

Finstock Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 123095 |
| Local Authority | Oxfordshire |
| Inspection number | 314494 |
| Inspection dates | 3–4 December 2008 |
| Reporting inspector | Peter Sudworth |

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Voluntary controlled |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School (total) | 54 |
| Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS | 0 |
| Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years | 0 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Mr Steven MacLennan |
| Headteacher | Mr Paul S Barnett |
| Date of previous school inspection | 6 June 2005 |
| Date of previous funded early education inspection | Not previously inspected |
| Date of previous childcare inspection | Not previously inspected |
| School address | School Road Finstock Chipping Norton OX7 3BN |
| Telephone number | 01993 868314 |

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|--------------------------|-------------------|
| Age group | 4–11 |
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Fax number

01993 868314

Age group 4–11

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This Church of England VC primary school is smaller than average. It has two classes; one for Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) children and Years 1 and 2 and one for Years 3 to 6. An additional teacher is employed part-time which facilitates arrangements for Years 3 and 4 pupils and those in Years 5 and 6 to be taught separately for English, mathematics and science. No children of Reception age were on roll at the time of the inspection. The school works very closely with a privately managed pre-school which has premises adjoining the class for the youngest pupils. Children enter the school with skills and knowledge that are at the expected level for their age. The percentages of children entitled to free school meals or who are from minority ethnic backgrounds is much lower than in most schools. The proportion of pupils who have difficulties in learning basic skills, or who have emotional difficulties, is about the same as in most schools.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. Most parents are supportive of the school's efforts for their children. They praise the friendliness and inclusiveness which result in their children's happiness at school. As one parent wrote, 'Our school is a very friendly one. All of the children are made very welcome and look forward to going each morning'. Parents rightly praise the good level of pastoral care for the children and correctly highlight the good start pupils receive in the youngest class, which they judge correctly as a strength of the school. Nevertheless, a number of parents are not wholly positive. Some express concerns about the progress of high-attaining pupils. These concerns are partly justified. Staff currently do not develop pupils' learning well enough in mathematics in Years 3 to 6. This is because they do not always accurately match the work to pupils' needs in the mixed-age classes and build on previous learning. In science, in the same year groups, while pupils evidence sound knowledge, their investigative and reporting skills are relatively weak.

Staff in the youngest class have responded well to the results of the 2008 Year 2 assessments, which were weaker in reading and writing than in mathematics. Their new approach to teaching the sounds of letters is having a positive effect on pupils' reading and writing skills. Pupils have grown significantly in confidence in these areas as a result. The class has a very good partnership with the pre-school provision which meets on site. They work very closely together, planning work and ensuring a seamless transition from one setting to the other.

Pupils develop a sound range of skills for their future education. They have a good appreciation of healthy and safe living. They achieve satisfactorily. Pupils make a good contribution to their school by undertaking responsibilities and they contribute well to local community events. They are also aware of the needs of others globally and raise money for them, for example by organising a toy sale. A few parents express concerns about behaviour but staff manage pupils well and behaviour is generally good.

The governing body is supportive, but it does not analyse the curriculum in detail and it has not picked up that teaching time is slightly below the minimum recommended. Monitoring of the school's work by senior staff has not been incisive or regular enough. As a result, aspects of work that need attention have not been picked up and tackled. For example, pupils do not take enough pride in their work resulting, at times, in both untidy handwriting and presentation. The setting out of work in mathematics also leads to inaccuracies.

Small numbers in each year group mean that the results of individual pupils are very significant in test results and contribute to fluctuations and swings. Percentage results are not reliable indicators of school performance. Analysis of individuals' results shows that most pupils reach the expected levels for their age but, currently, there is some underachievement in mathematics in Years 3 to 6.

The school has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection and demonstrates a satisfactory capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

There were no Reception children in the school at the time of the inspection. Discussion with the EYFS teacher and examination of documentation indicate that the provision is good. Staff are well prepared for the arrival of the children in January and procedures are in place to ensure

children receive a good induction to the setting. The very good links with the pre-school and joint planning support the transition of the children most effectively. Such organisation reflects the good leadership of the EYFS. Records show that generally children make good progress.

What the school should do to improve further

- Match the work more accurately to pupils' abilities in mathematics in Years 3 to 6 and so improve their attainment.
- Assist pupils to develop better investigative skills in science in Years 3 to 6, including their recording of experiments.
- Monitor teaching and learning more rigorously and regularly to pick up on both strengths that can be shared and weaknesses that need attention.
- Ensure pupils take a greater pride in their work when they record it.

