritised and overload is avoided. Although numbers on roll are currently low, the school is much better placed to increase numbers in the future through their extremely close links with parents. For example, they have listened to prospective parents and in September this year established pre-school provision as well as a 'mums and toddler' group on site. A number of after school classes and a very informative website are also helping to strengthen the school's standing in the community. The acting headteacher is providing good strategic leadership, helped by her very clear understanding of how young children learn best. With the new staff, she has quickly established a calm but industrious learning environment. The involvement of all partners in the further development of the school and the good track of record of developments reflects the school's good capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

On entry to the Reception class, children's skills are a little above that typical for their age. However, this varies year to year. They achieve well and, by the end of Reception, the majority attain the goals expected, and many exceed them. Their achievement in their personal, social and emotional development is especially strong. Good assessment procedures help teachers plan activities that take account of children's prior experiences and learning needs. The strong focus on teaching letters and sounds makes a significant contribution to children's good progress in early literacy skills. Teaching is good because staff work and plan together as a team. They offer good levels of support and encourage children to become independent. In one lesson seen, children were intrigued to hunt for snowflakes and then use their collections in number work. The teacher extended their learning very well by asking questions to extend their vocabulary and their thinking. Children gain an increasingly broad understanding across all areas of learning. They learn to apply their knowledge gained in one area to another, because activities are well planned to help them do this. Resources are labelled clearly and children can access them easily. Children are encouraged strongly to be independent learners and their personal development is outstanding. Children's welfare is given the utmost priority and this is a key factor in helping them to feel safe and to flourish. While activities in the very attractive classroom are well organised, opportunities for development through the outdoor curriculum are not as well developed. Leadership is good and the good links with Year 1 ensure continuity in pupils' learning. Parents are very pleased with the start their children make and typically say, 'Padbury is a wonderful place to start your education and it provides a very caring and nurturing environment.'

What the school should do to improve further

- Sharpen the already good teaching and the curriculum, so that as many pupils as possible make rapid progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Improve the opportunities for pupils to engage in high-quality activities outdoors.

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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?	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?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	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/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	1
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 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?	1

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 eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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	1
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**

18 December 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Padbury Church of England School, Buckingham, MK18 2AP

Thank you for talking to us, making us feel welcome and letting us see all the exciting things you do when we recently visited your school. We really liked your splendid singing! Your parents wrote to say how happy you are at school and we can see why. Your school is a good school. Some things are outstanding.

Here are some of the really good things about your school.

- You make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- You behave really, really well and you are very kind to each other.
- The adults care for you exceptionally well and quickly deal with your worries.
- You know a great deal about how to be safe, eat healthily and how to keep fit.
- The children in the Reception class make a good start to their education.
- You learn well because the teaching and the activities you are given are good.
- Your personal development is outstanding.
- You really understand how important it is to be honest and to respect others, even though they might be different from you, and to live peacefully.
- You have a very good understanding of Christianity and other religions.
- The governors of your school do an excellent job.
- Your new teachers have got the right ideas for how to make things even better.

To make your progress even better, we have asked your school to do two things.

- Make sure that you make even faster progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Improve the outdoor learning area so Reception children can be given other ways of learning.

You can do your bit by continuing to be very positive and by making the most of your time at Padbury. Very well done to you all and best wishes for your future.

Yours faithfully

Dr Alan Jarvis

Lead Inspector