

Cholsey Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123081
Local Authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	314485
Inspection dates	10–11 March 2008
Reporting inspector	Jeffrey White

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	208
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Tony Bellis
Headteacher	Mrs Heather Haigh
Date of previous school inspection	13 October 2003
School address	Church Road Cholsey Wallingford OX10 9PP
Telephone number	01491 651862
Fax number	01491 651649

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Most pupils are of White British origin. Few are from minority ethnic backgrounds and none is at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils who take a free school meal is well below average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school is satisfactory and improving. The headteacher, staff and governors work well together in the drive to raise standards and improve achievement. Standards are average, and are rising. Pupils' achievement and progress are satisfactory and are also improving. Children in the Foundation Stage make satisfactory progress overall but make especially good progress in their personal development. The school works well in partnership with others and is supported very well by parents.

Pupils' personal development is good and their contribution to the community is excellent. They behave well, have positive attitudes and thoroughly enjoy what they do particularly in the extra-curricular activities and the links with schools abroad. The headteacher and staff value pupils' opinions and encourage them to take some responsibility for their learning. Pupils talk knowledgeably about how to stay safe and be healthy.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, and there is some good teaching. In the most effective lessons all pupils make good progress because they are challenged well by the work they are given. However, in some lessons the most able pupils are not always challenged enough.

The headteacher and staff have reviewed the curriculum in order to make it more creative. Pupils are especially enjoying the links between subjects. The new curriculum is satisfactory, but it has not yet been monitored to check on the balance between subjects. Pupils' learning is enhanced well by the good range of extra-curricular activities.

Care, guidance and support are good overall. Pastoral care is especially strong, and pupils are well looked after. They know who to talk to if they have a problem. Academic guidance is satisfactory, and the developing use of targets for pupils' learning is helping them to become more aware of their progress.

Leadership and management are satisfactory and improving quickly. Leadership of pupils' personal development is strong. Procedures to monitor and evaluate the school's performance, especially in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, are much improved and are helping standards, progress and achievement to improve. Provision in the Foundation Stage is not evaluated thoroughly enough at present but has been identified by the school as a priority.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children enter the Foundation Stage with a wide range of abilities but many are at levels below what is expected for their age especially in social development. By the time they reach Year 1 many are still below the expected levels in some aspects of their learning, particularly in literacy. They make satisfactory progress overall and good progress in their personal and social development, and in speaking and listening. Children understand daily routines and behave well. They enjoy choosing what they will do and there is scope for them to develop even more independence. Relationships are good. Teaching is satisfactory overall and some is good. Staff encourage children to engage in a wide range of activities which enable them to explore, experiment and interact with each other. The few more able children are not always challenged sufficiently. Children enjoy the good opportunities for them to talk about their work. The newly appointed Foundation Stage manager has been instrumental in raising children's interest in writing and reading by re-organising the classroom areas, and is keen to modify the curriculum to meet the needs of all abilities. Links with parents, and the playgroup on site, are good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that the most able pupils are consistently challenged well.
- Identify strengths and weaknesses in the Foundation Stage to help improve children's progress.
- Monitor the revised curriculum to check the balance between subjects.

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

Achievement is improving because targets for pupils' learning are being used increasingly more effectively. The whole-school focus on improving standards in mathematics and writing is meeting with success and standards are rising. For example, pupils now write more confidently when developing their ideas, and use punctuation more accurately. Pupils enjoy mathematics and use mathematical vocabulary well. Pupils at the end of Year 6 attain higher standards in English and mathematics than in science. However, the picture in science is improving quickly now that pupils are taught science separately in addition to its inclusion in topic work. Pupils' speaking skills are developed well. Those with moderate learning difficulties make good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

