

Clifton Hampden Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123127
Local Authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	314507
Inspection date	16 October 2007
Reporting inspector	Keith Williams

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	52
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs T Talbot
Headteacher	Mrs A Pearson
Date of previous school inspection	2 June 2003
School address	Clifton Hampden Abingdon OX14 3EE
Telephone number	01865 407700
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: achievement and standards, teaching and learning, personal development and well-being, care, guidance and support, leadership and management, gathering evidence from: lesson observations, discussion with staff and pupils, the scrutiny of pupils' work, assessment data and documents. 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 its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Almost all of the pupils at this very small rural school are of white British heritage. Many live outside the school's designated area. Below average proportions speak English as an additional language, are eligible for free school meals or have been identified with learning difficulties. The school has the sports Active Mark.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This good school continues to improve and has some excellent features. The staff take full advantage of the school's small size by knowing each pupil well and keeping a very close check on their all-round development. This is confirmed by many parents, one of whom noted, 'The school has a real sense of belonging. It creates a supportive environment where children are treated as individuals and do well'. As a consequence, pupils make excellent progress in their personal development and achieve well academically.

The thoughtful, determined headteacher, well supported by the deputy, staff and governors, ensures that every effort is made to promote pupils' personal development and help them to fulfil their potential. Teamwork is very strong. Staff share many responsibilities for leading subjects and other important aspects of the school's work. Their professional development is given a high priority and specialist teaching from outside the school is used well to supplement their expertise. As a result, teaching is consistently strong. Staff cope very well with the challenges of planning for mixed-age and ability classes. Arrangements to split the Key Stage 2 class for literacy and numeracy work very well because teachers are able to focus sharply on pupils' individual needs. In all subjects, careful planning ensures that pupils build on their knowledge, skills and understanding as they move from year to year. The curriculum promotes pupils' personal development very well. A strong sense of belonging and an appreciation of the wider world are promoted well through lessons and assemblies. Pupils have a very well developed understanding of how to lead healthy and safe lives, including regular fitness sessions for those in Year 6. Good progress in basic skills means they are well prepared for their economic well-being and there are very good opportunities for pupils to use these skills in other subjects. A very good range of activities enriches and extends the work in lessons and contributes to pupils' enjoyment.

Pupils make consistently good progress because they are taught well and have excellent attitudes to their work. As numbers are very small, the capability of each year group can be considerably different, and records show that this can vary from below average to above average from year to year. Taken overall, however, pupils' starting points are just above average. Good and, occasionally, excellent teaching in Key Stage 1 means that standards are rising and, by the end of Year 2, pupils achieve well to reach above average standards. This good progress continues in Key Stage 2 and standards are exceptionally high by the end of Year 6. Pupils play their part in this positive picture by being impeccably behaved and eager to learn. Lessons are calm and supportive; teachers are able to teach and pupils can concentrate on their learning. Pupils' high levels of enjoyment are reflected in above average attendance levels, one parent commenting, 'My child cannot wait to get to school in the mornings'. Relationships are excellent and pupils feel that their views make a difference. Every pupil attends 'school meetings,' where important issues are discussed and changes are made. They contribute to the wider community, too, for example by inviting older locals to enjoy harvest lunch.

At the time of the last inspection, assessment procedures were too complicated and provided too little information to track pupils' progress and set challenging targets. This situation has been turned around impressively. Regular tests and assessments are used well to find out how pupils are doing and plot their progress, so that any pupils at risk of underachieving are identified quickly and given the support they need. The emphasis, rightly, is on tracking the progress of individuals and, coupled with teachers' day-to-day assessments, gives staff a detailed picture of their pupils. It is difficult to draw firm conclusions about the progress of different groups,

because of the small numbers. Despite this, staff are not complacent. They analyse results of the national tests carefully, identify areas of potential weakness and set very challenging targets for the school's performance. Recent concerns about the progress of boys in writing, for example, have been tackled successfully, so that boys now do as well as girls. Although there are some opportunities for Year 6 pupils to determine for themselves how well they are doing and how they should improve, across the school, such opportunities are limited.

High quality care and good support and guidance underpin the school's work. Robust systems ensure that pupils' health, safety and welfare are secure and checks on the suitability of adults are rigorously maintained. Consequently, pupils feel, '...very, very safe'. Pupils who find learning difficult are supported well, so that they achieve as well as their classmates. Pupils of all ability are set very challenging targets to improve their learning, and pupils have a good understanding of what is expected of them. They receive good verbal feedback from teachers, but inconsistencies in the way that work is marked mean they are sometimes unsure of how they have done in individual lessons and how they might improve.

The school's leaders have a very accurate view of the school's effectiveness and how it should improve. Their very strong track record of dealing with weaknesses, raising standards in Year 2 and maintaining high standards in Year 6 show that they have excellent capacity to achieve this.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children in Reception are based in a class with pupils in Years 1 and 2. Very good planning and teaching mean that children achieve well and most reach, and sometimes exceed, the goals expected of them by the end of the year. A skilful combination of working as a discrete year group and joining older pupils for some of their activities works well. Support staff and other adults who volunteer their time contribute well to children's development. The outdoor area is well resourced and is used well to promote children's confidence, independence and physical development. They take delight in exploring the properties of water, '...because it was in our story'. The school is rightly monitoring the opportunities children have to make similar choices and decisions about their work in the classroom.

What the school should do to improve further

- Reduce inconsistencies in marking so that pupils have a clear understanding of how they should improve.
- Increase pupils' involvement in assessing their own work.

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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	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
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	2
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?	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

29 October 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Clifton Hampden Church of England Primary School, Abingdon, OX14 3EE

I am writing to thank you for the friendly way you welcomed me to your school recently and to tell you what I found out. Many of you spoke to me and you gave me lots of helpful information. Your teachers and parents think that you go to a good school and I agree with them. Here are some of the things I liked about your school.

- By the time you reach Year 6, the standard of your work is very high.
- One of the reasons why you learn well is because the teaching is good in every class. Your teachers think carefully about the work they plan, because there are pupils of different ages in each class. They make sure that they challenge those of you who can do harder work and those of you who need extra help get it.
- Your headteacher and the other adults do a very good job of making sure that you are safe and well looked after. Lots of you told me this. Because you are a small school, they know you really well and make sure you are doing as well as you can.
- You do your bit, too. Your behaviour is excellent and I could see how hard you try in lessons. Well done! I am sure you will keep this up.

Even though yours is a good school, your headteacher and the other adults want it to be even better. There are two things I have asked them to look at:

- I want them to make sure that you know exactly how you can improve your work. You can help by making sure that you read what they write in your books very carefully.
- Year 6 pupils sometimes have the chance to mark their own work to see how well they are doing. I want Year 6, and other years, to have even more chance to do this.

I know you will want to help your teachers to make your school even better and I wish you good luck for the future.

Yours sincerely

Keith Williams Lead inspector