

Weston Turville Church of England School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110422
Local Authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	310295
Inspection date	6 February 2008
Reporting inspector	Nicola Davies

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	200
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Andrew Pilkington
Headteacher	Ms Karen Brooks
Date of previous school inspection	10 May 2004
School address	Main Street Weston Turville Aylesbury HP22 5RW
Telephone number	01296 613436
Fax number	01296 614139

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the progress of older pupils, how well teachers encourage learners' independence, problem solving and creativity and the quality of pupils' personal development and well-being. Evidence was gathered from the analysis of pupils' test results, observation of lessons, parents' questionnaires, discussions with the headteacher, staff, governors and pupils and scrutiny of samples of their work. 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

This is a small one-form entry Church of England primary school. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. Very few pupils are entitled to free school meals. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is lower than average. A higher than average proportion of pupils leave or join the school other than at normal times.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This good school is at the centre of the local community as it pursues its mission of 'wisdom within a Christian ethos'. The school is well led and managed and strengths in pupils' personal development and well-being are a reflection of the good care, guidance and support it provides for girls and boys of all ages and backgrounds. As one parent explained, 'The high quality of care is reflected in the children's behaviour and the school provides a warm and nurturing environment for both children and parents alike'. Consequently, pupils feel very secure and are able to concentrate on their work. The school has good links with specialist agencies and local services to ensure that pupils who are vulnerable or those with disabilities or learning difficulties, are welcomed and included well in the school. For example, a parent whose child joined partway through the school praised the way the staff had 'pulled out all the stops' to help her child settle and make good progress. Pupils enthusiastically adopt healthy lifestyles, inspired not only by the good teaching but also by the many extra-curricular activities. These include activities such as tag rugby and cheerleading alongside working on the school's 'eco-friendly' allotment. Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to keep safe. Junior safety officers monitor the traffic on the local roads, and on the day of the inspection many pupils brought their bicycles into school to have them checked over for safety. Similarly, older pupils help younger ones feel secure and keep them entertained as 'wet play' monitors. Pupils enjoy these and many other opportunities they have to get involved in school and local life. For example, each year they take an active role in commemorating Weston Turville residents who lost their lives in conflicts and their school houses commemorate the names of four of these.

The main reason for pupils' good enjoyment and progress is that teaching is good. Sample lesson observations confirm that teachers have good relationships with pupils and set interesting activities, often involving pupils in collaboration or discussion. These help pupils develop their first class communication skills and their confidence in speaking with adults and each other. Such skills prepare these 'happy, confident and polite' pupils well for their next steps in education. The school has added to these by giving pupils opportunities to get involved in assessing their own progress. The good curriculum covers basic skills well and has other strengths. Pupils relish the opportunities they have to sing beautifully in assemblies and in local festivals. Similarly, the school holds very successful weeks where they focus on one topic in depth. Pupils particularly enjoy these weeks and the opportunities they have to work with pupils in different year groups and to develop their skills across different subjects.

Standards at the school are above average in national assessments at the end of Years 2 and 6 and pupils make good progress overall. An area that the school has identified as being weaker is the satisfactory progress that some pupils make as they get older. The headteacher and staff have investigated this thoroughly and have taken successful action to ensure that pupils build their skills consistently as they go through the school. The tracking of all pupils now shows exactly where they are each term from their first days at the school, and targets help children and adults alike to know what they need to work on next. The school's focus on writing has improved progress for pupils in English. Staff have reviewed the way they teach mathematics, and how they include work on investigating and solving problems both in mathematics and science. Pupils have appreciated these efforts, one commenting on how the teacher 'tries to make mathematics practical so it is fun'. Staff have also put into place successful small group work for pupils who are struggling, or who need more challenge. These strategies are beginning to have the desired effect and inspection evidence indicates current pupils are making good

progress. However, there are still some inconsistencies across the school in how well teachers plan to meet the different mathematical needs and abilities within their classes. These are not always picked up as staff have had relatively few opportunities to monitor teaching and learning in the subject through observing lessons. This is a weaker aspect of the school's self-evaluation which it has identified for further action in its well-considered plans for the future.

Thoughtful evaluation of what is going well and where improvements can be made involves adults and children at the school. One example is attendance which has improved significantly since the last inspection. The governing body takes an active role in improving the school, making good use of its members' professional experience. As a result, it both asks searching questions and, on occasions, fires the school's enthusiasm. A few parents do not feel as well involved in this process of school improvement and consultation, for example, where changes are made. However most parents strongly support the quality of education their children receive in this 'very caring school'. Good teaching, and an enjoyable curriculum alongside good care, guidance and support are clear evidence of the school's good leadership and management and its satisfactory capacity to continue to improve.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children get a good start to their education in the Reception class. Most have attended pre-schools and generally their skills are above those expected for their age. Parents particularly value the welcoming but lively environment which means children settle well and quickly become confident in exploring the indoor and outdoor activities within the spacious and well organised setting. As a result, children are equally active in both adult led and more independent sessions where they take a lead in their own learning. For example, during the inspection some children had made their own trombones which they were 'playing' in the outdoor area whilst others were accompanying them with tambourines and drums. The school has recently introduced a new way of teaching sounds and letters and plans to make sure that approaches to this are consistent across the early years of the school and to further extend independent learning within and beyond the Foundation Stage. Children thoroughly enjoy their time in the Reception class and make good progress to generally exceed expectations for their age.

What the school should do to improve further

- Further improve the progress of pupils, especially in mathematics, by more closely monitoring teaching to ensure it meets the particular needs of learners.

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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?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

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?	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	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	3
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

15 February 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Weston Turville Church of England School, Aylesbury, HP22 5RW

Thank you for helping me when I visited your school recently. I very much enjoyed my day with you and your teachers. I was sorry I wasn't able to stay just a little longer and spend some time with you in your allotment. Perhaps another time.

Your headteacher had told me a great deal about your school before I arrived and had shared with me what the school is proud of and what it would like to improve. Like your teachers, I judge that you go to a good school and that you make good progress to reach standards which are higher than in many other schools. One of the particularly good things about the school is how well you understand how to keep healthy and safe and how much you enjoy helping others. So well done.

Your teachers have been thinking about what they need to do to make the school even better. Sometimes they ask for your ideas and tell you about what they are planning. One of the things they have been working on is making sure that all of you make good progress as you get older, particularly in mathematics. You told me that you really enjoy numeracy when it is fun, although some of you would still rather not have to work on fractions! The teachers have worked well together to make some useful changes and I have asked them to keep a close eye on how this is going through making time to watch some of your lessons. This is really helpful to see just how much you are learning and for teachers to share their best ideas.

It was lovely to join your school for the day. Everywhere I went I seemed to hear beautiful singing so I am sure you will enjoy taking part in the festival and the audience will enjoy listening to you.

With best wishes for the future,

Nicola Davies

Lead Inspector