

Twyford CofE School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110437
Local Authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	310303
Inspection dates	22–23 September 2008
Reporting inspector	Christopher Parker

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	First
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	73
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	29
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Russell Wood
Headteacher	Mrs Judith Foster
Date of previous school inspection	12 July 2004
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Church Street Twyford Buckingham MK18 4EQ
Telephone number	01296 730305
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Age group	3–9
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The school is much smaller than average. It provides a class for three-, four- and five-year-olds in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). There are two further classes catering for Years 1 and 2, and 3 and 4. Cohort sizes vary from eight to 15. The proportion of pupils taking free school meals is much smaller than in most schools; as is proportion of pupils with learning difficulties. There are no pupils at an early stage of learning to speak English.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

'...our children are thriving at Twyford and gaining in confidence each day.' Many parents, who almost unanimously hold the school in high regard, share this sentiment.

This is a good school. In the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) the children make an outstanding start to their education. The pupils make good progress in Years 1 to 4 and consistently reach exceptionally high standards. Throughout the EYFS and Years 1 to 4 the pupils' personal development is outstanding. All pupils learn and play together in harmony and show considerable respect for each other and for all the adults who work in the school. Those who work with the youngest children lay very secure foundations for the children's personal, social and emotional development, which underpins their subsequent learning and enjoyment. One parent commented that their daughter was 'encouraged and inspired in all she does.'

The school's success is due to the direction and leadership of the headteacher who, over the last two years, has significantly enhanced the curriculum to provide a very wide range of opportunities. She has worked with the teachers to extend and develop their skills in order to 'encourage excellence, develop confidence and inspire all'.

The teachers successfully interest and engage the pupils. They plan tasks for the different ages and abilities in each class. With the help of the teaching assistants they support pupils of all abilities, including those with learning difficulties, to make good progress. Through the well focused school improvement plan the teachers have increased the range of opportunities for pupils to make better progress in writing and mathematics. Recent developments in marking and target setting are also bringing improvements. However, the teachers have not yet established the coherence and consistency in the guidance they give to pupils to rapidly accelerate progress and help them to achieve even higher.

The headteacher is systematically developing her colleagues' skills and abilities to take on greater leadership responsibility. The EYFS coordinator is now giving excellent leadership to the provision for the youngest children but in other areas, coordinators are managing the provision rather than leading the drive for excellence. The recent appointment of a new mathematics coordinator has given considerable impetus to extending the influence expected from this important middle leadership role.

The headteacher and governors are, through effective self-evaluation, constantly looking to bring about further improvements. The school is in a strong position to build successfully on the successes of the recent past.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

The children enter Nursery with the skills and abilities expected for their age. More children than usual have a broader range of skills and greater confidence. They make excellent progress so that a greater proportion of the children reach, and often exceed, the goals set for the end of the reception year. This is the result of the excellent leadership and organisation of the EYFS by the headteacher, now taken over by the coordinator. Learning and development are very effectively managed and supported by all of the adults. Throughout the EYFS, adults make timely interventions to extend the children's confidence, build their vocabulary and significantly enhance their personal development. The adults do not miss an opportunity to extend learning and constantly assess and record the progress the children make.

The provision made for the children in EYFS promotes their well-being, learning and development very well. The accommodation is safe and well resourced. The outdoor area is used very effectively. The range of tasks and activities, both led by adults and chosen by the children, are expertly managed and ensure the outdoor area is in constant and very effective use.

What the school should do to improve further

- Extend the role of subject coordinators so that they play a greater role in leading the school's pursuit of excellence.
- Build on recent developments in marking and target setting to provide a more coherent approach to helping pupils to move rapidly to the next stage in their learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The pupils build successfully on the excellent start they make in EYFS. They make good progress from Year 1 to Year 4 and reach high standards overall. In 2005 and 2006, assessments at the end of Year 2 show standards were exceptionally high in all subjects. They remained high in reading in 2007 but dipped in writing and mathematics. In recent tests, standards remained high in reading and have risen to be exceptionally high again in mathematics. Standards in writing also improved to be well above average. Examples of the pupils' work and the school's records show that high standards are maintained through to the end of Year 4 where almost all pupils reach the level expected for their age and a number are already working at the level expected by the end of Year 6.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The pupils' personal development is outstanding. It builds on the excellent foundations laid in EYFS. The pupils take full advantage of the many opportunities the school offers. The ethos of the school is exemplified by the very high expectations of behaviour and pupils' consideration for others. As a result behaviour is excellent and attendance well above average. The pupils say they feel safe in school and enjoy playtimes, particularly the days when it is their turn to use 'the apparatus'.

The pupils speak animatedly about their work, enjoyment of lessons, after-school activities and school events. They have responded very positively to the school's focus on improving writing. Both girls and boys say they feel confident to attempt 'brave' writing and say their work has improved as a result. They know about the benefits of a healthy diet. The school council plays an active role in bringing about improvement. The school councillors wrote to their Member of Parliament to express their concerns about where the school bus was turning around. The drive and entrance to the school have now been improved. They also arranged a cake sale and Blue Peter 'Wear Your Wellies' event to raise funds for charity.

