

Lee Common Church of England School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110428
Local Authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	310298
Inspection date	16 October 2008
Reporting inspector	Graham Lee

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	Infant
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	50
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	13
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Giles Knowles
Headteacher	Mrs Alison Lawes
Date of previous school inspection	10 January 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Oxford Street Lee Common Great Missenden HP16 9JH

Age group	4–7
Inspection date	16 October 2008
Inspection number	310298

Telephone number
Fax number

01494 837267
01494 837267

Age group	4-7
Inspection date	16 October 2008
Inspection number	310298

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: how well children achieve in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS); pupils' achievement in writing; the effectiveness of academic guidance and aspects of their personal development. Evidence was gathered from observing pupils in lessons and around the school, discussions with staff, governors and pupils, samples of pupils' work and examination of documents provided by the school. Inspectors also took into account the views of parents expressed in questionnaires. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This school is much smaller than average and serves a rural community. Almost all pupils are of White British origin and very few speak English as an additional language. Boys outnumber girls by a significant margin. The school has reviewed its arrangements for provision in the EYFS from this September, with all children entering a discrete Reception class on a full time basis. The school has an Activemark in recognition of its work in physical education.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Inspectors agree with the parent who commented, 'This is a good school which is on its way to becoming a very good school.' Lee Common is indeed a good school, which is continuing to improve under the very effective leadership of the headteacher. The school is at the heart of the village community and its work is underpinned by strong Christian values. Staff take excellent care of the pupils and work in close partnership with their families. One parent remarked 'My son loves going to school. They have welcomed him from the moment he started.' This is typical of the views of many. Consequently, parents are confident that their children are safe and secure and pupils thrive in this supportive environment. Their personal development is good and they achieve well.

Standards have been well above average for many years and, in 2008, pupils' attainment was even higher, as a result of very good progress in Year 2. They did particularly well in reading and mathematics and challenging targets were exceeded. There was also a marked improvement in writing, after a dip in 2007, although some more able pupils did not make the progress of which they were capable. This is because children's writing skills were not sufficiently well developed in the Reception class and, consequently, they started from a less secure position in Year 1 than they did in reading and mathematics. Moreover, opportunities are sometimes missed for pupils to write for different audiences and purposes. Pupils' very good basic skills mean that they are very well prepared for the next stage of their education and the world beyond.

Pupils achieve well because of good teaching and learning. Teachers have good relationships with their classes and generally plan effectively to meet the varying needs of their pupils. They work well with support staff, who make a considerable contribution to pupils' good progress. Sometimes, there is an over reliance on commercial schemes and worksheets, which results in pupils not being challenged as much as they might be. Teachers' marking is regular and encouraging but does not always give pupils a clear idea of how they might improve. Pupils' good achievement is also supported by systems introduced by the headteacher to track their progress. This is enabling teachers to identify pupils who are in danger of falling behind at an earlier stage in order to provide the necessary additional support. These systems are also being used to set ambitious targets for every pupil. At the level of the individual pupil, this still has weaknesses. Some targets are very general and pupils are often vague about them. The tracking system is relatively new and does not yet provide a clear overview of every pupil's progress from joining to leaving the school.

All parents returning the questionnaire said that their children enjoy school and this is evident in their enthusiastic approach to school life. It is not, however, reflected in their attendance, which has declined over the last few years. This is mainly because of families taking holidays in term time. The school has recently tightened its procedures but this has not yet arrested the decline. Staff, governors and parents say that pupils' behaviour has improved considerably since the last inspection. Behaviour is satisfactory. Most pupils behave well and are keen to learn. Good systems have been introduced which make expectations of behaviour clear to all. Nevertheless, a number of pupils find it hard to cooperate and quickly become distracted. Pupils have a very good understanding of the need to adopt a healthy lifestyle. This is assisted greatly by the school's commitment to working with others to provide pupils with opportunities to take part in a range of sporting activities, which they greatly enjoy. Pupils make a good contribution to the school community and willingly take on responsibilities around the school

and in the newly formed school council. The school makes a good contribution to the cohesion of the local community and pupils are very involved with the life of the church and the village community. The annual maypole dance is a highlight of the village calendar. However, pupils' understanding of living in a diverse cultural society is satisfactory. Improving this is a priority for the school this year.

