

Ashton Keynes Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	126297
Local Authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	315482
Inspection date	8 October 2007
Reporting inspector	Geoff Burgess

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	186
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Tarr
Headteacher	Maggie Carleton
Date of previous school inspection	10 December 2002
School address	Gosditch Ashton Keynes Swindon SN6 6NZ
Telephone number	01285 861436
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: • standards in mathematics have been lower than in English and science in the past two years • recent data suggested that girls' achievement is better than boys • what makes the school's curriculum and provision for care, guidance and support outstanding as the school suggests? Evidence was gathered from: • latest national test results, the school's records, latest targets, pupils' work, and discussions with school leaders • first-hand evidence in the school, interviews with staff and pupils, parental responses, an analysis of school documentation. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but inspectors 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

With a significant inflow of pupils into all classes in recent years, this village school has grown significantly. The great majority of pupils are White British. Levels of social deprivation are low in the local area. Very few pupils are eligible for free school meals. Children start school with above average abilities in most years, but though the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD) is similar to most schools, the number of pupils with considerable special needs is higher than usual.

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, highly regarded by parents and the local community. A parent describes it as 'an excellent place of learning which is helping our children to realise their academic and social potential'. To its great credit, the school has maintained high standards during a period of significant expansion and change during which it very successfully welcomed a significant number of pupils and families from a recently closed neighbouring school into the school community. It also carried through a very ambitious project to upgrade the learning environment, both inside and out. The school's leadership has been very effective and efficient in managing both while preserving the school's very good record in national testing and in enhancing pupils' personal development. This is a good indication of a well run school with a positive and forward-looking ethos. Equally ambitious plans for the future reinforce the view that the school is in a good position to keep on improving.

Thanks to consistently good teaching and the high quality support of skilled teaching assistants, achievement in English, mathematics and science is good. Standards are above average in almost all year groups, including the Foundation Stage, as shown by consistently above average results in national testing. Where, in one year group, overall standards are average, this is associated with a concentration of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD). The school's records show that pupils with LDD achieve well throughout the school thanks to very effective and focused support and there are already signs that this year group is catching up with other year groups. The school acknowledges that although standards are above average in all subjects, in recent years they have not been as high in mathematics as in English and science, mainly because fewer higher attainers achieved higher grades. Although recent data suggested that girls were achieving better than boys, inspection evidence did not bear this out. A noteworthy feature of this school is that pupils achieve higher standards than usual in other subjects such as physical education (PE) and music.

This is a happy school. A parent reflects the views of many by commenting, 'My children love going to school and are full of enthusiasm', a view reinforced by pupils' views, their high attendance levels and the evidence of first-hand observations in the classrooms. An important factor in this has been the 'very smooth transition' of the many pupils who have been welcomed into the school recently. This is much appreciated by their parents. Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. They are polite, trustworthy and hardworking. Staff, acting as excellent role models, are proud that relationships throughout the whole school community are so good. Pupils' social and moral development is excellent. Strong connections with the local church community and the school's priority of ensuring that pupils experience and value other cultures ensure that their spiritual and cultural development is good. Very good attention is given to ensuring that pupils are healthy, fit and safe. Staff are vigilant about keeping records and fulfilling statutory requirements. Pupils are confident that they can go to any adult for help. The school works extremely well with parents to ensure that their children have every opportunity to succeed. Parents are very pleased that 'any concerns are dealt with professionally but with a great deal of care and understanding'. The school's focus on PE motivates pupils to join in with the many sports activities on offer. Good attention was given to making the grounds a good place for pupils to both be active and have the space to sit quietly.

A parent notes that 'a lot of the school's enormous success comes from the sense of community there'. This sums up the school's very inclusive ethos and the way in which pupils are encouraged to take responsibility within the school and get involved in the local community. With the head

taking the lead, the partnerships the school has formed with village organisations and other schools make a very important contribution to pupils' personal development and to the life of the school. With high standards in literacy and numeracy and good competence in using information and communication technology, the opportunities pupils have to contribute in school and in the local area prepare them well for the next stage of their education and later life.

Pupils really enjoy their education because the things they do are engaging, relevant, and, in their words, 'fun'. They particularly enjoy the school's topic-based approach and the many extras they can take part in, both during the school day and after school. Key elements in this are the use made of the interests and subject strengths among the teaching staff, many of whom share jobs, and the excellent use the school makes of outside expertise, especially in physical education and music. This was seen during the inspection, with groups of pupils learning a range of orchestral instruments and a music specialist from the local secondary school working with the Year 6 class.

The outstanding provision for pupils' care, guidance and support is much appreciated by parents, one of whom notes that 'a mix of discipline and caring attitudes make it a truly remarkable school'. A good example can be seen in the positive and very effective way it has supported and guided children from traveller families so that they can take full advantage of the opportunities presented by the school. High quality academic guidance ensures that teachers, pupils and parents are aware of how well pupils are doing and what they need to do to improve. Good procedures for setting individual and school targets and tracking improvements have promoted good, and sometimes very good, progress among most pupils; and ensure that the school is well placed to raise standards even higher.

The school's arrangements for monitoring the quality and impact of its provision work well. It is very open and realistic about its strengths and weaknesses. Expectations are high throughout the school community and all members are ambitious for the school to build on the many improvements already put in place. By using all available funding, including very substantial fund-raising by the school community, big improvements have been made to the school's facilities. With the chair a constant champion of the school's cause, the governing body forms a powerful source of expertise and support in these and many other areas. However, key to the school's success over many years has been the contribution of the headteacher. Her sustained enthusiasm, commitment and dedication are hugely respected by colleagues, governors and parents and, in the words of a parent, 'The kids love her'.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The popularity of the school meant that the Reception class was oversubscribed this year. At the time of the inspection, those children who gained a place had been in the school for a few weeks. Good induction procedures and good provision have seen boys and girls make a very good start to their time in school. They are happy, confident and fully involved in all that is going on. The school's records show that children make good progress in all areas of learning and that most achieve the early learning goals before the end of their Foundation Year. Parents of children in the Reception class are very pleased with the way their children have settled into school and the progress they are making.

What the school should do to improve further

- Match high standards in English and science by improving achievement in mathematics, especially among higher attainers.

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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	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	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?	1

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	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
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

10 October 2007

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Ashton Keynes CE Primary School, Swindon, SN6 6NZ

I thoroughly enjoyed my visit to your school and wished I could have spent a bit more time talking to you and sharing all the interesting things I saw you enjoying. Thank you for making me feel so welcome. You obviously love all the improvements to the buildings and the grounds and, like you, I think it is a good school.

I particularly liked these things:

- Your behaviour is excellent. You work hard and do your best.
- Everybody gets on very well together.
- I agree with you that your teachers and helpers are good at helping you learn and you make good progress. Lots of you are good at music and PE.
- The things you have to do in class are interesting and fun and your teachers arrange a lot of extra activities for you to enjoy.
- The school is very involved in village activities.
- You know you are safe and that there is always someone to turn to.
- I know you appreciate all the grown-ups do to make sure your time in school is as happy as possible.
- Your headteacher is great at making it possible for everyone to do their best and making the very best use of all the school's resources.

To make things even better, I have asked your school to:

- set you targets that are a little bit harder each year so that by the time you leave, you have made even better progress
- help you to do as well in mathematics as you do in other subjects.

You can help too by continuing to work hard and do your best. Again, thank you for all you do to make your school as good as it is. It was a pleasure for me to share it with you for a short time.

Yours sincerely,

Geoff Burgess (Lead inspector)

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