The pupils benefit from very strong links with the church and village community. The pupils also work with other schools, for example, to create a network newspaper. They have a good understanding and respect for cultural traditions. This was very evident in an uplifting and extremely enjoyable music lesson where pupils were learning African drumming.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Lessons are lively and interesting. There are good levels of adult support in most lessons. Teaching assistants and volunteers provide additional help that is very beneficial to the less able pupils. The adults in EYFS provide the youngest children with an excellent range of tasks and activities. Skilful interventions extend these activities and develop the children's vocabulary. This was very evident when children in the Reception class were beginning to learn to make simple calculations using 'add' and 'equals'.

In Years 1 and 2 the teaching of reading through linking sounds and letters is effective through well managed groups that take account of the stage of the pupils' development. This work underpins the high standards in reading and the improvements in writing. Mathematics teaching in Years 3 and 4 is particularly challenging and the teacher carefully assesses what the children have understood. The information she gleans immediately informs planning for the next steps in the pupils' learning. However, there are instances in other lessons where too much emphasis is placed on what the pupils have done rather than what they learned.

Steps have recently been taken to develop a consistent approach to marking to help pupils to improve their work. The teachers also set targets for the pupils but they are not always used alongside their marking to provide a coherent approach that helps the pupils to make even greater progress. Many of the comments, in writing for example, relate to punctuation with few indications of how the pupils might improve the structure and organisation of their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The school provides a very broad and creative curriculum in which art and music make an outstanding contribution to the pupils' personal development and well-being. The art and design work on display is of a high standard. This is the result of systematic teaching of skills within a comprehensive curriculum. The art and design curriculum is extended through events such as 'Take one picture' where Monet's work was used as the basis for a range of activities. One parent commented, 'expanding the music provision...has been extremely beneficial to the children'.

An excellent range of opportunities is provided for the pupils both during and beyond the school day. Information and communication technology is used well to extend the pupils' learning. Subjects are linked together very well to provide a wide range of opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy skills through, for example, finding key facts and information in history.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care and support of pupils is very strong. Some elements of academic guidance, however, are not yet consistently implemented or as refined and precise as they could be. Recent improvements to marking and target setting are evident in the pupils' work. These changes are not sufficiently established to make sure that all pupils are consistently challenged to reach the highest standards.

The school has comprehensive arrangements to make sure that the pupils can learn in safety and with effective support. Appropriate checks are carried out to confirm that adults working in EYFS and Years 1 to 4 have been cleared to work with children. Health and safety arrangements are of a high standard and risks are carefully assessed.

The tracking of the pupils' progress is very thorough and, following training, assessments are now accurate and comprehensive. Support for those with learning difficulties is good. The older children are very well prepared for the next stage in their education because of the strong links with the local primary school which they move to at the end of Year 4. The school welcomes parents, seeks their views, provides a wide range of information for them and uses their skills to support activities in and out of school. As a result links with parents are very productive and considerably enhance the pupils' well-being.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher has been very effective in establishing a clear direction for the school. She has put into place a considered and well structured improvement plan with the aim of providing an excellent education for the pupils. By engaging all members of staff and actively involving them in implementing improvements, there is a high level of commitment and shared understanding of the school's goals. As a result, the pupils make good progress and staff are seeking to raise achievement further. The ethos of the school promotes excellent personal development. The school strongly promotes community cohesion locally and internationally.

The headteacher's monitoring of the quality of teaching is incisive and highlights where teachers need to improve. This is part of a good, comprehensive and accurate programme of self-evaluation which takes full account of parents' and pupils' views. The records of the monitoring of teaching show the significant impact of the headteacher's leadership and high expectations. Over the last two years, the quality of teaching has gradually improved so that it is now consistently good and outstanding in EYFS.

The headteacher has established a structure within which teachers can develop leadership roles. She has worked very successfully with the EYFS coordinator to create a model of middle leadership and is now looking to extend the influence of other coordinators throughout the school. The recent appointment of a knowledgeable and very enthusiastic mathematics coordinator is a very positive move but currently subject coordinators are not taking a sufficiently strong lead in the drive for excellence.

Governors play an active and very effective role in monitoring the work of the school. They have carried out an extensive self-evaluation which provides a very comprehensive picture of the work of the school and the impact of their decisions. They make good use of the information they gather from discussions with pupils and parents, and their regular visits to classes.

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
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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?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
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?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
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	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 learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
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	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	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**

02 October 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Twyford CofE School, Buckingham, MK18 4EQ

I thoroughly enjoyed my recent visit to your school. Many of your parents wrote to me to tell me how pleased they were with the school and the progress you are making. Some of you also told me how much you enjoy school and the many opportunities it provides for you. Yours is a good school.

Many of you are reaching very high standards in reading, writing and mathematics. The youngest children make an excellent start because the adults give them so much help and support to grow in confidence and learn so many new things. In Years 1 to 4 you make good progress because the teachers set you very interesting and enjoyable tasks. Your personal development is outstanding and you behave very well and show great respect for each other and the adults who work in the school.

The teachers always mark your work and have recently started to make more comments to help you to improve your next piece of work. I have asked them to develop this further and link it more closely with the targets they set you.

The headteacher wants the school to encourage excellence, develop your confidence and inspire you all to do the best you can. I have asked all the teachers to play a part in leading the drive to achieve these things in the subjects they coordinate. The headteacher has been very successful in making changes and improvements over the last two years. As a result, the school is in a strong position to get even better.

I hope you continue to do well and reach the highest standards you possibly can.

Yours sincerely

Christopher Parker

Lead Inspector