

Curdridge Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115879
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	312088
Inspection date	12 June 2008
Reporting inspector	Keith Sadler

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	113
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Rosemary Short
Headteacher	Mrs Sally Wood
Date of previous school inspection	25 May 2004
School address	Church Lane Curdridge near Botley Southampton SO32 2DR
Telephone number	01489 782613
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: whether pupils that find learning easy make sufficient progress; how well teachers' marking and the use of personal targets contribute to the pupils' achievement; and how well teachers carry out their subject responsibilities.

Evidence was gathered from the analysis of pupils' progress, scrutiny of samples of their work and observation of pupils in lessons, and during breaks and lunchtime. Discussions were held with staff, governors and pupils. In addition, the responses of 66 parents' questionnaires were analysed and their comments taken into account. 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

This small and oversubscribed primary school serves the village of Curdridge. The school has recently undergone an extensive building project to refurbish much of the original building and to provide attractive new accommodation. The school has four classes of mixed aged pupils. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage and all are fluent English speakers. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below the national average. The most common needs are moderate learning difficulties. The numbers entitled to free school meals is very low. The school has a new headteacher who took up post one year ago.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Curdridge is a good school. It has improved well since the previous inspection and has a good capacity to improve further. Pupils' personal development is outstanding. Their behaviour is excellent and this makes a positive contribution to learning. Their outstanding enjoyment of school and learning are reflected in their highly positive attitudes. In addition, pupils say that they feel safe. This is because staff place a high priority on protecting and safeguarding the pupils' well-being. Pupils grasp with relish the many opportunities for taking on responsibility, such as by helping younger pupils and being members of the influential school and class councils and deciding on how money is to be raised for other children who are less fortunate than themselves. Pupils say that their thoughts and ideas are valued by adults. The staff involve them well as partners in learning and this too, has a positive impact on their achievements. For example, the school's own very accurate evaluations revealed that pupils did not have a sufficiently clear view about their progress and what they need to do to improve. In consequence, changes were made to teaching and learning with teachers being much more clear about what was expected of pupils in lessons and in units of work. This has paid dividends because even the youngest children in the Foundation Stage know what is expected of them and they make accurate decisions about whether they have met success criteria for lessons. Across the school, revised systems for tracking pupils' progress were introduced and these are starting to help teachers to develop a more accurate picture of pupils' progress. Teachers now need to embed the use of tracking so that in all classes teachers use these data to monitor pupils' progress more often. Teachers' marking has improved significantly since the previous inspection. It is now good and is a further important feature in the improvements in pupils' learning.

Pupils achieve well. From average starting points, they make good progress and attain the challenging targets that the school sets for them. By the end of Year 6, they reach standards that are significantly above average and sometimes, such as in science in 2007, exceptionally high. Vulnerable pupils who find learning difficult and need additional help make good progress because their needs are identified early and they are given good support. Although in the past the number of pupils gaining the higher levels in national tests, particularly in English, has not been consistently high, this is not now the case. The most able pupils achieve well and their needs are catered for well because the school has built effective strategies, such as the setting of particularly challenging work, and this supports these pupils' good achievement. The good level of basic and personal skills prepares pupils well for their move to secondary education.

Parents are almost unanimous in their support. Their comments are typified by the parent who wrote, 'Curdridge provides a very happy environment that produces very caring and thoughtful children. The school always seems to be doing something fun and exciting.' A few parents commented that the school's communication with them is not effective. However, the school's systems match those of most other schools, and in some respects are more effective. There have been recent improvements. For example, the Foundation Stage teacher now makes home visits and there is an open evening for parents of new children prior to the good quality induction programme. There are termly parents' meetings and regular newsletters. In addition, as a result of consulting parents by questionnaire, other improvements have been made. There is now a regular governors' newsletter, and a message board by the entrance. Taken together, this demonstrates both helpful communication and also a positive response to consultation.

The new headteacher has done a first rate job in building upon the many strengths found at the time of the previous inspection. She has steered the school well through many changes

since her arrival and is rightly much admired by the whole school community. Because she has been careful to consult with parents, governors, staff and pupils, the school has successfully fostered a strong sense of common purpose. There has been a priority to strengthen the teachers' subject leadership role. Responsibilities have been clarified and extended and this is beginning to have a positive impact on the school's improved curriculum and pupils' progress. However, senior staff recognise that teachers' leadership role in checking the quality of teaching and curriculum planning is not yet consistently strong.

Change has been pursued with vigour and decisions taken have been based on a careful analysis of need. This has led to a positive impact on pupils' achievement. Evaluation, for example, showed that there was a need to accelerate progress in writing for all groups of pupils and this led to appropriate training that has seen an improvement in the teaching of writing. Improvements have included all pupils having regular opportunities for writing longer pieces of work, more careful checking of their progress and providing more opportunities for writing in other subjects. These have successfully helped to raise standards of writing in all year groups. Even though more of the current Year 6 pupils are on course to attain the higher level in writing, the staff are aware that more can still be done. The strengths in teaching and learning found at the last inspection have been maintained. Teaching is consistently of good quality and some lessons are outstanding. Support staff make a very positive contribution to learning not only in working with small groups of vulnerable pupils but also when leading large groups of pupils.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children make a good start in the Foundation Stage. Many parents commented on how quickly their children settle when starting school. This is aided both by an effective induction process, and also because the Foundation children share a class with Year 1 pupils who make them welcome and support them well. Children are given a good range of interesting activities that match their needs well. A good balance is struck between activities with their Year 1 classmates that are directed by the teacher, and those that they choose for themselves. A good priority is placed on helping children to be more independent by allowing them to plan their own learning. This is complemented by good quality review sessions in which children talk about their learning together. As a consequence of the good teaching and the wide range of experiences on offer, children achieve well and make good progress towards the goals expected for their age. A large majority attain these goals on entry into Year 1 with some exceeding them considerably, particularly in their personal, social and emotional skills.

What the school should do to improve further

- Embed the procedures for tracking pupils' progress in learning.
- Build on the good start made to raise achievement in writing.
- Strengthen the role of subject leadership particularly in checking teaching and curricular planning.

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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	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	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
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	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

24 June 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Curdridge Primary School, Southampton, SO32 2DR

Thank you for making me so welcome when I visited you recently. You were all extremely polite and keen to talk to me about your work and your school.

There are many good things about your school. These are some of them.

- You reach above average standards and make good progress in your learning.
- You behave exceptionally well and work hard to help others.
- You thoroughly enjoy school and the good range of things for you to do. I hope that the fete went well on the Saturday after the inspection. I was very impressed with the Chinese dragon dancing: I hope the performance was as good as the rehearsal I saw!
- All the adults make sure that you are well looked after and cared for.
- Your headteacher, and all the other people who help run your school, are very good at making sure that you receive a good education.
- I agree with you that the new accommodation and the changes to the older parts of the building are of high quality.

I agree with your parents that you go to a good school. However, all the adults want it to be even better. I have asked Mrs Wood, the staff and governors to do these things.

- Make sure that the new ways that your teachers have to check your progress are used in all classes.
- Continue with the focus to help you to make even better progress in your writing.
- Make sure that your teachers help each other by checking that their teaching and planning in the different subjects is really good.

You can help by continuing to work hard to meet your targets, particularly in writing.

With best wishes

Yours sincerely

Keith Sadler

Lead Inspector