

Winslow Church of England Combined School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110449
Local Authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	310308
Inspection date	17 January 2008
Reporting inspector	Christopher Parker

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	477
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Simon Doyle
Headteacher	Mr Robert Green
Date of previous school inspection	14 June 2004
School address	Lowndes Way Winslow Buckingham MK18 3EN
Telephone number	01296 712296
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school. He examined how:

- the leadership team has improved teaching, the curriculum and the guidance pupils receive in English
- the school responded to the recent dip in results in mathematics
- leaders are using monitoring and analysis of pupils' progress to increase achievement, evaluate performance and plan school improvement.

Evidence was gathered from the analysis of pupils' test results, scrutiny of samples of their work, observation of lessons, parents' questionnaires, discussions with pupils, the headteacher, senior management team, assessment and English co-ordinators and chair of governors. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail.

Description of the school

Winslow is a much larger than average primary school. Pupils join the school from local infant schools at the start of Year 3, increasing the number of classes in each year group from two to three. Very few pupils are eligible for free school meals. Most pupils are of white British heritage. Almost all pupils speak English as their first language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is much lower than in most schools.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

When the school was last inspected it was asked to improve standards in writing. It was also asked to make more effective use of monitoring and analysis of pupils' attainment and progress. The inspector set out to investigate the extent of the school's success in bringing about these improvements.

An analysis of the school's English results over the last five years shows conclusively that it has been very successful in raising standards in writing. In 2003, the results of national tests in English, at the end of Year 6, were very similar to the national average. By 2006 standards had risen to be exceptionally high. They remained high in 2007 with well over half of the pupils reaching the higher level. This considerable improvement is the result of the excellent leadership of the headteacher, senior management team and subject co-ordinators. They have used a wide range of strategies for training, monitoring and evaluation and considerable determination to improve the quality of teaching, the curriculum and the guidance for pupils. The senior management team's very comprehensive monitoring of the quality of teaching shows that it is consistently good and some lessons are outstanding. This proved to be the case in Year 6. The teachers used their subject knowledge to great effect to develop the pupils' understanding of bias in texts containing differing points of view. The teachers successfully provide challenging work to pupils of different abilities. As a result, they are well motivated, collaborate and co-operate very effectively. The pupils' work shows they make good progress and achieve well, not only when writing in English lessons, but also in the many opportunities they have to write in, for example, science and history. Many, but not all, develop a good handwriting style and present their work carefully. The work of the pupils in Year 5 and 6 shows many are making rapid progress. The content of their writing benefits greatly from excellent marking which sets out clearly the next steps the pupils have to take to improve their work. The older pupils respond very thoughtfully to their teacher's comments and, in discussion, say how effective their teachers are in helping them to improve their writing. The pupils say how much they enjoy the wide range of opportunities they have to write for different purposes. The school recipe book, 'on sale now', is just one very good example of how the pupils have written for a particular purpose and readership.

Standards in mathematics and science have been consistently high for the last few years but in 2007 the results of national tests in mathematics, although remaining above average, dipped at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. The senior management team responded immediately by examining, in detail, the performance of individual pupils and identifying why a small group did not reach their targets. In lessons, teachers are now providing more opportunities for pupils to use and apply the skills they learn. Individual pupil's progress is monitored frequently and additional booster support provided where they are not on course to meet their targets. Demanding targets have been set for 2008 and 2009. Through the school's commitment to the Challenge Award for gifted and talented pupils, it is providing master classes in mathematics and science, in conjunction with the local grammar school. This creates the opportunity for some of the older pupils to work at much higher levels than those expected for their age. In lessons and in their work, pupils are making good progress and the detailed tracking of each pupil's performance shows a return to high standards in mathematics in 2008.

Since the last inspection the school has systematically developed the tracking of each pupil's progress. This is used particularly effectively to meet the needs of individual pupils. However, the extensive data collected is not being analysed incisively enough to give the senior

management team an insight into the performance of groups, classes and cohorts. Other elements of the school's self-evaluation are comprehensive and provide information that is used very effectively to set priorities for improvement. For example, subject co-ordinators carry out frequent checks of the teachers' planning and examine the children's work in considerable detail. The records of these activities, alongside those from the senior management team's extensive monitoring, provide the governors with accurate information. This information allows them to play an extremely effective role in guiding the school to even higher standards.

Discussion with pupils reveals their enjoyment extends well beyond writing and the wide range of subjects, including French and German, they are taught. They speak appreciatively of the many opportunities the extensive curriculum provides for them, particular the themes based on works of art, such as Turner's *Fighting Temeraire*. The work on display is testament to their enjoyment and the skills they develop, notably, the impressive creative work in processing photographic images. Sport has a high profile in the school. The pupils know the importance of these activities to a healthy lifestyle. They behave extremely well and say they feel safe at school and that incidents of poor behaviour, although rare, are dealt with speedily.

Most parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire are very pleased with the work of the school. The views of many are encapsulated by one parent who wrote, 'My children are extremely happy and enjoy their schooling'. Every two years the school carries out an extensive survey of parents' views, which is independently analysed and provides valuable information used to set priorities for improvement. This year a similar survey of pupils' views is planned to give an additional dimension to those coming through the student council. The senior management team and governors take very good account of a wide range of views.

The overall effectiveness of the school is good. It is very well placed to extend its many outstanding features because of the headteacher and senior management team's very strong commitment to continually improving the quality of teaching and the pupils' achievements.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Most children enter school with well-developed skills for their age. They make good progress and develop them further by the end of the Foundation Stage. Consequently, more children than usual exceed the expected goals. They are very well prepared for Year 1. The children settle quickly and as one parent commented there is an '...emphasis on enjoyment of learning...my son sings the songs learned on the IWB (interactive whiteboard)...and loved the pirate day.' The teachers provide a wide range of activities that are led by adults and for the children to choose themselves. The teachers encourage independence, and there is a flow of activities to the outdoor area. However, there are occasions when adult interaction is not fully exploited in outdoor activities. In the classroom, adults are very involved in making all activities purposeful and guide learning successfully.

What the school should do to improve further

- Use of the data collected about pupils' progress to evaluate the performance of groups, classes and year groups to give an even sharper focus to self-evaluation.
- Ensure all pupils develop a good and fluent style of handwriting and present their work carefully.

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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	1
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	1
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?	1
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?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
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	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

30 January 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Winslow Church of England Combined School, Buckingham, MK18 3EN

This letter is to tell you about the findings of the recent inspection and to thank you for taking the time to talk to me. You go to a good school, which has many outstanding features. The teachers are continually looking for ways to make the school even better. Those of you I spoke to told me you feel safe at school and the adults take good care of you. You are able to turn to them if you need help. You behave well and say that any misbehaviour is dealt with quickly.

You are doing well in lessons and are making good progress. You concentrate and work well together. You do particularly well in writing and I was very impressed by the artwork and the image processing on display. Some, but not all of you, have developed a fluent style of handwriting so I have asked your teachers to help all of you to present your work as well as possible.

The teachers make lessons interesting and lively. Some of you told me how much you enjoy the tasks they set you and how you find the teachers' marking very helpful. The school provides an excellent range of opportunities for you both in and after school. Your personal development is excellent because you take part in so many of the activities on offer.

The headteacher and the senior teachers are doing a lot to check that you get every opportunity to achieve as well as you can. I have asked them to look a little more closely at the data about your progress to help them to get a clearer picture of how successful they are.

I enjoyed being in your school. I hope that in the future it is even more successful in helping you to do as well as you possibly can.

Yours sincerely

Christopher Parker

Lead Inspector