

# St Edburg's Church of England (VA) School

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	123188
<b>Local Authority</b>	Oxfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	314532
<b>Inspection dates</b>	6–7 February 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Malcolm Johnstone

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 aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	158
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Colin Duckworth
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Damian Booth
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	17 May 2004
<b>School address</b>	Cemetery Road Bicester OX26 6BB
<b>Telephone number</b>	01869 252393
<b>Fax number</b>	01869 252393

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This small primary school is situated in an area with features of socio-economic disadvantage. An above average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties. Most of these pupils have moderate learning difficulties and social, emotional and behavioural needs. Almost all the pupils are of White British heritage and there are very few pupils from a home where English is an additional language. The proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is below average.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

There are good features in the satisfactory education provided by this improving school. There is a strong Christian ethos, a common sense of purpose and a clear commitment to gain the best for all pupils. Personal development and well-being and care, support and guidance are good. Pupils enjoy learning, behave well and have good attitudes to learning. Staff, pupils and governors say that these aspects have improved significantly since the previous inspection. This is because relationships are strong and pupils understand what is expected of them. As one parent commented, 'discipline is fantastic and the zero tolerance approach works very well.' Pupils know how to lead a healthy lifestyle and how to keep safe. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The school encourages a sense of social and moral responsibility and pupils respect the beliefs and views of others.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher and deputy, with strong support from senior leaders and governors, are providing the stability the school has lacked in the past. The school has faced a number of challenges linked to staffing difficulties. There is clear evidence that robust strategies to improve the quality of education and good self-evaluation are beginning to have a positive impact. The school has made good progress since the previous inspection and has good capacity for further improvement.

Pupils' standards and achievements are satisfactory. By the end of Year 6, standards are broadly average in English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT). Writing is the weaker aspect of English. Recent initiatives to improve writing are beginning to have a clear impact. There is evidence of a wider range of extended writing activities. Standards in science are below average, largely because there are too few opportunities for pupils to develop investigative approaches to learning. The curriculum is good and includes a wide variety of enhancement activities including the arts and sport. These add significantly to pupils' enjoyment and learning.

Teaching is satisfactory and improving. It is consistently good in some year groups, particularly towards the end of Key Stage 2 where behaviour is excellent and pupils have an outstanding work ethic. In most classes, day-to-day assessment is good and informs the next stage of learning. This effective and consistently good teaching is not always evident in all year groups where there is a lack of pace and challenge in the work and expectations of presentation and marking are inconsistent.

There are good links with outside agencies that support pupils' learning effectively. The school has developed good links with parents and most are supportive of the school in all aspects of its work. A few express concerns about behaviour and say that the school does not take account of their concerns and suggestions. These concerns are not supported by evidence from the inspection.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Provision in the Foundation Stage is good. Children make a positive start to school life. The curriculum is exciting and creative with a good balance of indoor and outdoor play to support the children's learning. Many children join the school with skills that are below those expected for their age. They achieve well and make good progress, although a majority do not reach all the early learning goals in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development.

The quality of teaching is good. There are effective planning, preparation and assessment procedures. These ensure that most activities meet the needs of the children successfully. When children work in the outside learning environment, adults do not maximise learning opportunities in the activities. Leadership and management are good and there is a good professional dialogue between home and other settings. This and good induction procedures help children settle quickly into school routines.

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

- Raise standards and improve pupils' achievements in writing and science.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning so that in all year groups it consistently reflects the best practice in the school.
- Provide the more able pupils with increased opportunities for investigative learning, particularly in science.
- Ensure that in some classes, the presentation of pupils' work is improved and marking provides pupils with clear and consistent guidance on how their work could be better.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Standards have risen since the previous inspection. By the end of Year 2, they are broadly average in reading and mathematics. By the end of Year 6, standards are broadly average in English, mathematics and ICT. Across the school, writing and science are the weaker subjects and standards are below average. Achievement is satisfactory overall. Over the past year, most pupils have made good progress in mathematics and reading. However, in subjects such as mathematics and particularly in science, the work for the more able pupils does not always challenge them enough. At these times, their progress slows to a satisfactory level. In their general class work, pupils who have learning difficulties make steady progress. This accelerates when they receive individual and small group support that is more intensive. Bearing in mind that the current Year 6 has a higher proportion of pupils with learning difficulties, the school is on track to reach lower but realistic targets for 2008.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Most pupils enjoy coming to school and behave well. The behaviour of the older pupils is exemplary and they have an excellent work ethic. This is the result of the high expectations of their teachers. Pupils say that on the few occasions when bullying occurs, it is dealt with successfully. They say they feel safe in school, are dealt with fairly and that an adult will help them if they have any difficulties. There is a positive learning environment. This provides good opportunities for pupils to take responsibility as school councillors, class, school and playground monitors. Older pupils are proud to be 'Playground Pals.' Pupils understand the benefits of healthy eating and exercise. They are beginning to incorporate this knowledge into their own lives. There are good opportunities to participate in sports and older pupils gain confidence and independence well through residential activities. These and the standards pupils attain prepare them satisfactorily for the next stage of their education. Attendance is broadly average and has improved since the previous inspection.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

