

St Ebbe's Church of England Aided Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123212
Local Authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	314542
Inspection dates	21–22 January 2008
Reporting inspector	Keith Sadler

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	260
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Jill McCleery
Headteacher	Mrs Elizabeth Burton
Date of previous school inspection	26 April 2004
School address	Whitehouse Road Oxford OX1 4NA
Telephone number	01865 248863
Fax number	01865 248817

Age group	5–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

St Ebbe's is a popular, average sized primary school. It serves an ethnically diverse community in the Grandpont area of south Oxford. Overall, the social circumstances of pupils are above average. The school has a close relationship with the local Nursery school, which children attend until the term following their fifth birthday. This arrangement means that about a third of the children do not start at the school until Year 1. The school holds the Healthy Schools and Sports Activemark awards.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

St Ebbe's is a good school. The headteacher, well-supported by her deputy and other staff with responsibilities, provides good leadership and management for the school. This has brought about improvements in the school's provision and pupils' progress in their learning. Along with improvements since the last inspection, such as the more effective monitoring of teaching and learning, this means that the school has a good capacity for further improvement. Pupils are well cared for. Parents recognise this and are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. A typical comment was, 'We are overwhelmed by the warm, enthusiastic, creative and caring atmosphere of the school'. Many commented on the welcoming nature of the staff.

Pupils' personal development is outstanding and contributes to their academic success. The very strong supportive ethos and nurturing provision enables pupils to make rapid progress in their personal development. Relationships are strong and pupils' excitement and willingness to talk about the school and learning demonstrates the pupils' love of school and learning. They behave well and relish the many opportunities to take responsibility.

There are good systems in place to check pupils' progress and the school's provision. As a result, staff have a clear understanding of the areas that need development and ensuing actions have made a positive impact on achievement. The school is successful in ensuring that pupils make good progress particularly in reading and mathematics. In consequence, by the time they leave school, standards are above average and, on occasion, exceptionally high, particularly in mathematics. As a result, pupils are prepared well for their move to secondary education. The school is rightly focussing on increasing the proportion of pupils that gain higher levels, particularly in writing. The quality of teaching and learning and the curriculum is good and this is an important feature in raising achievement and standards. Teachers have excellent relationships with pupils, manage them well, and in most lessons set them activities that fully capture their interest. This generally leads to pupils having good levels of concentration and a strong willingness to achieve well. However, in some lessons, work is not always matched well enough to differing abilities, which slows learning, particularly for the more able.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Many parents commented on the very good arrangements to help their children to make a smooth transition from the Nursery. Children quickly settle and, because their personal and social skills are good, they soon become confident and secure learners. Children's communication, language and literacy skills are average when they enter the school. In consequence, the Reception teacher places a particular emphasis on children's reading and writing skills. These are taught well and children make particularly good progress in these areas. Assessment of children's attainment, through regular observations, is thorough. The good curriculum ensures that there is a suitable balance of activities for both indoor and outdoor learning, and also for children to make choices for themselves as well as being directed by staff. As a result, children make good progress in all areas of learning. By the time that they enter Year 1, most children attain the expected goals and many exceed them.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase the proportion of pupils gaining the higher level at the end of Year 6, particularly in writing.

- Develop more consistency in teaching to bring lessons up to the quality of the best.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children enter the Reception class, or Year 1, with skills and abilities that are above those typically found, particularly in their personal, social and emotional development. From these above average starting points, pupils achieve well in both key stages. This includes those with learning difficulties and those learning English as an additional language, due to the well focused support they receive. Achievement is particularly strong in mathematics and reading, both at Key Stages 1 and 2. In national tests at the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment overall is significantly above average and, on occasion exceptionally high, as it was in 2006. Current Year 5 and 6 pupils are on course to continue to attain these high standards.

