

# Culham Parochial Church of England School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	123132
<b>Local Authority</b>	Oxfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	314508
<b>Inspection date</b>	27 March 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Alan Jarvis

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	41
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs M Jefferies
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs S Knox
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	26 January 2004
<b>School address</b>	High Street Culham Oxfordshire OX14 4NB
<b>Telephone number</b>	01235 521766
<b>Fax number</b>	01235 521766

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following areas.

- Strengths and weaknesses in pupils' standards and progress.
- Pupils' personal development and well being and, in particular, how they take on greater responsibilities and learn independently.
- The impact of leadership and management.

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 this report.

## Description of the school

This small school serves the villages of Culham and Sutton Courtenay and the surrounding rural area. Nearly all pupils are from a White British background with broadly average social and economic circumstances. The proportion of pupils with moderate learning difficulties is above average. Pupils are taught in two classes: one class with Reception and infant aged pupils and another with those of junior age.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

'The children have a very happy time and are constantly encouraged to do their best' and 'The school copes wonderfully with pupils who have special educational needs', are typical of many parental comments. Overall, the school provides a good quality of education where pupils achieve well. Pupils' personal development and well-being are also good because of the very good pastoral care and the wide variety of activities included in the curriculum. Their attendance is excellent. They say, 'Teachers make learning fun and our views are listened to'. They also rightly say behaviour is good and occasional instances of unkindness are promptly dealt with.

Year groups are small and their level of skills on entry to the school can be very different each year. This means standards vary considerably. There can be great differences too due to the numbers of pupils who join or leave during the year. In 2007, standards in Years 6 were very low, currently they are above average. How can this be? The answer is that last year two thirds of pupils in the group had learning difficulties and disabilities, this year none has.

The headteacher and governors rightly focus on the progress that pupils make from their very different starting points. The school's data shows that progress has improved, particularly in the earlier years. It is now consistently good across the school. This stems from the equally good teaching and is helped by pupils' very good attitudes to learning. For example, the able group of pupils in Year 2 have made good progress and their standards are very high in reading, writing and mathematics. This shows that the school's focus on improving writing and provision in the Foundation Stage has paid off bringing standards equal to those in reading. Pupils continue to make good progress through Years 3 to 6. Progress in English has been very strong for a number of years. It continues to be so. Standards in English are exceptionally high this year and the current Year 6 pupils have made rapid progress. They have very good speaking and listening skills, write extremely fluently for many purposes and read with ease. Progress in science is also good, where pupils respond positively to the many opportunities to undertake practical investigations. In mathematics, however, progress is not as even. Pupils in Year 6 have made good progress through the junior class to reach above average standards. This ensures they are well prepared for secondary school. However, a few pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5 are marking time. The school is giving a higher priority to mathematical investigations and providing them with more support to address this.

Pupils have an extremely good understanding of how to stay healthy and safe. This is seen in the healthy food they eat, their eager participation in the weekly swimming and gym sessions and their safety awareness when using computers or playing on the climbing equipment at break times. Pupils have good attitudes to their learning and make good progress in developing their independence, confidence and self-esteem. Much of this is due to the positive steps taken to improve the curriculum, the use of less teacher directed methods and more opportunities for pupils to contribute to their community. For example, more learning is now set within a theme and encourages an individual response such as the work the juniors have recently done on the Egyptians. The school abounds with good quality artwork in which pupils are able to demonstrate their feelings and the choices they make. Events such as the 'Victorian Musical Hall' and nativity play in the Parish church that the pupils organised and presented successfully foster their confidence and team working skills. Every half term the juniors research a project for homework that is shared with their classmates. The splendid presentations on the 'Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service' and the 'History of the 'Beano' seen during the inspection show how well pupils' independent learning skills are developing.

The headteacher and governors have responded well to the last inspection report, particularly in improving leadership and management so that it is effective at all levels. This has been brought about by clarifying the roles and responsibilities of each member of staff, good training and is underpinned by a supportive process for reviewing the performance of teachers and teaching assistants. The school has identified the right issues for development. As the headteacher says, 'We prioritise our work so that we can avoid overload and do a small number of things well'. The success of this approach is seen in the stronger progress now being made in the earlier years and in the confidence pupils now have to work independently. In addition, a review of the work of the governing body has helped them streamline their work and focus their efforts where they are most beneficial. For example, one governor skilfully oversees all aspects of health and safety whilst others visit the school on a regular basis to help monitor how well developments are proceeding.

Teachers know their pupils well. Assessments are used effectively to help pupils with moderate learning needs, and those who have a statement of special educational need, meet their targets. The school has introduced a refined system for tracking and monitoring pupils' progress over the longer period. This has helped to pinpoint specific weaknesses in the progress of a few pupils, and the areas they need most support. This is being used well to refine teaching. The information also helps teachers set pupils individual targets, which are reviewed at the end of each term. This check is not made frequently enough and, therefore, does not give pupils a sufficiently clear idea of how well they are progressing towards their targets. Marking too does not refer closely enough to pupils' targets.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

A new purpose built classroom and a secure outdoor learning environment for the Foundation Stage has led to a good range and balance of activities both inside and outside that are well suited to young children. There are excellent working relationships with the Culham pre-school who share these facilities. These enable a seamless curriculum that in turn helps children make a smooth transition to the Reception class. Parents are delighted with this arrangement with growing numbers appreciating the good start children make to school. As one said, 'My child has come on leaps and bounds'. Close links with home enable children to settle in quickly and smoothly. The quality of teaching and the curriculum is good. Staff provide purposeful play, with a good mixture of focused and adult-led tasks. The current reception children started with skills that were broadly in line with those expected for their age. Tracking shows they have made good progress, particularly in their personal, social and emotional development. Nearly all are likely to meet or exceed the goals expected of them at the end of reception in every area of learning.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Increase opportunities for mathematical investigations in the junior class.
- Help pupils assess their work more frequently and make sure marking pinpoints how well learning is progressing so all reach their challenging targets.

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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 <sup>1</sup> 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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	1
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	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

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
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

04 April 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Culham Parochial Church of England School, Oxfordshire, OX14 4NB

As you know I visited your school recently to find out how well you were doing. I enjoyed speaking to you, seeing your lessons and hearing you sing my favourite hymn. May I particularly thank the two pupils who gave splendid presentations about the 'Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service and the 'History of the Beano Comic'. My report says that yours is a good school. This is what I liked the best.

- You and your parents are right to say you are happy at school, the school listens to your views and your teachers encourage you to do your very best.
- You work hard in lessons, enjoy them a lot and are making good progress.
- Teaching is good in all classes and this is a very important reason why you make good progress in all your subjects.
- By the time you leave school many of you will have made very good progress in English and good progress in science. Progress in mathematics is also good, and improving, but not quite as good as in the other two subjects.
- Your teachers and other staff look after you very well, including those of you who need extra support to help you progress well.
- Your school is run well. Your headteacher, staff and governors are working on the right number of things they need to make it even better.

All staff are working hard to make your school better and your parents are keen to help you. In order to make it even better, I have asked the school to look at two things.

- Provide more opportunities for practical mathematics for pupils in the junior class, and;
- Help you assess how well you are doing more frequently to make sure you all reach challenging targets.

If you are in the junior class you need to focus more on your mathematics. Everyone needs to be sure they know their targets and look at your work more frequently to see if you have met them.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Alan Jarvis

Lead Inspector