

Frieth Church of England Combined School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110461
Local Authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	310317
Inspection dates	18–19 March 2008
Reporting inspector	Lily Evans

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	128
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr H T Nixey
Headteacher	Miss S Smithin
Date of previous school inspection	4 May 2004
School address	Frieth Henley-on-Thames RG9 6PR
Telephone number	01494 881 554
Fax number	01494 880 734

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Frieth is a popular village school in the heart of the village. Many pupils travel from the outlying area. Mobility is higher than usual. There are above average numbers of pupils with special educational needs. The school has gained the Healthy Schools and Investors in People awards.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The inspector agrees with parents that the school, 'provides a safe, nurturing environment in which pupils thrive and are happy.' Led by the hard working headteacher the staff work together in a real spirit of cooperation to provide a good quality of education. The pupils' enjoyment of learning is at the heart of the school's work. Pupils feel safe and well cared for. They are aware of how to be healthy and are thoughtful of others within the school and wider community. They work together to raise funds and provide support for those less fortunate than themselves.

Standards and achievement vary from year to year because the number of pupils in each year group is small and, in addition, a higher than usual proportion join or leave the school each year. Most pupils enter the Foundation Stage at higher levels than those expected for their age. They make good progress and, at the end of the Reception year, most reach, and some exceed, the goals expected of them in personal and social development, communication and numeracy. Pupils continue to make good progress and, by the end of Year 2, standards are above average. By the end of Year 6, standards remain above average and, taking account of the changing pupil population, this reflects a good level of achievement. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 make good progress. However, in a small number of lessons, teachers miss opportunities to extend those pupils capable of reaching the higher levels. Despite this, there is evidence that strategies put in place to boost the progress of groups are having a positive impact pupils' performance.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers are now making much better use of assessment to plan learning in lessons and, in most lessons, teachers challenge pupils well. In a few lessons, however, teachers are missing opportunities to do this and pupils' progress slows. Teachers have good relationships with pupils and use successful strategies to reward and encourage good behaviour. They have involved pupils in drawing up new school rules. Pupils now have targets for learning but not all can remember what they are. Teachers' marking in a number of classes is linked to pupils' achievement of their targets and is helping them to understand their next steps in learning. This is not consistent across the school, however.

The energetic headteacher and staff share a vision for moving the school forward. Close working relationships allow them to plan, evaluate, assess and monitor progress well, in important areas such as reading, writing and science. Senior staff and subject coordinators have clear roles and responsibilities in monitoring pupils' work. Improved use of ongoing assessment highlights those pupils who are not reaching the standards they should. This is enabling teachers to plan lessons and support that meet the needs of different abilities. For example, pupils with learning difficulties sometimes make rapid gains in learning because the learning assistants are well briefed and use the programmes of support competently.

Governors give good support to the school and are prepared to challenge standards as they seek the best outcomes for the pupils. The school's recent track record shows there is good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Pupils enter Reception above expected levels for their age and make good progress through well-planned activities. Teachers plan together providing stimulating activities that promote enquiry, an understanding of the world and a sense of the past. An example was seen where

children were finding out about Beatrix Potter, where she lived and the comparing how people lived in Victorian times. By the end of Reception, several pupils are working at National Curriculum levels in reading, writing and number work. Working together with Year 1 for part of the day, enables pupils to make a smooth transition into Year 1. Teachers' use of assessment to plan, evaluate and monitor progress is effective.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide a more consistent challenge for pupils particularly those capable of reaching higher levels.
- Ensure teachers' marking is aimed consistently at helping pupils improve and achieve the next steps in their learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well from their starting points to reach above average standards. Monitoring information shows that the proportions of pupils making more than expected progress have increased. Standards in reading, writing and numeracy in Year 2 are showing an improvement on last year and there are similar improvements in science and mathematics in Year 6. Standards in English are stable and the progress of lower attaining pupils, in particular, is accelerating. For example, several pupils have made three sublevels of progress in reading since September. The school is planning work for higher attainers but, at times, they are missing opportunities to challenge those who are capable of reaching higher levels. As a result, on such occasions, these pupils do not achieve as well as they can. There is no significant difference in the achievement of boys and girls.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils attend well and enjoy school because, as one said, 'Teachers make learning fun.' As a result pupils are keen to learn, concentrate well and their behaviour in and around school is good. They like the 'behaviour charts' in each classroom and commented on the fairness of them. They know how to stay safe and report that there is no bullying in school. As pupils agreed, any arguments, 'usually about football', are quickly resolved by themselves or, if necessary, by a teacher. They enjoy taking responsibility, for example through the school council and the head and deputy head boy and girl system. Pupils' spiritual, moral, and social development is good. Their awareness of multicultural society is less well developed. Pupils know about healthy lifestyles and enjoy the increased level of sporting activities and clubs that the school offers during lunchtimes and after school. They decide each year which charities to support and are currently raising funds for The Newman Trust.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The continuing drive for improvement is resulting in good teaching and learning. The recent focus on teachers' use of assessment is enabling them to plan effectively to meet the needs of learners. It is also enabling teachers to identify early, those pupils who need extra support. Teachers are using a good range of approaches that capture the interests of pupils, such as

