

Standlake Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123111
Local Authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	314498
Inspection dates	21–22 January 2008
Reporting inspector	Charalambos Loizou

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	97
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Chris Naylor
Headteacher	Mrs Sandra Connell
Date of previous school inspection	22 March 2004
School address	Standlake Witney OX29 7SQ
Telephone number	01865 300454
Fax number	01865 300454

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Standlake is a small rural primary school serving an area of mainly private housing. The school admits three and four-year-olds into its Foundation Stage Unit and the children are taught together in the same class. All other classes are of mixed-age. Most pupils are of White British heritage. A small number come from a variety of other backgrounds and some of these are at the early stages of learning English. A small but significant number of pupils come from traveller families. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is lower than that of most schools although the percentage that has special educational needs is in line with the national average. There are close links with the church and local community. Most of the teaching staff joined the school in the last three years.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Standlake is a good school. It has some outstanding features particularly in its curriculum. It is well led and managed and successfully serves the needs of the community. The headteacher and assistant headteacher's strong leadership has guided excellent improvements to the school since its last inspection. Pupils achieve well and reach above average standards.

The school has been transformed, with improvements to the building and the establishment of the Foundation Stage Unit. High quality artwork, poetry and design and technology adorn every wall. Displays designed by the pupils illustrate the school's outstanding curriculum, including the excellent use of information and communication technology (ICT). Pupils enjoy school very much and are very proud of their school. 'It's a great school, I love it, you make lots of friends and the teachers are always there to help you,' said one summing up the views of many. Parents are very pleased with the school, 'The school has improved immeasurably,' 'I am thrilled with my child's progress,' and 'Standlake is a fantastic community school,' are just a few of many positive views expressed by parents.

The teaching is consistently good. In Years 3 to 6, it is outstanding, enabling pupils to make rapid progress and attain high standards in English and above average standards in mathematics and science by the time they leave in Year 6. By the end of Year 2, pupils reach above average standards in reading and mathematics. Inconsistencies in the quality of handwriting, spelling and punctuation mean that writing standards are average and should be higher.

Good teaching in the Foundation Stage helps the children to progress well. Teachers accurately assess pupils' progress throughout the school but national test results in Year 2 show that some pupils fall short of predicted levels. Assessments in both the Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1 are not regular enough to check on the progress pupils are making and to help teachers accurately predict pupils' attainment at the end of Year 2. A good start has been made to address this, but there is still more to do.

Pupils' personal development, well-being and behaviour are outstanding. Relationships are excellent. Pupils show initiative as school councillors when organising fund-raising, managing the budget for the healthy tuck shop, and by suggesting ways to improve resources. Librarians organise book quizzes and special displays such as the 'spooky, scary, stories'. Special sports leaders are appointed to lead the 'wake up and shake up' activity each morning for staff and pupils. Pupils' self-confidence and excellent cultural development are promoted through drama, art, music and studies of different cultures and customs. An opera performed with a local special school provided excellent opportunities for pupils to work with others who have severe learning difficulties or disabilities. Close links with the church and stimulating assemblies support the pupils' spiritual and moral development extremely well. Pupils feel very safe because there is strong pastoral support. Teaching assistants provide effective support for those with moderate learning difficulties. Pupils in the early stages of learning English quickly gain the confidence to engage in conversation. There are successful links with the local authority support service to integrate pupils from traveller families. The support teacher for these families is respected and trusted and has helped the school to become truly inclusive with excellent social and racial harmony.

The considerable successes achieved in improving standards and eradicating weak teaching demonstrate good leadership at all levels. The school is held effectively to account by a

supportive governing body. These factors underline the school's good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Good teaching and a stimulating curriculum ensure that the children make good progress. The children successfully develop and improve their language and communication skills when asked to recognise letters in their names, handle books and to engage in role-play. Children happily explore dinosaurs and develop early scientific and creative skills when making dinosaur biscuits, noticing changes to the mixture of the dough, 'The biscuits have to go in the oven now,' says one child when asked what happens next. The children learn to count and explore numbers, shapes and patterns, one boy counting out steps to see how far he launched a rubber ball across the play area. The staff are vigilant and supportive, although there are a few missed opportunities to extend children's thinking further when questioning the children. The staff have established very good relations with parents and there is a smooth transition into Year 1.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve pupils' handwriting, spelling and punctuation to raise standards in writing by the end of Year 2.
- Check children's progress in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 more often to help teachers accurately predict how well pupils will do by the end of Year 2.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards are above average overall and pupils achieve well. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 reach high standards in English because of outstanding teaching. Children join the Foundation Stage with skills and abilities that are typical of three and four-year-olds. They make good progress, and when starting Year 1, work comfortably within the early stages of the National Curriculum. A few parents choose to send their children to private education so that in some years the outward mobility of higher ability pupils affects standards. Nevertheless, all pupils make good progress in Years 1 and 2. Pupils achieve especially well in Years 3 to 6, and because of excellent teaching, nearly all pupils are on course to reach or exceed the levels expected for their age in English, mathematics and science. Pupils with moderate learning difficulties in reading, writing and mathematics make good progress because of consistently effective support and guidance.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They form strong friendships and enjoy school very much, as reflected in good and punctual attendance. Pupils represent the views of others very well as school councillors and show initiative as sports leaders when organising 'huff and puff' activities at break-times. They feel safe and learn to cope with any aggressive behaviour through special anti-bullying workshops. Pupils adopt very healthy eating habits and are encouraged to be active in sports. They play an excellent part in their local community through charitable fund-raising, church festivals and through strong links with partner schools. Well-planned assemblies help them to reflect on important moral and spiritual themes. Pupils are thoughtful and look for the positive qualities of others, including their teachers, demonstrated during a recent school assembly. They learn about other cultures