There is some strong and highly effective teaching in the school that is helping raise pupils' achievements and accelerate the rate of progress. All lessons are planned well and good use is made of ICT to support learning. 'Talk partners' are used well to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills. Where lessons are most effective, day-to-day assessment is used effectively to plan the next stage of learning and pupils are encouraged to use success criteria to help them assess how well they have met the learning intentions. In these lessons, expectations are high and result in excellent behaviour and an outstanding work ethic. In some year groups, there is a lack of pace to the learning and teaching methods do not excite or challenge the pupils well enough. This slows down pupils' progress and results in breaks in the continuity of learning. There are inconsistencies in the quality of presentation of work and in marking. In some classes, work is poorly presented and marking does not inform pupils how they might improve or refer to their personal academic targets.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 2

The curriculum has developed well since the previous inspection. Curricular planning is good with an appropriate emphasis on English and mathematics. An extensive range of visits and visitors enhances the curriculum. There is a good range of after school clubs. These are well supported by outside specialist teachers and include sports and the arts. There are good links between subjects and these have added a greater relevance and enjoyment in learning. A current focus has been to develop writing across the curriculum and there are good examples of writing in a range of styles and for different purposes. The linking of reading to speaking and listening is helping to improve standards in this aspect of pupils' learning. ICT supports learning well across subjects. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties is satisfactory and improving.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 2

There are effective strategies for promoting pupils' personal and social development. Teaching assistants provide good additional support for pupils with learning difficulties and the very few pupils who are at the early stages of learning English. Arrangements for identifying and supporting these pupils are managed well and enable pupils to make steady progress towards achieving their targets. Pupils' academic guidance is good. The pupils have their own targets in English and mathematics and these help them assess how well they are doing. There are rigorous arrangements for child protection and conscientious risk assessments. The school works closely with parents and a range of external agencies to support pupils' learning.

## Leadership and management

#### Grade: 2

The headteacher, deputy and key subject co-ordinators have coped well with a number of staffing difficulties. With effective support from a good governing body, they have dealt with these well and kept the school on an upward path. They have been successful in improving

standards, curricular provision and pupils' personal development in a stimulating learning environment. There is no complacent acceptance of current standards and they remain determined to improve further. There is good self-evaluation, effective use of a range of performance data and regular and focused monitoring of teaching by senior leaders. These initiatives are helping to identify the right priorities for development. The senior leaders know that there is more scope to raise standards and eliminate inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and pupils' progress. Governors are effective in their support of the school and in holding it to account for the quality of education it provides. There is good administrative support that aids the smooth running of the school on a daily basis.

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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?	3
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?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

### 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	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
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	3

### The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
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	3
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	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
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**

14 February 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Edburg's Church of England (VA) School, Bicester, OX26 6BB

I am writing to say how much we enjoyed our short visit to your school. You all made us feel very welcome. It was good to see you working in lessons and to know that you enjoy school. The school council were particularly helpful and gave us much information about the school. We were impressed with your behaviour and the friendly way in which you play together and care for each other. The behaviour of the older pupils and the way in which they set about their work are excellent. We have said that your school is providing a satisfactory education that is improving well. This means that while there are many good things happening in your school there are still some important things that can improve.

You are doing well with your reading, mathematics and ICT. It is clear from what you tell us that you also enjoy sport, art and music. We have asked the teachers to help you to improve your science and writing by making these subjects more exciting and interesting. We saw some good lessons during our visit and have asked the headteacher to make sure that all your lessons are as good as these. We think some of you could improve the work in your books. We have also asked some of the teachers to ensure that when they mark your books, their comments help you to see how you can improve.

We know how much you like your headteacher and all the staff and are sure that you will do your very best to help them make your school even better.

Malcolm Johnstone

Lead Inspector