

Crowmarsh Gifford Church of England School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123133
Local Authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	314509
Inspection date	24 June 2008
Reporting inspector	Alison Grainger

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	187
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr S Brown
Headteacher	Mrs B A O'Dwyer
Date of previous school inspection	7 February 2005
School address	Old Reading Road Crowmarsh Gifford Wallingford OX10 8EN
Telephone number	01491 836785
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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 issues.

- Provision for children in the Reception Year.
- The influence of teaching and academic guidance on pupils' progress.
- Pupils' personal development and well-being.
- The contribution of leaders and managers at all levels to school improvement.

Evidence was gathered from the school's data on pupils' progress; visits to lessons and scrutiny of pupils' work; observation of an assembly; discussions with staff, governors, parents and pupils; and analysis of responses to the parents' questionnaire. 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 of these areas, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. Very few pupils from other ethnic backgrounds are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. The proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is also below average. Children begin school with a wide range of individual attainment. Taking the intake as a whole, most children start the Reception Year with skills at least at the level expected for their age.

There have been several staff changes since the last inspection. The current headteacher has been in post since January 2007.

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. It is improving rapidly as a result of the outstandingly clear educational direction provided by the headteacher and the strong teamwork of staff. Pupils are pleased with the changes that have been made over the last year or so. They point out that they enjoy school a lot more now because teachers are making lessons increasingly interactive and practical. They identify that this has brought improvements in behaviour. Pupils say that they want to behave well and that almost all of them do so all of the time. In lessons and around the school, behaviour is now of a very high standard. Attitudes to learning are very good and most pupils enjoy school a good deal as the above average attendance rate shows.

Many parents value the school's 'friendly, happy atmosphere'. One parent commented on 'vast improvement' in 'the pastoral care and sense of well-being amongst staff and pupils'. Pastoral care and the arrangements for safeguarding pupils are excellent. Pupils are sure that they have an adult to whom they can turn should the need arise and really value the pastoral role of the teaching assistants. Pupils say that they feel very safe at school. They know a lot about how to stay safe in school and outside. As a result of the high quality attention to pupils' welfare, and the very effective programme of personal, social and health education, pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Extra-curricular activities, such as clubs, visits and visitors also make a strong contribution to pupils' personal development, including their skills in working together in teams.

Pupils have a very good understanding of how to keep fit and healthy through diet and exercise and put this awareness into practice. They 'love' the very healthy school lunches and point out that, since these have been on offer, many pupils who used to have packed lunches now choose to have school lunches. Pupils make an exceptional contribution to the school and wider community. The school council represents pupils' views very well. Responsibilities are undertaken diligently, including those involving older pupils in looking after younger ones. Much is done to raise funds for charities. Pupils entertain senior citizens and care for the environment. All in all, pupils are very socially aware and sensitive to the needs of others.

Pupils are well prepared for their future lives, not only because of the very good personal attributes they develop but also because they make good progress with their work. Achievement is good and overall standards are significantly above average at the end of Year 6. Results in the national tests at the end of Years 2 and 6 show that pupils have not been making consistently good progress since the last inspection. However, effective action has been taken and pupils are once again progressing at a good rate across the school. Almost all are making at least the expected progress in relation to their starting points and capabilities and many are doing better. The school is aware that at the end of Year 6, and even in the Reception class, pupils are reaching higher standards in mathematics than in English. It knows that English standards need to rise to match those in mathematics.

Pupils are currently making good progress because teaching and the curriculum are good. A strong emphasis on assessment means that most teaching is well focussed on what pupils should be learning next, with activities varied to take account of pupils' different capabilities. Pupils are told the purpose of lessons so that they know what they are aiming to achieve. Teaching assistants are well deployed to support groups and individuals and this is particularly helping pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Throughout the school, lessons are characterised by a calm and productive atmosphere.

Within the curriculum, an increased emphasis on practical and problem solving activities is helping pupils to reach particularly high standards in mathematics. The school has rightly improved its resources for reading, increased opportunities for writing in different subjects and developed the use of drama strategies as means of raising standards in English. While these developments are supporting progress well, the school recognises that there is still further to go.

The school has been working to improve the guidance given to pupils about how well they are doing and how they can improve their performance. In some classes, there is good practice in the use of individual targets and marking. However, this is not yet consistent across the school. Marking does not always tell pupils what they have done well and what they need to work on next. Targets are not always well enough understood by pupils or presented in a way that is sufficiently focussed and clear.

Good leadership and management at all levels, accurate self-evaluation, and a recent track record of significant improvement, show that the school has good capacity to become even more effective. A few parents would like the school to communicate better with them. There is already much good communication with parents. However, the school is willing to review its practice in the light of feedback from parents. It has very recently undertaken a survey of parents' views with this in mind.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision for Reception children is very much better than at the last inspection with significant developments having taken place recently. A new outdoor area is making a tremendous difference to the learning opportunities provided so that the curriculum and teaching are now good, with time used purposefully to support learning. There are occasions, however, when there are missed opportunities for teaching assistants to interact with children to move learning on more quickly. Developments, such as in the teaching of sounds and letters, are resulting in current standards being higher than in the past. Almost all children now in Reception are on course to reach most of the goals expected for their age and, in many areas, a good proportion of children are exceeding these standards. Children are well cared for. Parents are pleased with the start given to their children. As one observed, 'My daughter loves her school, teacher, and is making great strides forward.' The leadership of Foundation Stage provision is good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in English to match those in mathematics.
- Ensure that all pupils are given clear guidance on what they are already doing well and on what they need to do next to improve their performance.

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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	2
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?	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	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 July 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Crowmarsh Gifford Church of England School, Wallingford, OX10 8EN

Thank you for helping me when I visited your school. I enjoyed talking with you. The school council representatives that I met told me that your school is getting better and that you are enjoying it more. They said that you like having more practical activities in lessons and more opportunities to get actively involved. They told me that they think the school is good and I agree with them.

Almost all of you behave very well all of the time which means that your behaviour is very good. I saw how sensibly you behave in lessons and around the school. All of you that I spoke with were very polite and helpful.

I found out that you know a huge amount about how to keep fit and healthy. I am not surprised that you love the school lunches. They look very healthy and appetising. You told me that you feel safe in school and you also know a lot about how to keep safe. The adults take very good care of you.

As a result of the improvements that the school has made recently, you are making good progress with your work. This is because teaching and the curriculum are good. The good support for your learning begins in the Reception Year where there are now many interesting activities both indoors and outside. All of you are lucky to have so many activities in addition to lessons, such as clubs, visits, and visitors who teach you new skills.

There are two things that I have asked the school to do now.

- Help you to reach standards in English that are as high as your standards in mathematics. At the moment, the standard of your work is highest in mathematics.
- Make sure that you are all given clear advice on how well you are doing and on what you need to work on next.

You can help by continuing to behave well and by always doing your best.

Yours sincerely

Alison Grainger

Lead Inspector