role-play, research and discussion. Interactive whiteboards are used widely and effectively. Most teachers question and challenge pupils well which helps them develop confidence. In a few instances, teachers' expectations are too low and in consequence, pupils are not challenged and their progress slows. Where the challenge is good, teachers encourage pupils to think for themselves and find solutions to problems, such as how to prove that different soil types contain different amounts of air. There are examples in books of good practice in marking work in relation to pupils' targets and helping them to evaluate their progress. However, this is not yet consistent across the school.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school has worked hard to improve opportunities for enrichment of the curriculum. Parents are highly appreciative of the sports activities and clubs on offer, which include pupils from Year 1 and 2. Pupils now learn French from Year 1. The school has worked hard to improve planning to meet the challenge presented by mixed age class groups. The recent review of science planning is leading to better coverage through the cycle of topics. A good range of visits and visitors, special events at school such as 'Book Week' contribute to extending pupils experiences. The school's involvement in events through the church and within the local community is strong.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school knows every pupil well and is committed to providing good pastoral support and care for each pupil, especially in times of need. This helps them to feel valued and safe. Arrangements to ensure the health and safety of pupils are effective. The school makes good provision for pupils' emotional and behavioural development using specialist programmes and the support of outside professionals. Good behaviour is rewarded well and any problems are addressed promptly.

There are good procedures for monitoring and assessing pupils. This information is now used well to set learning targets for pupils. This is leading to improved achievement because many pupils understand what they need to do to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher, her committed management and school team have worked with enthusiasm to bring about improvements since the last inspection. They have a clear vision for school and a will to succeed. As a result of improvements, statutory targets have had to be reviewed and reset to reflect pupils' current achievement. The school recognises that these targets were too low and will have to be more challenging in future. Other improvements include increased attendance, the introduction of good monitoring and tracking systems, the use of assessment, the curriculum and resources and enabling coordinators to develop their roles. Coordinators have reviewed and improved teachers' planning and are monitoring the quality of work in pupils' books, although opportunities for them to observe teaching in their subjects have been infrequent. However, the headteacher monitors the quality of teaching and learning and identifies how improvements in learning can be brought about. Recognising the importance of

staff training, she ensures that all staff have their training needs identified and met. Learning support assistants' contributions are valued and the school draws on their expertise in particular areas of learning to deliver special learning programmes for pupils. The school accommodation is cramped. One class is taught in a confined but open corridor area used for computers. There are agreed plans for extending the building to provide extra teaching space. Governors give good support to the school in many practical ways and ensure that all statutory requirements are met.

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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well 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 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?	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	3
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

01 April 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Frieth Church of England Combined School, Henley-on-Thames, RG9 6PR

Thank you for making me feel so welcome when I visited your school the other day and talked with you. I promised to write and tell you what I thought about your school. I agree with you that Frieth is a good school. It is a place where you feel happy and well cared for. It was good to see you behaving well around school and in your lessons. I enjoyed seeing how you take a pride in your work, concentrate in lessons and enjoy taking responsibility.

Your school does these things well.

- Teachers make learning interesting and fun.
- You work hard and make good progress in your reading, writing, mathematics and science.
- You behave well, stay safe and understand about how to be healthy.
- You have good opportunities for clubs, sport, visits and visitors.
- You take part well in events in the village such as the 'Flower and Produce Show' and harvest festival.

Just like in life, there are always things you can make better, these are the things the school could do better.

- Make sure you always have work that challenges you to reach higher levels.
- Make sure that teachers, when they mark your work, help you to see how you can improve.

I think you can help your teachers by making sure you work hard at all times.

With very best wishes

Lily Evans

Lead Inspector