

Uffington Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123170
Local Authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	314523
Inspection date	10 June 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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	62
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Sue Saunders
Headteacher	Mrs Elizabeth Robertson
Date of previous school inspection	28 February 2005
School address	Broad Street Uffington Faringdon SN7 7RA
Telephone number	01367 820296
Fax number	01367 820296

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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 areas:

- the impact of teaching and the curriculum on standards in writing and mathematics;
- the extent to which pupils understand their learning and the use of assessment to plan work for pupils in mixed-age classes;
- the opportunities pupils have to apply core skills, including information and communication technology (ICT), to their work in other subjects.

Evidence was gathered from lesson observations, the analysis of test results and assessments of pupils' performance, as well as parents' responses to questionnaires and discussions with pupils, staff and a governor. 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

Uffington is a small village school. It has close links with its neighbouring parish church and other schools in the Wantage area of Oxfordshire, as well as international links with schools in Europe. Pupils are taught in four classes, three of which are of mixed-age. Reception children are taught in the Foundation Stage unit, which also accommodates an independently run pre-school playgroup. The vast majority of pupils are White British and a small number come from a range of other backgrounds, including pupils from traveller families. A very small number of pupils are learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average. A small number of pupils have moderate learning difficulties and require additional support, although the proportion varies considerably across classes each year. A significant number of pupils join or leave the school at different times.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Uffington is a good school. Pupils achieve well and reach above average standards. One parent reflected the views of many when accurately describing the school as having 'a very caring ethos'. Consequently, pupils thoroughly enjoy school, behave extremely well and relationships are excellent. The school is well led and managed. The headteacher provides highly effective leadership and, as one parent commented, she 'has always found time to listen' to parents' views. Governors and staff, too, do a great deal to involve parents and pupils. The school has forged excellent links and partnerships with its community, including the small number of traveller families. Strong international links with schools in Ireland, France and Spain enable the pupils to communicate with pupils from different backgrounds and cultures, and this adds to their personal development.

There is a good pace to learning in the Foundation Stage. The children join the Reception year with a wide range of abilities that are in line with those expected for their age. Good teaching enables them to reach standards that are in the early stages of the National Curriculum by the start of Year 1.

Typically, a small number of pupils take the national tests in Years 2 and 6 each year. In addition, records show that some families leave during Key Stage 2 before the pupils take the Year 6 tests. Consequently, standards by the end of Year 6 fluctuate because the performance of individual pupils greatly influences the overall results. Assessments show that all pupils achieve well in relation to their different starting points. Pupils reached challenging targets this year and standards are above those expected by the end of Years 2 and 6 in English, mathematics and science. However, pupils make slower progress in writing when compared to reading and mathematics because of inconsistencies in the quality of their handwriting, spelling and punctuation.

Pupils say they love coming to school, which is reflected in their good attendance. A very good range of after-school clubs, sport, music and the creative arts, enhance the school's outstanding curriculum and add to pupils' enjoyment. As one pupil stated, 'We do ever such a lot and I really loved the residential trip,' when reflecting on the recent visit by Years 5 and 6. The pupils benefited enormously from adventurous activities such as climbing, surfing, exploring rivers and team building. They worked with pupils from another school that caters for those with severe physical or learning disabilities, and reflected on these experiences during a whole-school assembly about caring and sharing. This visit, like many other successful activities, demonstrate the positive impact the school's curriculum is having on the pupils' outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The pupils adopt healthy lifestyles and attitudes through, for example, the daily 'wake up and shake up' exercise. In addition, there is a high take-up of after-school sports and clubs, and most pupils choose to eat fruit at break-times. Pupils learn a great deal during special projects and themed weeks, including activities involving visiting artists, authors or sports coaching. There are many opportunities to research and apply skills they have acquired to a range of topics, as well as learning to play a musical instrument, or to learn Spanish or French. In addition, the acquisition of skills when using computers, digital cameras and other technologies also prepares pupils well for the future.

The teaching is good and stimulates the pupils' interests and curiosity. For example, in Years 5 and 6, pupils applied their mathematics skills to interpret graphs when investigating which weather patterns are the most favourable for surfing. The task was made interesting by the

fact that it was linked to one of the activities experienced during their visit. Lessons provide regular opportunities for pupils to assess their learning, as one capable Year 2 pupil explained, 'I am using the learning objectives to check and make sure I use words called and "time connectives" in my sentences'. The climate for learning is excellent and pupils who need additional support are given appropriate resources and help to make good progress towards their learning targets. Teachers share each lesson's learning objectives with the pupils so it is clear what is expected and, as a result, pupils understand what they should be aiming for. Assessments are used well to plan work for mixed-ages, although some tasks are not pitched at the right level for all pupils to extend their learning further, which slows their progress.

The school council thrives on the opportunity to represent the views of pupils and to take responsibilities. 'We come up with ideas like improving the bike sheds and we organise fund-raising,' remarked one very mature councillor. Pupils feel safe and well cared for because safeguarding arrangements are robust. 'We know that you have to be careful on internet chat rooms', explained one, demonstrating how well briefed the pupils are when using ICT at school or at home.

The headteacher and staff work closely with governors and the school's very good website helps to keep parents fully informed. The headteacher's and governors' very accurate evaluations of the school's effectiveness, as well their good track record of improvement since the last inspection, shows that the school is well placed to continue improving.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Skilled teaching and a stimulating curriculum ensure that Reception children make good progress. The children cooperate very well with others. They work with equal success when choosing their own activities or when directed by the teacher. The effective teaching of numbers and shapes and the many opportunities provided to handle books and to engage in role-play, successfully develop the children's language, communication and mathematics skills. There is scope to improve the children's early writing skills sooner, especially when they demonstrate confidence in recognising letter sounds and words in books and texts. Indoor and outdoor areas are stimulating, and encourage the children to explore. For example, the 'Forest School' project incorporates challenging and practical outdoor experiences in a woodland environment. These improve the children's confidence and self-esteem and knowledge of the natural world around them.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide more opportunities for pupils to edit and improve their handwriting, spelling and punctuation to accelerate their progress and raise standards in writing.
- Ensure that assessments of pupils' performance are used to plan work that is tailored more closely to their needs and abilities and extends their learning.

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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

19 June 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Uffington Church of England Primary School, Faringdon, SN7 7RA

You all made me feel really welcome when I visited your school. I enjoyed my lunch with the school council and the conversations I had with many pupils during break time. I think that you go to a good school. You work very hard with your teachers and I agree with most parents who say that your school is helping you to do well. There are many good things about your school.

- Your teachers and support staff are good at helping you to make good progress and organise an excellent range of activities for you.
- You are very well behaved, polite and courteous.
- You enjoy school very much because there are many things for you to do. The recent residential visit in Years 5 and 6 was excellent, the photographs of you all surfing were fantastic, and I can see why you had a great time!
- I was really impressed with the quality and range of clubs and sports you have opportunities to take part in.
- The large majority of parents are very pleased with you and your teachers and the school is always trying to work closely with them. The website is a great way of finding out more about your school.
- The headteacher, staff and governors manage the school well and work hard to keep looking for ways to make the school even better.

I have asked your teachers to:

- help you improve the quality of your handwriting, spelling and punctuation;
- make sure that when checking how well you are doing, they plan work in lessons which will challenge all of you.

Well done and I wish you all the very best.

Yours sincerely

Charalambos Loizou

Lead Inspector