

Fringford Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123102
Local Authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	314495
Inspection date	6 May 2008
Reporting inspector	John Earish

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	100
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Christopher Kip
Headteacher	Mrs Susan Pearson
Date of previous school inspection	20 September 2004
School address	The Green Fringford Bicester OX27 8DY
Telephone number	01869 277397
Fax number	01869 277397

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school. The inspector looked particularly at the children's progress and standards as they move through the school, as well as the impact of initiatives taken by school leaders to raise standards and the quality of provision. The inspector met with staff, governors and pupils. Parts of some lessons were observed, parents' questionnaires and a sample of pupils' work were examined and school information, including self-evaluation, was scrutinised. 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 the report.

Description of the school

This small school serves the rural villages of Fringford, Stratton Audley, Hethe and Godington near Bicester. Pupils are taught in four mixed-age classes. They come from a variety of social backgrounds and are almost all of White British heritage. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties varies significantly from year to year but is currently below that found nationally.

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. Pupils achieve well and their personal development and pastoral care are outstanding. They are adamant that school is enjoyable because teachers make the learning fun and the children are friendly and very well behaved. Parents too, are overwhelmingly positive about their children's education and say, 'it is a very happy school with a strong emphasis on learning and raising pupils' self-esteem'.

Standards are above average although there is considerable year-on-year fluctuation. This is a common feature of small schools and occurs because variations in the performance of each individual can have a disproportionate effect on the standards overall. However, given their starting points, all groups of pupils achieve well and make good progress between Reception and Year 6. By the end of Year 6, standards are well above average overall. Pupils also make good progress in developing their information and communication technology skills.

Achievement is good because teaching and learning are good. Teachers relate well to their pupils and help promote the family atmosphere of which the school is justly proud. Work is well matched to pupils' needs because teachers have an accurate overview of each individual's performance and set realistic yet challenging targets for them to achieve. However, there are missed opportunities in some lessons for pupils to solve problems and explore their own ideas, so their progress is not as rapid as it could be. Pupils say they learn much better this way because it is both challenging and fun.

Another reason behind the school's success is the outstanding level of pupils' personal development including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are exceptionally well cared for and as a result behave extremely well, treat each other with great respect and very willingly respond to the many opportunities to accept responsibility. They make an excellent contribution to their community, participating in local events, involving themselves in charity fund-raising and decision-making through the school council. For example, the councillors have recently successfully negotiated sponsorship of the new school sports kit. Pupils' determination to succeed and regular attendance is further evidence of their enjoyment and commitment to learning. They increasingly become independent learners, well able to discuss their learning and use their targets to improve their work. This is excellent preparation for future life and learning.

Care, guidance and support are good overall with exceptional strengths in all aspects of pastoral care. Teachers are very good at tracking pupils' progress and using the information to plan challenging tasks and activities. All pupils have personal targets which they find helpful and informative. Pupils say their work is regularly marked and the comments that teachers make help them improve. However, some of the older pupils would like even more opportunities to assess for themselves how well they are doing at meeting their target. They believe this would help them become more self-critical about their own achievements.

The curriculum is of good quality and is constantly evolving. It meets the basic academic needs of pupils well, as well as supporting their social and personal development extremely well through initiatives to encourage healthy living and staying safe. Pupils appreciate the way teachers are increasing the links between the different subjects because it makes their learning much more enjoyable and creative. For example, the youngest pupils grow their own vegetables and flowers in a small garden and all organic waste is recycled. In addition, the focus weeks,

residential trips and numerous clubs and activities add much to pupils' motivation to learn, work hard and succeed.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher is a very good leader who has very high expectations of what is achievable. There is no complacency, and all the adults are continually striving to improve by setting themselves challenging targets. Extremely detailed and accurate self-evaluation has resulted in a comprehensive improvement plan of good quality to support these aspirations. Teachers are receiving good quality support to gain confidence at monitoring new school initiatives in order to increase their impact on the quality of learning as well as the rate at which pupils make progress. The governing body is able to participate in strategic planning and give effective support because governors know the school well. There is a good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

When children start school, their skills and abilities are generally above those expected of four year olds. Children do well because they are extremely well looked after and benefit from good teaching and support. By the end of the Reception Year, almost all attain and many exceed the early learning goals expected for their age. There is a good range of structured opportunities for children to develop their knowledge and skills both indoors and out. Adults ensure a good balance between activities chosen by the children and those planned for them by the teacher.

What the school should do to improve further

- Extend the opportunities for pupils to assess their own work so they have an even better understanding of what they need to do to improve.
- Ensure that teachers capitalise on opportunities during lessons for pupils to solve problems and explore their own ideas in order to sustain their rapid 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?	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	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	1
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	1

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	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
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

19 May 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Fringford Church of England Primary School, Bicester, OX27 8DY

Thank you for being so friendly and helpful when I came to inspect your school recently. I really enjoyed talking to you about your school and looking at your work. I am writing to tell you what I think about how well you are getting on and how well your school is helping you to learn.

I was very much impressed with your friendliness and your extremely helpful attitudes towards me. You listen very carefully to what your teachers have to say and learn a lot in lessons. I especially liked looking at your exercise books and reading your stories and discussing your science investigations. I particularly liked my discussions about the universe, black holes, gravity and space travel with Year 6. I may have already met another Stephen Hawking! You are also making a big impact with your use of information and communication technology.

You go to a good school that prepares you well for the next stage of your learning. To make it even better, I am asking your teachers to give you even more opportunities during lessons to solve problems and explore your own ideas on your own or in small groups. You said that you really enjoy working in this way, as it is challenging and is much more fun...especially the science investigations. I am also going to ask them to give you more opportunities to assess your own progress so that you have an even better understanding of what you need to do to improve your work.

I am sure that you are ready for this challenge! You can all help by continuing to work hard to meet the targets set for you. I hope that you have great success in the future.

Yours sincerely,

John Earish

Lead Inspector