

# Whitchurch Church of England Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	116324
<b>Local Authority</b>	Hampshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	312260
<b>Inspection dates</b>	2–3 October 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	George Rayner

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	305
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Cathy Saint
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Peter Smith (acting)
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	24 March 2003
<b>School address</b>	Daniel Road Whitchurch RG28 7LS
<b>Telephone number</b>	01256 892755
<b>Fax number</b>	01256 895848

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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This school is larger than most primary schools. It serves a small town close to Andover. Most pupils come from relatively advantaged homes, but there is considerable variation in individual home circumstances. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage and none are at an early stage of learning to speak English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is below average. Until the appointment of a permanent headteacher, the school is being led by an interim headteacher, who took up his post at the start of the current term.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school with some good features. Although it has not always secured sustained improvement since the last inspection, it is now beginning to show clearly that it is an improving school. The governors and local authority advisers have worked together effectively to guide the school through a difficult period which culminated in it needing to appoint an interim headteacher at short notice. He is providing good leadership. He has quickly gained the confidence of staff, governors and parents and has identified the existing strengths that the school can build upon and those areas that it needs to improve. The previous inspection found some underachievement, particularly in mathematics at the end of Year 6. Since then, there have been times when standards have declined, mainly in Years 1 and 2. The school has now succeeded in halting this and has begun to improve standards in several areas, particularly in Years 3 to 6. Consequently, pupils now achieve satisfactorily in all subjects to maintain average standards in Year 6. The school's monitoring had previously shown that there was too much inadequate teaching. Following effective training, this has been significantly reduced, with an increasing proportion of good lessons. Teachers are not yet always providing sufficient challenge for the most able pupils. This means that, while they achieve satisfactorily overall, their progress is not always as fast as it could be, given their abilities and talents. An important factor in raising standards has been improvement in assessment and tracking procedures. These now provide good information for giving pupils realistically challenging targets and quickly giving support to any who are having difficulty in meeting these. The school cares well for its pupils. Consequently, their personal development and well-being are good. Pupils behave well and contribute to school life by willingly carrying out roles such as school councillors. They talk knowledgeably about how to keep themselves safe and healthy, eating sensibly and taking plenty of exercise. The needs of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are carefully identified and a good learning plan is prepared for each one. When they work with teaching assistants in lessons, this helps them well to keep up with learning. The involvement of teaching assistants is not always well planned however, so that their skills are not always used as well as they could be. The school's record since the last inspection shows a satisfactory capacity to improve. Most of the impetus for improvement so far has come from senior leaders, governors and local authority advisers. As key figures in raising standards, staff working at middle levels, such as those responsible for subjects and special needs provision, are keen to be more fully involved in monitoring and developing teaching and learning. With a few exceptions however, for example in English, they are not yet sufficiently involved.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Children start school with skills and understanding broadly typical for their age, although their early language and mathematical development is often relatively weak. Good provision in the Foundation Stage enables children to progress well in these areas and they reach expected standards across the board by the end of the Reception year. Adults develop warm relationships with children and provide a secure and stimulating environment. Areas dedicated to particular aspects of learning, such as construction, art, number and 'pretend writing', motivate children to have a go, and the adults' sensitive comments build their self-confidence. Every opportunity is taken to encourage children to express their ideas. Whilst pushing a wheelbarrow full of large blocks, one said, 'You know what, I'm dumping these for the workers'. Such spontaneous comments are quickly picked up by staff to promote further thought and language. The outdoor

space provides good opportunities for social and physical development, although there are limited opportunities for children to explore aspects of nature such as how plants grow.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Ensure that the most able pupils are always fully challenged, so that they always make the progress that they are capable of.
- Increase the involvement of key staff working at middle levels in monitoring and developing the areas for which they are responsible.
- Capitalise on the capabilities of teaching assistants by better planning of when and how they are involved in supporting teachers and pupils.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Pupils make satisfactory progress, so that their standards are average at the end of Year 6. They become competent readers and are able to express themselves through interesting writing. Many pupils are not yet fully skilled in using sentences and paragraphs to develop and explain their ideas. Most develop a sound range of numeracy skills, although they are not consistently strong in every area. Pupils' ability to use their skills independently to make calculations or explain how they have solved problems are weaker aspects. Recent work shows that, following improvements to teaching, pupils are improving in these. Pupils with learning difficulties make similar progress to their classmates. The most able pupils also generally do so, but on the occasions when their challenge is not as high as it should be, they do not make full use of their abilities to show what they can really do.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The school is particularly successful in promoting moral and social development through for example, cooperative working and the school council. Pupils' spiritual development is also good, shown for example by their trustworthiness and respect for others. Pupils' understanding of life and attitudes in other cultures is weaker, although satisfactory. Links with a Ugandan school successfully promote pupils' concern for people in less fortunate circumstances than their own. Pupils have positive attitudes and say that they enjoy lessons. Most attend school regularly. Year 6 pupils take their roles as 'buddies' to Reception children very seriously. The Reception children quickly develop their confidence as a result. Pupils develop a sound range of skills in preparing for their futures. Working in pairs and groups, they develop the ability to exchange ideas and cooperate. They talked enthusiastically about a recent 'enterprise week' which gave them insights into how businesses work.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers plan carefully so that learning develops methodically. They clearly set out their expectations for effort and behaviour, so that relationships are good and most pupils work willingly. Teachers often give their pupils stimulating tasks that succeed well in engaging their interest. This is not fully consistent though. Sometimes activities are more mundane. This sometimes reduces the open-ended scope for the most able pupils to make full use of their ability. When teaching assistants work with groups of pupils, for example those with learning difficulties, they effectively ensure that work is pitched appropriately for their needs and help them to keep up with the pace of learning. Their involvement is not always well planned though, so that they sometimes contribute less well than they could. Teachers use marking well to encourage pupils, often giving good guidance on how to improve. Scrutiny of pupils' books shows that many make good use of this to make their work better.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 3

