

Hawridge and Cholesbury Church of England School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110445
Local Authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	310307
Inspection date	16 September 2008
Reporting inspector	Paula Protherough

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	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	164
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	9
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Headteacher	Mrs R Stallwood
Date of previous school inspection	3 November 2003
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Hawridge Chesham HP5 2UQ
Telephone number	01494 758368
Fax number	01494 758629

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors. Inspectors investigated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

Are pupils achieving as well as they can given their starting points, particularly in mathematics and writing for boys, and higher attainers? Do leaders have a clear oversight of pupils' achievement and provision and use this information to set appropriate plans for school improvement? Does the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provision meet the needs of learners?

Evidence was gathered from school and national data, observations of lessons and playtimes, pupils' work, discussion with and information from pupils, staff, parents and governors. 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 in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average village primary school in a country setting. Many of the pupils come from the nearby town of Chesham. Pupils are of predominantly white British origin and speak English as their first language. Very few pupils are eligible for free school meals. The proportion with learning difficulties is lower than the national average and there are no pupils with statements of special educational needs (SEN). The Early Years Foundation Stage is the September intake of full time pupils.

The school has achieved Healthy Schools Status and Basic Skills Quality Mark and Activemark.

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 where pupils achieve standards that are well above the national average by the end of Year 6, and are well equipped to move on to the next stage of their education. The Reception pupils arrive at the school with levels of skills and knowledge broadly in line with age related expectations. They make good progress through the EYFS and, by the end of Reception, most are reaching a good level of overall achievement. In Years 1 and 2, pupils make steady progress and achieve satisfactorily. Teacher assessments show that, by the end of Year 2, standards are above the national average in reading and writing and close to average levels in mathematics. Progress accelerates in Years 3 to 6 so that, by the age of eleven, standards are well above average in English, mathematics and science, as they have been for several years. Boys and girls of all backgrounds and abilities generally make good progress from their starting points.

The teachers know their pupils' needs well. The information gathered from the school's robust assessment and tracking procedures is used effectively to judge pupils' progress and ensure that teachers plan appropriate support and challenge for individuals. The headteacher, assistant headteacher and governors have correctly identified the need to improve achievement at Key Stage 1 and build further on the high standards at Key Stage 2. However, a rapid turnover of teaching staff in recent years has hindered sustained team building. Even so, at this very early stage of the new academic year, the school already has a settled, calm and purposeful working atmosphere. Pupils' behaviour is good in lessons and at playtimes. Pupils have an excellent commitment to physical exercise and a keen appreciation of what it means to be fit and healthy. The thorough preparation of the senior leadership team means that all teachers are developing a consistent approach to many aspects of their work, such as the organisation and planning of lessons and the marking of pupils' work and the setting of homework. Lessons are purposeful and proceed at a good pace. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to supporting pupils' learning throughout the school.

Good leadership has kept the school moving forward through challenging times. The extensive improvements to the building, planned by the governors and leadership team, have considerably enhanced the school's learning environment. The positive impact of new initiatives such as the data tracking system, a new maths scheme, the use of interactive whiteboards in all classes and the appointment of a new energetic caretaker, is evident. However, the current approach to school improvement planning lacks sufficient rigour. The plan sets out important and relevant areas for action, but does not always make it clear how success is measured in terms of raising pupils' achievement.

The new staff team are enthusiastic and eager to take on leadership roles and shared responsibility for crucial areas such as mathematics, information and communication technology (ICT) and literacy. Early indications are that staff are developing a good oversight of their roles and responsibilities but, as yet, lack a full programme of monitoring activity to guarantee consistency of provision.

Pupils are kind and supportive of one another and enjoy working together. The older pupils and the school council appreciate opportunities to take responsibility and appreciate the high level of care shown by all adults. Some parents dislike the school's system for behaviour management but the pupils are overwhelmingly in favour of it and feel this has improved behaviour in the school. Inspectors agree that the clearly understood systems are supporting

pupils' good behaviour. Pupils also appreciate the praise, encouragement and rewards within the house point system. There are shortcomings in the information provided to parents about aspects of what is happening in the school and several parents expressed their concerns about this, for example, in relation to extended staff absence. However, the majority praised the school for its work and appreciated how much their children had achieved during their time there. The close links with the local community ensures that the school contributes well to promoting community cohesion.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The Reception class offers a happy and harmonious environment that encourages purposeful work and play. It is well-managed and successfully organised to meet the differing developmental needs of the children. Children's safety is paramount and inspectors' observations and conversations with the children confirm that they feel safe and confident in the adults they work with. This is because the teacher and her assistant know the children's needs well as a result of their visits to the nurseries and other pre-school provision that the children attend before they start at the school.

Good achievement is due to the thorough assessment of each child, which identifies the next steps in their learning. Staff then provide them with appropriate, well-planned programmes that meet their needs well. The structured teaching of letters and sounds successfully develops spelling and early writing skills. Practical group activities supported by the teachers are effective in increasing confidence in problem solving, reasoning and numeracy. There is a good balance of teacher led activities and freedom for children to make choices. This effectively develops their independence, initiative and capacity for collaborative play.

The indoor environment is welcoming, and stimulates imaginative and constructive play. Despite its limitations, the outside area is effective as an outdoor classroom where children develop their knowledge and understanding of the world. The children appreciate joining the older pupils in the exciting main playground area where there are opportunities for them to meet physical challenges on the large playground equipment.

Parents are pleased with this good start for their children and appreciate the information they receive about their progress. Last year's teacher assessments show that, by the end of Reception, almost all children had achieved the goals expected of five year olds.

What the school should do to improve further

- Sharpen development planning so that there is a clearer focus on raising pupils' achievement, particularly at Key Stage 1.
- Enhance monitoring arrangements for the new staff team to ensure a consistent approach to teaching and learning.
- Improve the quality of information provided for parents and carers.

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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 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	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which 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	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	3
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**

29 September 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Hawridge and Cholesbury Church of England School, Chesham, HP5 2UQ

Thank you very much for the friendly welcome you gave the inspectors when we visited your school at the start of term. We enjoyed our time with you because you made us feel welcome and gave us your ideas about the school. Thank you for helping us.

We agree with you that you have a good school because the adults look after you and help you to learn. You told us that you enjoyed school and described many activities and visits, which are exciting and interesting. The teachers are good at involving you in lessons so that you know how to improve your work. We noticed that, as a result, you work hard, listen carefully, answer questions well and are kind to one another. By the time you leave school, you are confident and good at reading, writing, mathematics and science. You are well prepared for secondary school. Your behaviour is good and you especially enjoy being praised for good work and behaviour. We agree with you that the 'card' system for dealing with any bad behaviour is working well. At playtimes, you have lots to do, which means that you are very active and keep very healthy and fit.

We think that your school can be even better and we have asked the headteacher and teachers to.

- Make sure that plans to improve your school always include details of how this will help you get better in your work.
- Check how they teach to make sure that you have similar good experiences in lessons as you move through the school.
- Improve the information given to your parents.

Yours sincerely

Paula Protherough

Lead Inspector