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' attainment when they begin Year 1 is around the level expected, although this varies from year to year due to small numbers. Occasionally, groups of pupils have reached standards that are above average at the end of both Years 2 and 6, but the general picture is one of pupils reaching broadly average standards. This pattern continues with the current Years 2 and 6 pupils. Within a wide spectrum of ability, pupils are making satisfactory progress in the main and good progress in Years 1 and 2. Pupils who have difficulty in learning basic skills make similar rates of progress to other pupils. The current progress of pupils in Key Stage 2 is better in English than in mathematics and science. In 2008, results of assessments at Year 2 were weaker in reading and writing than in mathematics. A new approach to teaching letter sounds and good teaching in Years 1 and 2 is resulting in significant improvements.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Most pupils enjoy school. Their behaviour is good. Attendance is around the national average. Pupils live safely and healthily, and exercise regularly. They are judiciously wary of trusting strangers, and even adults they know, '...if you feel you can't trust them'. They know what to do if they are troubled. The school council meets regularly. Its suggestion box allows others to contribute ideas and this has led to a chess club. Pupils have limited access to after school clubs. Nevertheless, some pupils are keen on eco matters and tend the school gardens. Pupils contribute well to the community. They provided ideas for the village adventure playground. They sing to groups of older people and occasionally take part in church services. However, pupils do not always take enough pride in their written work, which results in untidy presentation. While most pupils show positive attitudes to their work, especially Years 1 and 2 pupils whose approach to work is exemplary, some older pupils are lethargic and do not contribute a great deal to lessons.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching is strongest in Years 1 and 2 where a brisk approach ensures that pupils are really focused on their work. Teaching assistants maintain a good involvement in lessons throughout the school and contribute to pupils' understanding. Teachers use modern technology effectively to present ideas visually, which adds to pupils' enjoyment. Good use of paired talk between pupils to discuss ideas keeps them thinking and involved. This also contributes to their confidence in speaking. In the older classes, the teaching in English is better than in mathematics and science. For example, Year 6 pupils practised their persuasive writing skills imaginatively when they formed companies and wrote bids to organise a Christmas party. The teaching of mathematics is weaker in Years 3 to 6 because in planning not enough account is taken of pupils' abilities, especially more able pupils. This is why some pupils are not making enough progress in the subject.

Teachers do not have high enough expectations of the way pupils present their work, for example, in the recording of investigations in science in Years 3 to 6. Written work is often untidy as a result.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Visitors to the school, such as artists and poets, make a good contribution to pupils' experiences. Carefully chosen visits add to pupils' understanding of their work. These include a biannual residential visit which develops pupils' problem-solving in practical situations. Good attention is paid to English, mathematics and science. However, the generous amount of time given to swimming does not allow sufficient opportunities for music and art in Years 3 to 6. Satisfactory provision is made for pupils who have difficulties in basic skills and there is very good provision for pupils who have learning disabilities. For example, pupils in Years 1 and 2 use a microphone so that a hearing impaired pupil can be fully included. There is only a small range of after school activities. The provision for mathematics in Years 3 to 6 does not currently meet pupils' needs well enough. Investigation and the recording of experiments are weak aspects of science. Satisfactory use is made of pupils' literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills in different subjects.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Staff take a genuine interest in all pupils and support their personal needs very well. Arrangements for health and safety are very good. Good links with external behavioural specialists support pupils with emotional difficulties well. Satisfactory arrangements are made to record accidents and incidents. The school has been alerted to a safeguarding matter that requires attention.

Academic guidance for pupils is satisfactory. Systems to track pupils' progress across the school are improving and this is resulting in quicker action on the findings. Pupils have individual targets in English so they know how to improve, but such targets are not yet securely in place in mathematics. The lack of a record of key skills in mathematics obscures how well individual pupils have progressed in their learning, and means staff cannot always provide the help that

is needed. Marking is supportive of pupils' work, but comments do not always specify precisely enough how the pupils can improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher sets a good atmosphere and tone in the school and these contribute to a harmonious team spirit and a friendly ethos. All staff feel part of the team. The school development plan is well written and contains the correct priorities for development. The chair of the governing body keeps in regular contact with the school and visits frequently. The governing body manages the school's limited finances well and keeps within budget. It fulfils its statutory duties. The committee structure helps to ensure that a good focus is maintained on several areas of the school's work. However, it does not have a sufficient focus on the curriculum. This is addressed too informally through occasional governor visits. The governing body has a satisfactory understanding of the school's strengths and its areas for development.

Monitoring of teaching and learning have not been regular enough. As a result, good practice is not being shared sufficiently well. Furthermore, aspects of the provision that need improvement are not being sharply analysed. Consequently, the weakness in recording science investigations and the current difficulties in teaching mathematics to mixed-age classes have not been resolved so that all pupils make progress according to their capabilities. Some pupils' lack of pride in their work is also going unchecked.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

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| 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

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| 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 capacity to make any necessary improvements | 3 |

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

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| How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS? | 2 |
| How well do children in the EYFS achieve? | 2 |
| How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS? | 2 |
| How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop? | 2 |
| How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted? | 2 |
| How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed? | 2 |

Achievement and standards

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| 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/or disabilities make progress | 3 |

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

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| How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners? | 3 |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 3 |
| The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles | 2 |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices | 2 |
| The extent to which learners enjoy their education | 3 |
| 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

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| How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of 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? | 3 |

Leadership and management

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| 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 eliminated | 3 |
| How well does the school contribute to community cohesion? | 2 |
| 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 |

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

18 December 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Finstock Church of England Primary School, Chipping Norton, OX7 3BN

Thank you for your warm welcome when I visited you and for talking to me about your school. The school provides a satisfactory education for you. You are making sound progress. Most of you enjoy school. You have a good understanding about keeping yourselves healthy and safe. You generally get along well together and know what to do if you have any worries. The staff take good care of you and take an interest in each one of you. I was interested to learn of your involvement in the adventure playground next to the school and how you made suggestions before it was built. I was pleased to learn of your interest in eco matters, such as tending the garden and composting.

At Finstock, some of you in the Year 3 to 6 class are not doing as well as you could in mathematics. This is because the activities are not always meeting your needs well enough, and I have asked your teachers to improve this. You have a satisfactory knowledge in science but I have asked the staff to help you with investigational techniques in this subject and to show you how to improve the way you record investigations. Some of you could set out your work more tidily and also make your handwriting much neater. I have asked the school to make sure that they look at teaching and learning regularly so that the strengths can be shared and any weaker areas tackled quickly.

Thank you once again for your help when I visited. I wish you all well for the future and I trust that you will work hard to reach your ambitions.

Yours faithfully

Peter Sudworth

Lead Inspector