The curriculum includes all the required elements and has some good features. Provision for the mixed-age classes is appropriately planned to ensure that all pupils cover the ground that they should. This is checked regularly and when, for example, the school recently discovered that some pupils repeated mathematics work in different years, it quickly put this right. There are some good links between subjects such as those between information and communication technology (ICT) and mathematics to provide motivating and varied contexts for learning key subjects. Generally, links are limited, however and the school is looking to extend them. A good range of activities enriches learning beyond the classroom. These include a variety of clubs, visitors and trips. Inspired by a visit to an art gallery, pupils produced some imaginative sculptures from paper and paste. A Year 6 pupil, writing about a recent residential visit to an outdoor adventure centre, said, 'It was the best place to go, with oodles of fun'.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 2

Parents appreciate the good care that pupils receive. One parent's comment that, 'The school has a positive ethos and excels in promoting good behaviour', reflects the views of the majority. Good use is made of agencies to support vulnerable pupils. The planning of support for pupils with learning difficulties was somewhat frustrated last year, due to conflicting priorities of key staff. Problems have been resolved and these pupils now benefit from carefully targeted support. Pupils' individual performance is monitored thoroughly and good use is made of the information to promote progress. Pupils speak about their targets with clarity and understanding. The school acknowledges that there is more to be done to ensure that the achievements of the most able pupils, and those with particular gifts and talents, are tracked consistently to ensure that their potential is spotted and maximised.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Improvement planning has been effective in securing recent, urgent, improvements. The school is aware that longer term planning is not yet as strong and is developing this. The school is increasingly involving subject leaders in monitoring their areas and using the information gained to guide colleagues on how to improve their practice. Since the last inspection, the rate of improvement has fluctuated, because self-evaluation has not always been effective. As a result, while there have been some good improvements, for example in the quality and use of assessment and transforming art from a weak subject to a strength, there have been periods when standards have declined. The school has now developed effective self-evaluation procedures, which are accurately identifying the weaker areas. It has used this effectively to speed up the rate of progress.

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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?	3
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	3

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

### 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	3
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	3

### The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
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

15 October 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Whitchurch Church of England Primary School, Whitchurch, RG28 7LS

Thank you for welcoming us to your school recently. We enjoyed meeting you and we are grateful for the help you gave by talking to us and showing us your work. We were able to see that yours is a satisfactory school. Some things about it are good.

The adults in your school know that they have had to improve some important things. In the past, the school has not done enough to make sure that all of you make sufficient progress in all of your subjects. The teachers have worked together to improve lessons and you now make satisfactory progress. This means that, by the time you leave the school, your standards match those of pupils in most schools.

When teaching assistants work with those of you who sometimes find learning more difficult, it works well in helping you to keep up. You do not always get this help when you need it though. We have asked the school to think about how it plans what teaching assistants do and make sure that all classes have one present when needed. The most able of you usually make as much progress as the others. Sometimes though, the work that you are given is not difficult enough to let you show what you can really do. To make your learning even better, we have asked the school to work on this.

Your new headteacher has quickly worked out what is good about the school and what needs improving. The other adults are supporting him well and are working hard together to make your school even better. We have asked the headteacher to make sure that all staff have the opportunity to come up with good ideas and join in with checking to see how well things are working.

You have helped a lot in bringing about the improvements. This is because you behave well and are willing to work hard. You also help in other ways, such as being school councillors and buddies. This help is very important and we know that you will continue to give it. Well done and very best wishes for the future.

George Rayner

Lead inspector