

Mursley Church of England School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110444
Local Authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	310306
Inspection date	23 June 2008
Reporting inspector	Susan Thomas-Pounce

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

Type of school	First
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4-9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	32
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Richard Rouse
Headteacher	Mrs Alexandra Owens
Date of previous school inspection	1 November 2004
School address	Main Street Mursley Milton Keynes MK17 0RT
Telephone number	01296 720305
Fax number	01296 720305

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector. This was a coordinated inspection carried out at the same time as the inspections of Swanbourne Church of England VA school and Drayton Parslow Village School.

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the effectiveness of leadership and management at all levels, how well pupils are progressing and the standards they attain, and how they respond to the range of opportunities the school offers.

Evidence was gathered from the school's own assessment data and other school documentation, observations of teaching and learning, the way that pupils interact with each other and their response to what is provided for them, parents' questionnaire returns and discussions with a governor and staff. 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

Most pupils at this much smaller than average village church school are from a White British background. Although numbers on roll have varied significantly from year to year, there has been a recent increase in admissions and the school is over subscribed for September 2008. Since September 2007 it has worked in close collaboration with Swanbourne Church of England VA School and Drayton Parslow Village School. The headteacher of Drayton Parslow School has become the acting headteacher. The school now caters for pupils aged 4 to 7 years. Older pupils are now educated at Swanbourne.

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 good school. The acting headteacher, who has united staff and governors around a clear vision and strategy for the future, provides outstanding leadership. She is highly effective in leading the school. She works in partnership with a committed staff, knowledgeable governors and supportive parents to promote a caring, respectful, inclusive and Christian ethos. As a result, the pupils love coming to school and have excellent attitudes to learning. A parent said, 'I am very impressed with my child's progress and development this year, Mursley is a wonderful school'. Most parents have a high regard for the education and care their children receive.

The pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding because all of those who work in the school are committed to ensuring the pupils are happy, receive very good care and are exceptionally well equipped with the skills to prepare them well for their future lives. Attendance is typical for an infant school and there are very good procedures in place to promote it.

The children's knowledge and skills on entry to the school vary considerably from year to year. This year they were broadly average. Unsurprisingly, standards attained at the end of Year 2 reflect these variations. For example, the standards children reach and the progress they make in writing in Years 1 and 2, have not yet quite caught up with the good standards and progress in reading and mathematics. However, improvements in the quality of teaching and learning have resulted in faster progress in Years 1 and 2. Progress is now good overall, with an increasing number of pupils on target to exceed the expected levels. Those pupils who find learning more difficult are supported well to make good progress.

The quality of teaching and learning is good as a result of the effective measures for improvement introduced by the acting headteacher. Teachers are making good use of information and communication technology to link subjects together. Lessons are carefully planned and based on accurate assessments to make sure that tasks are well matched to pupils' needs. As a result, lessons engender high levels of interest and engagement, and challenge pupils of all abilities. Leaders recognise that these best features are not consistently applied across the school. Skilled teaching assistants provide support for individuals and groups which enables the pupils to do well. Teachers successfully promote high levels of self confidence and, consequently, the pupils have extremely positive attitudes to learning and work hard. Behaviour is exceptional.

Ongoing improvements to facilities and resources, as a result of the collaboration with Drayton Parslow and Swanbourne schools, have extended and broadened the curriculum which is now good. Extra-curricular provision, which includes the arts and sports, has recently improved. Pupils also have the opportunity to work with a music specialist. Themed events such as celebrating the Chinese New Year extend pupils' knowledge and understanding across several subjects, helping them to learn well and providing them with lasting memories. Visitors and visits extend and enliven the curriculum.

Care, guidance and support for all pupils are good. The school secretary, who is also a higher level teaching assistant, makes a valuable contribution to the pupils' welfare. Pupils are greeted cheerily as they arrive at school. All safeguarding procedures are in place. Staff know the pupils very well and act swiftly to help them with problems, should they occur. The teachers recognise that academic guidance can be improved still further by making sure that all children are clear about their next steps in learning, how to achieve them and how to measure their own success.

Systems are in place to develop the capacity of leaders and managers at all levels, but not all curriculum leaders have yet been enabled to play their full part in monitoring and evaluating how effectively the curriculum is taught.

The outstanding leadership and management of the acting headteacher and governors have brought rigour and clarity to improvement planning. The school development plan sets out clear priorities central to their pursuit of excellence. A great deal has been achieved in a short time. The school has demonstrated an outstanding capacity to continue to improve.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children settle quickly into Reception, which is a very caring and secure place. The curriculum has been modified recently and learning now involves children more in making decisions for themselves. Adults plan enjoyable activities, both indoors and outdoors, that engage children and encourage them to work hard. Although there is no free-flow access to the outside area, there is a suitably planned balance of teacher-led and child-initiated activities. Plans to deliver these through more integrated themes are developing well. For example the children were working on a topic about 'Trains'; writing about them, drawing them, modelling them and getting very excited about taking a steam train ride on a local narrow gauge railway. Activities such as role-play, time to paint, and learning with sand and water capture children's interests and encourage them to use their imaginations.

Since the recent collaboration with Drayton Parslow and Swanbourne Schools improvements have been made to the teaching and learning environment. Improved systems for assessment are now used well to identify children's individual needs. Leaders recognise the need to underpin planning by developing further the systems used to collect information about children. Good teaching now ensures that children progress well. The teacher encourages the children to be independent, to cooperate and to talk about their learning. Consequently, current predictions indicate that when they enter Year 1, most will have achieved levels of knowledge and skills expected for their age and some will have surpassed them. Links with home are very good and every effort is made to encourage parents to get involved in their child's education.

What the school should do to improve further

- Extend the role of subject leaders so that they play a full part in monitoring and evaluating how effectively the curriculum is taught.

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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 effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

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	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
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	1

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?	1
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	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
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	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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

03 July 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Mursley Church of England School, Milton Keynes, MK17 0RT

I was pleased to meet you and all the staff and very much enjoyed the time I spent with you. Thank you for making me feel so welcome, talking to me and helping me to find out so much about you and your school.

You go to a good school where all the grown-ups do their best for you. They look after you and care for you well. Your teachers and teaching assistants make learning interesting and enjoyable and they work hard to help you make good progress in lessons. Your excellent behaviour in class, around the school and in the playground, help you to learn well too. It is clear that you are extremely happy at school. Your teachers and your friends help you to feel important and safe there. Everyone at school is keen to find ways to help you do as well as you possibly can. The acting headteacher, other staff and the governors are doing an excellent job in running the school.

Your acting headteacher is going to make sure that everyone who has a role in improving the work of the school is able to play their part in making this happen as quickly as possible by checking the plans and teaching more often. I am sure that all of the adults in your school will continue to do everything they can to help you.

You can play your part by continuing to behave well, work hard and come to school every day.

My very best wishes for the future,

Yours sincerely

Susan Thomas-Pounce

Lead Inspector