

Southrop Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115651
Local Authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	312014
Inspection date	11 December 2007
Reporting inspector	Christopher Schenk HMI

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	48
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Anne Newman
Headteacher	Catherine Holmes
Date of previous school inspection	13 January 2004
School address	Southrop Lechlade GL7 3NU
Telephone number	01367 850246
Fax number	01367 850246

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

Description of the school

Southrop is a small primary school that serves the villages of Southrop, Eastleach and Fyfield. Pupils also come from Lechlade, Fairford and further afield by parental choice. Most of the pupils are of White British heritage and none of them speaks English as an additional language. The proportion identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below the national figure and there are no pupils who have a statement of special educational need. The school received the Healthy School Award and Active Mark in 2007.

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 with some outstanding features. Pupils make good progress throughout the school and attain above average standards in English, mathematics and science. They learn about a wide range of interesting things. Physical education, information and communication technology (ICT), and music are given particular emphasis, enabling the pupils to achieve well.

Their personal development is outstanding. They gain a great deal in their self-confidence and self-esteem from being part of a small, close community in which every individual is valued and can flourish. They have very good attitudes to learning. One Year 6 pupil said, 'I really like this school because I love to learn.' Another said, 'You work hard but you enjoy it.' A third expressed his view of the school in just five words: 'Work, enjoy, achieve and think.'

The teaching is thorough and well planned to meet the needs of the wide range of ages and attainments in each of the two classes. The teaching assistants are skilled and experienced and work closely with the teachers, often taking the lead in activities for one or more of the year groups within each class. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make outstanding progress as a result of the precisely targeted teaching they are given by a part-time teacher.

The school has worked hard to bring about clear improvements in response to the last inspection. A building programme has made more space available on the restricted site, enabling the school to increase the facilities for ICT. These are well used and there are sensible plans for further developing the links between ICT and other subjects. The teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage have also improved, with more opportunities for outdoor play.

There is a good framework for planning the curriculum around themes, on a rolling programme that is suitable for the mixed-age classes. While useful links are made between subjects, there is further to go in this respect, not just to incorporate ICT but also to make better use of other subjects to enable literacy and numeracy skills to be applied more widely and in interesting contexts. The good curriculum is enhanced by an outstanding range of extra-curricular activities.

The school has recently introduced a new system for setting individual targets for older pupils. This has not been entirely successful because the pupils were not sufficiently involved in identifying their own targets and do not have a clear enough understanding of how they can meet them. Marking in books is regular and nearly always encouraging, but rarely gives pointers for further improvement.

The headteacher sets the tone of the school and encourages an ethos of openness, responsiveness and collaboration. The staff work effectively as a team, well supported by the governors and greatly appreciated by the parents, whose responses to a questionnaire sent out at the time of the inspection were overwhelmingly positive. 'The children flourish in the caring and friendly atmosphere' was a typical comment.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The ten children currently in the Reception Year are taught in the same class as the pupils in Year 1 and Year 2. Their programme is carefully planned to ensure that they are given a good range of appropriate activities covering all the areas of learning in the Foundation Stage curriculum. There are detailed and informative records, often illustrated by photographs, of their progress in each area. They now have regular opportunities in school for outdoor play,

using a suitable range of equipment, and once a week they benefit from an outdoor session in the nearby Forest School. They have sufficient time in which to work together as a year group on activities that are specifically planned for their stage of development. They also benefit from working with their older classmates, from whom they learn a great deal.

What the school should do to improve further

- Further develop the links between subjects.
- Help the pupils to understand how to make their work even better by involving them in target-setting and by improving the quality of marking.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The children in Reception make good progress in all areas of their learning. They continue to learn well in Year 1 and Year 2 and attain standards at the end of Year 2 that are above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. In 2007, they did particularly well in reading. They make good progress in Key Stage 2 and attain high standards by the end of Year 6 in English, mathematics and science. In 2007, they all reached the standard expected of the average eleven year old and most of them exceeded it. The progress made by pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is outstanding.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The pupils have an excellent understanding of how to be healthy. They take part in sporting activities with enthusiasm. Neither its small size nor the limited facilities for physical education prevent the school from fielding teams in several sports that hold their own against much larger schools. Boys and girls join in all sports together as equals. They feel very safe in school and look after each other well. As one commented, 'Any falling out is dealt with immediately.' They are particularly alert to the dangers posed by the Internet. Their self-confidence and self-esteem make outstanding contributions to their spiritual and social development. They show respect for religions and cultures other than their own. They have gained much from the school's involvement with the Gardens for Life project that has linked them with schools in Kenya and India. The active school council is given a budget and has been instrumental in bringing about changes, for example the introduction of a house system.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