The school is working hard to tackle its weaker areas. Standards in writing, though above average, are not as high as in reading. The school has placed an emphasis on raising achievement in writing, and there are indications that this is having a positive impact. Current data shows that pupils' progress is quickening and the gap in attainment between reading and writing is reducing. The school has always placed a strong focus on creative writing. It is the renewed emphasis on improving pupils' grammar, spelling and presentation that is raising attainment.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The school's very strong ethos of support and nurture is reflected in the pupils' outstanding personal development. Their spiritual moral and social development is excellent. They are reflective in lessons and in assemblies, and have a highly developed sense of what is right and wrong. Their cultural development is good and they respond well to the many opportunities in the curriculum, particularly in the arts. The pupils' social skills are a particular strength. For example in a drama lesson Year 5 and 6 pupils showed outstanding collaboration and co-operation. Older pupils contribute very well to the school community. They willingly take responsibility for younger pupils at lunch times. Pupils have an active voice in the school through the school council. Attendance figures are satisfactory and the school works hard to improve these. Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to live a healthy lifestyle through participation in a wide range of sports and healthy eating. The number of pupils that cycle to school is particularly high. They have a good knowledge how to keep themselves safe due to the many opportunities provided by the school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

In all classes, teachers manage the pupils well. Classes provide a calm and purposeful environment in which pupils learn well. In most lessons, teachers take care to plan work that is challenging for all groups of pupils. This quickens learning and ensures that the lesson objectives are met successfully. 'We like it best when work is hard because it makes us think,' said one pupil. On occasions, however, work is set that is not challenging enough, especially for more able pupils. Learning support staff provide valuable support, particularly for those pupils that find learning difficult. Their interventions and support enable these pupils to make good progress. The school has placed a good emphasis on strengthening pupils' involvement in their learning. Teachers

ensure that lesson objectives are clear and pupils know what is expected of them. This involves pupils in their learning and supports their independence well.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum promotes the pupils' personal and academic development well. The school is working successfully to make the curriculum more creative and interesting, and this is increasing pupils' enjoyment of learning. Most curricular planning ensures that work is well-matched to the pupils' differing learning needs. The school is rightly ensuring that this extends to all plans. There is a good range of additional activities comprising educational visits, visiting speakers and clubs. Pupils speak enthusiastically about arts weeks and residential trips. A rolling programme of topics ensures that pupils in mixed-age classes do not repeat work. Good opportunities are identified to practise literacy, numeracy and ICT skills in other subjects, such as writing a report about a rainforest creature. The school's programme for personal, social and health education is a particular strength and contributes effectively to pupils' personal development and well-being. Activities such as starting and running a small business in preparation for the summer fete, contribute successfully to pupils' academic learning as well as developing skills they will use in later life.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school is vigilant to ensure that pupils are safeguarded well. Pupils flourish in both their academic and personal development because adults know them well and take great care to support them effectively. Risk assessments are robust and timely, for example the pathway near the river was carefully monitored during the inspection due to the risk of local flooding. Good links with outside agencies ensure that the needs of pupils are met, especially if they are vulnerable or have additional needs. The guidance and support for pupils with learning difficulties is good and helps them to feel an important part of the school community and to progress well. Pupils' progress is tracked and recorded well. Pupils have individual targets to guide their learning. However, teachers' marking does not always indicate to pupils their progress towards meeting these targets.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher leads the school with a clear vision and increased rigour. Her good leadership and management ensures that all staff with responsibilities are given a voice in decision-making and are also held to account for their work. As a result, staff work closely as a team, willingly take on responsibility, and provide good leadership themselves. They are fully involved in the monitoring and evaluation process. The governors fulfil their roles well and are highly committed to the further development of the school. They support and challenge the school effectively, are directly involved in its work and have a good appreciation of the school's position.

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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	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	2
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 February 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Ebbe's Church of England Aided Primary School, Oxford, OX1 4NA

Thank you for being so helpful and friendly when we visited your school. We really enjoyed meeting and talking with you and watching you learn. We can understand why you like school so much. We agree with your parents that yours is a good school and all the adults look after you very well. You told us that you enjoy lessons and learning and that your teachers are kind to you. We can see that this helps you to do well in lessons because teachers know how to make your work interesting so that you learn new things.

We were impressed with your good behaviour and we could see that you get on well together. We thought that older children are very kind to younger ones and you enjoy looking after them. The staff take good care of you and those of you that need extra help are well supported.

Your headteacher and governors run the school well and know how to make it even better in the future. There are two things that we have asked to be done. Firstly to ensure that more of you reach the higher level at the end of Year 6 particularly in writing. Secondly, we have asked that all lessons are as interesting for you as the best ones, and challenge all of you to do your very best.

You can help by making sure that you work hard to meet your targets.

Best wishes

Keith Sadler

Lead Inspector