through drama, poetry and music, including the celebration of Christian and other world faiths. Pupils develop a very good understanding of ICT and other core skills that prepares them well for the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

There is a positive learning environment in all classes. Teaching assistants are particularly skilled in supporting pupils who need additional support with reading, writing or mathematics. Teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to practice their skills through investigation and problem solving. This was seen to very good effect in an excellent mathematics lesson for pupils in Years 5 and 6 when investigating number problems, including calculations using decimal fractions. Role-play and thought provoking class discussions motivate and inspire the pupils. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 were absorbed by the high quality of class discussion, role-play and the reading of extracts from a Welsh legend. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 confidently shared ideas with others about traditional stories to elicit discussion about characters. Teachers mark pupils' work diligently and provide targets for improvement, although assessments of younger pupils' performance are not regular enough to see if they are on course to reach their targets.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

An extensive range of enrichment is provided that includes the creative arts, sport, visits and visitors. Personal, social and health education is promoted extremely well through special topics or themed weeks. There is a strong emphasis on the creative curriculum, which is reflected in the high standard of pupils' artwork and sculptures. The performing arts and music are used very well to widen pupils' experiences. Pupils regularly use the local area for local studies and walks. Inspirational and high quality poetry produced by older pupils in Years 5 and 6, some compiled as an anthology and published with those of other schools, has a very significant impact on the high standards pupils achieve in English. The pupils use ICT skills very well during their studies, which has been a rapid area of improvement.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides very strong pastoral support and care, and good guidance. Pupils from traveller families do very well because of the highly skilled support of the teacher responsible for their education and welfare. Throughout the school, the staff are vigilant so pupils feel safe and settled in school. Very good attention is paid to child protection and to systematic risk assessments of activities and resources. Assessment and marking are used well to help pupils understand the next steps in their learning. Individual targets, pasted into pupils' workbooks, also help pupils to check their progress. However, teachers are not always making regular checks of pupils' performance in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2, to check on their progress and to predict rates of achievement that will help to set realistic targets for the end of Year 2.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher has provided outstanding and energetic leadership since the last inspection. Very accurate assessments of the school's work and performance have helped to identify the right priorities for improvement. These also incorporate the views of pupils, parents and staff. The development of teaching through highly effective staff training have guided excellent improvements to standards and has eradicated weak teaching from all parts of the school. Much improved assessment systems have helped the staff to track how well pupils are doing each year, although more is needed to sharpen target setting so that the staff can accurately predict the achievement of pupils by the end of Year 2. The assistant headteacher leads by her excellent example in the classroom and is a very good role model for other teachers. Governors hold the school to account well and provide good support. Resources are of high quality and there have been excellent improvements to the Foundation Stage Unit and school building.

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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?	1
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	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?	1
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	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
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

30 January 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Standlake Church of England Primary School, Witney, OX29 7SQ

I was very pleased to visit your school. You made me feel really welcome. I think that you go to a good school. Your artwork is fantastic and I was very impressed with many different things that have happened since your school was last inspected. These are just a few of the many things that I was pleased with most.

- You work hard and are extremely well behaved, polite and considerate.
- Your teachers and support staff are good at helping you to achieve well and reach good standards.
- You enjoy school and I can see why, because there are lots of interesting things for you to do.
- I really enjoyed looking at your computer work, especially the moving pictures that tell stories. I also enjoyed reading the poems in Years 5 and 6. They are brilliant. Well done! I also liked the work that the Foundation Stage children were doing about dinosaurs. I thought that the pupils in Years 1 and 2 did really well when I saw reading traditional tales and investigating the characters in these stories.
- I was very impressed with the school councillors, librarians and sports leaders. Keep up the excellent work you do to help others.
- Your parents are very pleased with you and your teachers and the school works very closely with them.
- The headteacher, staff and governors manage the school well and work hard to keep looking for ways to make it even better.

I have asked your teachers to do two things.

- Help some of you do even better in writing. You can help too by trying to write neatly and accurately.
- Make regular checks on how well the younger children are doing so that they all do their very best by the end of Year 2.

Well done and I wish you all the very best.

Yours sincerely

Charalambos Loizou

Lead Inspector