'All the teachers are really good at teaching.' This comment from a pupil shows that the pupils appreciate the careful and thorough teaching that they receive from the teachers and the teaching assistants. They keep a close track of the progress that is being made by the pupils and identify any difficulties at an early stage so that something can be done about them. In particular, any pupils who are referred to the part-time teacher with responsibility for special needs are diagnostically assessed so that they can be given an individual programme of work. Teachers also identify pupils with particular gifts and talents, in order to give them appropriate challenges. However, they do not always expect enough and sometimes play safe. For example, some competent and enthusiastic readers are kept on reading scheme books for too long when

they are eager to widen their acquaintance with good literature. In a similar way, opportunities are sometimes missed to extend the pupils' thinking and research skills through more interesting and challenging homework.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The broad and well-planned curriculum covers all the subjects that are required and also includes French throughout the age range. The thematic approach to the planning enables helpful links to be made between subjects. However, there is not enough use made in literacy and numeracy of starting points from other subjects to enable pupils to apply their skills in context. The planning makes good use of educational visits and visitors; for example, a Jamaican storyteller visits the infant class in connection with their study of Jamaica. Older pupils benefit from residential trips to places near and far; last year, for the first time, there was a trip to France. Outstanding opportunities for sporting, musical and other activities are offered at lunchtimes and after school. As one parent commented, 'I am particularly impressed by the broad range of activities carried out at the school – brass band, tag rugby, choir, field trips, netball, Spanish etc etc. It seems amazing that such a small school can offer so much.'

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils are well cared for, guided and supported. The school is a safe and secure place. The parents were unanimous in strongly agreeing that their children are safe and well cared for at school. All staff have first-aid qualifications and the health and safety officer is vigilant in ensuring that hazards are minimised. Child protection procedures are in place. Because progress is carefully tracked, pupils are given support when they need it and the support that is given to pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is very effective. Pupils are receptive to any academic guidance they are given, but they do not play a full enough part in identifying their personal targets. The marking in books does not give them sufficient guidance on how they can improve further.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher leads the school well and has the confidence and support of the staff, the pupils, the parents and the governors. Since September, she has worked in the school for three days a week, as part of a phased retirement. On the days when she is absent, the teacher of the junior class is acting headteacher. The governors are closely involved in the work of the school and have played an active role in implementing the concise and well-targeted development plan. In particular, they have managed finances prudently to enable improvements to be made to the building, the playground and the equipment.

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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 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	1

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	2
The behaviour of learners	2
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 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	2
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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

12 December 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Southrop C of E Primary School, near Lechlade, GL7 3NU

Thank you for your welcome when I visited your school recently. I really enjoyed my day. It was good to hear the choir singing and the brass band playing and to see the infants practising your play in the village hall and playing netball after school. I am particularly grateful to the pupils in Year 6 who came to talk to me.

I think you go to a good school that helps you to get on very well with your learning in an enjoyable way. I am particularly impressed with your self-confidence and the way you look after each other. I think that you have a lot of interesting things to do in lessons and an outstanding range of clubs and activities at lunchtimes and after school.

I have spoken to your headteacher and suggested some ways in which the school could become even better. You do pretty well with your literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) but I would like the school to find more ways for you to apply these skills to your work in other subjects. I would also like the older ones to be more involved in setting their own personal targets and it would help you to improve still further if your teachers gave you more suggestions for how to get better when they mark your books.

You told me that the school is bright and cheerful, and that it is friendly and happy. I think that you are quite right and I am sure that you will all continue to work hard, behave well and enjoy yourselves so that it remains a bright, cheerful, friendly and happy place.

With best wishes

Christopher Schenk Her Majesty's Inspector



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