The headteacher, ably supported by a committed and enthusiastic staff team, has a clear view of the school's strengths and has put in place effective strategies to address weaknesses when they are identified. For example, considerable work has been done to provide pupils, particularly boys, with more inspiration to write, and this has led to improved standards and progress in 2008. The fabric of the beautiful Victorian building and grounds has been enhanced considerably, as have resources for learning. Provision for information and communication technology, for instance, has improved immeasurably. Pupils say how much they enjoy using the new computer suite and technology is being used much more effectively to support learning in other subjects.

The governing body is a relatively new team and brings a great deal of expertise and enthusiasm to its work. Governors offer a good balance of support and challenge to the headteacher. Significant changes over the last couple of years have been generally well supported by parents, although a small minority do not feel confident that the school takes their views in to account. This is not the view of the majority of parents as illustrated by this typical comment; 'The school encourages the active involvement of parents, seeks their views and takes them on board.' Communication is informative and of good quality, and governors have recently introduced a regular forum for parents to express their views. Issues from the last inspection have been addressed well and standards remain high. This indicates that the school has good capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children are very well looked when they join the school and enjoy their time in the EYFS. They settle quickly because of the welcoming environment, and become confident learners. Children who began school in September 2007 had skills and understanding which were broadly typical for their age and better in aspects of their personal development. This is fairly typical of the school's intake, although it does vary from year to year because of the relatively small numbers involved. Last year, children made good progress in most areas of their learning in Reception to reach standards that were above national expectations by the time they moved into Year 1. This was also the case over the previous two years. However, children are not doing as well in writing, where standards at the end of Reception are below national expectations. The teacher plans well to meet children's needs in all other areas of the learning through interesting themes and topics. Good leadership identified that children needed to have more opportunities to explore the world around them as well as early language and mathematical skills taught more directly. To this end, the outside area is being used well for exploration but some children regularly choose the same activities. They do not often choose to write, for example. Moreover, the absence of a trained support assistant means that opportunities to develop children's learning, influence choices and assess progress, particularly in the outside area, are missed. The teaching in the more directed activities is of good quality and this leads to good progress, in reading and mathematics particularly.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide pupils with more opportunities to write in different contexts, particularly in EYFS, in order to accelerate their progress in this subject.
- Ensure that individual targets and teachers' marking give pupils a clear idea about how to improve.
- Work with parents to improve attendance.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	----------------

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

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?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
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?	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
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	3
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	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?	2

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	2
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	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**

03 November 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Lee Common Church of England School, Great Missenden, HP16 9JH

You may remember that I visited your school with another inspector a little while ago. I am writing to thank you all for being so helpful. We really enjoyed our day at Lee Common. I thought you would like to know what we found out.

You go to a good school, which is helping you make a good start to your school life. Your parents tell us how much you enjoy school. You told us how much you enjoy using the new computer suite and this is really helping with your learning. You also enjoy taking part in the different sports activities, which are helping you to stay fit and healthy. You do well in lessons but some of you need to try your best to keep your mind on what you are doing and to work with the other children in your class.

You are learning very well in mathematics and reading because the teachers and other staff are helping you to get better all the time. Although you are doing quite well in writing, we think that some of you could be doing even better. By the time you leave Lee Common you are doing better than in most schools which will help you when you get to your next school.

Your headteacher, other staff and governors are working hard to make the school even better for you. We have asked them to do a few things, which we think might help.

- We want you to have more chances to write about different things to help you get even better in writing. You can help with this by always doing your best.
- We would like your teachers to make sure that your targets and marking in books help you to get better. You can help by trying hard to reach your targets.
- A few of you take too much time off school. We also have asked the school to work with your parents to make sure that you go to school whenever you are fit and well. This will help with your learning.

Good luck to you all.

Yours sincerely

Graham Lee

Lead Inspector