An outstanding feature is the involvement of pupils in the school, and in the local and global community. Members of the School Council take their roles seriously and are actively involved in changes being made. The Eco Council monitors the school's consumption of energy. The pupils enthusiastically engage in re-cycling. Older pupils help younger ones whilst others show maturity and confidence in feeding back to whole-school assemblies, for example on the results of sporting fixtures. Pupils visit the local Day Care centre and have developed valuable links with a school overseas in the Choko project. These activities contribute well to pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils report they feel safe in school and know who to turn to if they have a problem. A pupil commented, 'Everyone treats you well here'. Pupils understand the need to adopt a healthy lifestyle. Their behaviour is good and they enjoy what the school has to offer. This is demonstrated by their good attendance. Pupils particularly like opportunities to work together to solve problems, for example, in mathematics. These factors, together with a satisfactory grounding in numeracy, literacy, and information and communication technology, help pupils to develop future work-place skills.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Lessons are planned well and the fostering of pupils' personal development is a particular strength, which ensures pupils are confident learners and interested in their progress. For example, pupils in Year 6 in a lively discussion evaluated their progress towards reaching their literacy targets. Pupils are very interested in lessons and enjoy their learning. Teachers' discipline is effective and consequently pupils behave well. In most lessons pupils make good progress.

For instance, in a highly effective mathematics lesson, Year 5 pupils improved their knowledge and understanding of capacity because the teaching was practical and challenging.

While teaching and learning has many strengths, overall, they are only satisfactory. In most lessons opportunities are missed to challenge the most able pupils. The use of assessment is improving quickly as teachers become more confident in setting challenging targets, but is currently satisfactory.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The current focus on writing extends key skills and encourages pupils to add variety and range to their work. As a result, there are some good examples of writing in history, geography and science. For instance, during a topic about space, Year 3 and Year 4 pupils composed letters to Neil Armstrong, the astronaut. This gave them a meaningful purpose for their writing, to which they responded well. The headteacher and staff are working hard in developing a more creative approach to linking subjects through topics and pupils are enjoying this approach. This initiative is in the early stages of its development and consequently has not yet been monitored to check there is suitable balance between subjects. A good range of clubs, visits and musical tuition supports the curriculum well.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

This inclusive school cares extremely well for pupils within a mutually supportive community in which they feel valued and their confidence grows. Those with specific needs are especially well nurtured. They are fully integrated and make good progress because of the high level of support. Good use is made of external agencies and expertise.

The headteacher and staff have high expectations of pupils' attitudes towards each other and relationships are good. Rotas allow pupils safe access to various play areas and they are encouraged to consider further ways in which improvements can be made. This involvement has a positive effect on pupils' personal development. Pupils are clear about the targets they are working towards. Teachers' marking is evolving well to provide positive feedback and make it clear to pupils how they can improve. Increasingly pupils are involved in judging for themselves how well they are doing.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher, staff and governors have worked well together to improve the school, especially over the last two years. Governors have become much more involved in monitoring the school's work and fully support the headteacher and staff in the drive to raise standards. Procedures to track pupils' progress are greatly improved and result in effective action. For example, standards improved in mathematics because objectives for learning were made more precise across the school. The leadership of pupils' personal development is especially strong and pupils' opinions are valued. All subject leaders are improving their skills but are not yet sufficiently involved in evaluating the impact of the school's revised curriculum. Provision in the Foundation Stage is improving but is not monitored thoroughly enough to identify strengths

and weaknesses in children's learning. The school runs smoothly and teamwork between the teaching and non-teaching staff is good.

The school's capacity to improve is now good because self-evaluation is greatly improved and the headteacher and governors now know what needs to be done to improve the school further.

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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	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ 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	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	1
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

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?	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	3
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

25 March 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Cholsey Primary School, Wallingford, OX10 9PP

Thank you for your help on our visit to your school. Your school is satisfactory but improving because of the hard work of your headteacher, staff and governors. You told us how much you enjoy coming to school and that you feel well cared for and safe. You behave well and have good attitudes. Your progress is getting better and is being helped by your targets for learning. We are very pleased that your attendance is good and this shows you are eager to learn.

We have asked your headteacher and teachers to make sure that those of you who sometimes find your work too easy are given more challenge. We have also asked your headteacher, teachers and governors to find out if the youngest children are making enough progress. We have also asked them to check the balance between subjects in your new curriculum.

With best wishes

Jeff White

Lead Inspector