

Great Kimble Church of England School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110430
Local Authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	310299
Inspection date	19 June 2008
Reporting inspector	Bernice Magson

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4-7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	46
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Fiona Kent
Headteacher	Mrs Gillian Harrington
Date of previous school inspection	7 June 2004
School address	Church Lane Great Kimble Aylesbury HP17 9TH
Telephone number	01844 346189
Fax number	01844 346189

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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 following issues: how well all groups of pupils are achieving; how the school is seeking to raise standards in writing, particularly for more able pupils; and the effectiveness of leaders and managers in promoting the school's vision and aims. Evidence was gathered from the school's records, planning and policies, from observing teaching and learning, from discussions with children, staff, parents, and governors and from a scrutiny of parents' questionnaires. 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 self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included in the report.

Description of the school

This is a very small Church of England school, which serves the villages of Kimble, Butlers Cross and several rural farming hamlets. Pupils are mostly of a white British background. Pupils are taught mostly in mixed age classes. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities varies significantly year-on-year, and includes pupils with physical difficulties, behavioural, emotional and social needs and dyslexia. The school has an Activemark for sport, Healthy Schools status, and Investors in People accreditation.

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 wonderful school. Everything it does has the child at its heart' commented one parent, reflecting the views of many. Indeed, this is a good school where pupils' achieve well. Pupils' personal development, including their behaviour is outstanding and relationships are excellent, both between pupils and with adults. Pupils develop as confident, happy, successful, independent learners, who have an excellent understanding of moral values, care extremely well for one another and join enthusiastically in activities associated with the church and local community. They feel valued members of the school and contribute exceptionally well to its development. Parents are supportive of the school, recognising how well each child's talents are nurtured in a caring Christian environment.

Pupils receive excellent care and support from all staff and, as a result, they enjoy school very much and attend very regularly. Pupils feel safe and secure and know well how to take care of themselves. They have an excellent understanding of healthy lifestyles for their age. Sporting activities are popular, as are special curriculum weeks when they learn new skills, such as Indian dancing. Pupils contribute regularly to worship in church and take part in local events, such as maypole dancing. Their basic skills develop well, and along with their excellent personal development, they are well equipped for their next stage in education.

The good curriculum includes an extensive range of first-hand learning experiences to motivate pupils. As a result, they have excellent attitudes to learning, work hard in lessons and make good progress. They attain above average standards by Year 2 from average starting points on entry. The school predicts that the current Year 2 is on course to attain appropriately challenging targets in national tests. Good strategies have been recently introduced to raise standards in literacy, which are proving effective. The curriculum includes a good focus on the learning of letter and sounds and, as a result, standards in reading are now a strength. However, few pupils achieve the higher levels in national tests in writing by the end of Year 2. There are insufficient opportunities for pupils in Years 1 and 2 to write for different audiences across a range of subjects.

The quality of teaching is good. Pupils are encouraged to use their prior knowledge and understanding to develop their learning further. For example, in Years 1 and 2, following a mini-beast trail in the school grounds, pupils were able to classify mini-beasts, plants, and bushes unaided, and identify key characteristics appropriate to their survival. Teachers make good use of assessment systems to track pupils' progress. However, in planning lessons, teachers do not use this assessment information enough to ensure learning tasks challenge older pupils sufficiently. Additional support is targeted well to pupils with specific learning needs, who achieve as well as their peers.

Leadership and management are good. A dedicated headteacher, ably supported by a cohesive team of staff and governors, promotes well the school's values and aims and creates a nurturing Christian ethos in the school. Leaders and managers have a team approach to strategic planning and financial management, which is effective. Through their good efforts and with strong support from parents who successfully raise funds to support the school, the learning environment has been effectively enhanced, both indoors and out. Challenging targets are set annually to bring about school improvement, and monitored rigorously by the headteacher and governors. The school recognises the need to provide other staff with opportunities for monitoring. The school has a good capacity to improve.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children make a good start to their education in the Reception year. In a warm, friendly and supportive environment, children develop as confident learners. Behaviour is excellent and children have a good understanding of right and wrong. In lessons, concentration levels are high. Children learn well through a good curriculum, which matches their interests and makes good links between subjects. For instance, children were involved in playing a game of 'Give me a clue' to guess various jungle animals, with tasks in writing, painting, chalking of footprints, and computer tasks to indicate various animal features. Teaching is of a good quality. In a well-structured learning environment, teachers provide a good balance between adult-led activities and child-initiated play. Rigorous tracking of children's progress now takes place, although this is a recent development and not yet fully embedded, and the information is not used enough in planning lessons. From average starting points, many children reach beyond expected goals for their age in all areas of learning by the end of the Reception year.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase opportunities for pupils in Years 1 and 2 to develop their writing skills across a range of subjects.
- Make greater use of assessment data to ensure pupils are challenged effectively in their learning in all lessons.

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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	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	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
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 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?	1

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

02 July 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Great Kimble Church of England School, Aylesbury, HP17 9TH

Thank you for making me so welcome when I visited your school. It was good to talk with so many of you and find out about all the exciting things you are doing. I was pleased to see how well the older children are looking after the younger ones. I think that you have a good school. I liked these things most about your school:

- you reach standards above those in most schools, particularly in your reading and mathematics
- your behaviour is excellent and you play together very well
- you understand very well about the importance of eating healthily and keeping fit
- the adults take very good care of you and work hard to make sure that you are happy and safe in school
- the teachers find many exciting things for you to learn each day
- your headteacher, governors and teachers are always looking at how the school is doing and finding ways to improve it.

To make your school even better I have asked your headteacher and governors to do two things. The first is to help children in Years 1 and 2 improve their writing by providing more opportunities for them to write in other subjects. The second is to make greater use of information about how you are doing to make sure you have work that is right for you in every lesson. This means that those of you who find learning easier have activities that challenge you to learn more. You can help by continuing to listen carefully and take note of what the teachers say. Then you will continue to enjoy your school and make really good progress in your learning.

Yours sincerely

Bernice Magson

Lead Inspector