

Lea and Garsdon Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	126335
Local Authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	315502
Inspection date	29 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Peter Sudworth

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	97
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tim Culling
Headteacher	Elisabeth Mary Bowyer
Date of previous school inspection	1 March 2004
School address	The Street Lea Malmesbury SN16 9PG
Telephone number	01666 823534
Fax number	01666 823534

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school with a particular focus on: pupils' progress in science, mathematics and writing, assessment arrangements and their effectiveness in supporting pupils' progress, and the provision for mixed-age classes. Other aspects of the school were not investigated in detail but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's assessments given in its self-evaluation were not justified and these have been included where appropriate in the report.

Evidence was gathered from discussions with the headteacher, the chair of the governing body, various staff and pupils. Parents' questionnaires were analysed. Visits were made to lessons and to an assembly. Work samples and a range of documents and data were examined.

Description of the school

Half the pupils come from the school's traditional catchment area and the other pupils are drawn from Malmesbury and a range of villages. There are four mixed-age classes. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is much lower than the national average. Currently, the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is higher than in most schools with a heavy concentration in Years 3 to 6 where approximately one in three are on the special needs register. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. Pupils have usually attended some form of pre-school provision before entry at age four. The school has gained several local and national awards. There are small cohorts in the school, which means that tables of results in percentages need cautious interpretation.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Lea and Garsdon Church of England Primary School is a good school. Pupils achieve well and by the end of Year 6, standards in English, mathematics and science are above average. Children get off to a good start in the Foundation Stage. They settle quickly and acquire good working attitudes. Levels of attainment have been rising consistently by Year 2 in recent years. They were above average in 2007, although few pupils reached the higher level in writing.

The vast majority of parents strongly support the school. They speak highly of the provision made for their children. One parent's comment sums up the views of many. 'I am very pleased with the school and my child's progress. The fact my child wants to go to school every day and enjoys it says it all.' Pupils' excellent attendance is testimony to their thorough enjoyment of school. 'School is fun', they say. Pupils' outstanding behaviour and very good relationships with other children and the respect that they show to their teachers support their good progress. They have clear views of justice and fairness. They have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe and of living healthily. Pupils engage well in both the school and local communities. They undertake a range of different school duties efficiently, such as helping with assembly arrangements, which contribute to their sense of responsibility. The developing school council has already contributed ideas to the running of the school, such as suggesting improvements for wet playtimes. Pupils engage well in the extra activities that staff provide.

Trips out locally and further afield, and the good use of visitors add variety to the school curriculum and enhance pupils' knowledge. Year 6 pupils put on helmets that they had made to walk around the local market town as they investigated Civil War battles. Other pupils dressed up as Victorian children and attended a 'Victorian School'. These first-hand experiences bring a real sense of meaning to their studies and make learning enjoyable. Staff teach many of the basic skills of English and mathematics effectively and pupils are prepared well for the next stage of their education. Nevertheless, the tracking of pupils' progress across the years is not sufficiently rigorous and staff do not always measure rates of progress precisely enough.

The school has a warm, friendly feel. Staff work well together as a team. Pupils appreciate each other's efforts. They applauded spontaneously in assembly the art club's decorations for Christmas. Pupils are confident in the school staff and feel safe. The headteacher and staff have positive relationships with parents and make themselves available to discuss any concerns about their children's progress. Staff make classroom learning environments attractive and present pupils' work on the walls with care. However, they do not ensure consistently that pupils organise their own completed work with the same attention. Some pupils do not show enough pride in what they have accomplished. Work from different subjects sometimes gets mixed up, especially when they record it in files. It is then not easy to track pupils' progress and for pupils to look back on their work. Teachers often praise pupils' efforts in the regularly marked work but miss opportunities to help them to improve it, especially in the technical quality of their writing. As a result, pupils do not reach the same high standard in writing as in their reading. Individual target setting is too irregular for many pupils in English and mathematics to help them reach even higher standards.

The provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is outstanding. The expertise of the special needs coordinator and the early identification of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are big factors in the very good progress that these pupils make. Accurate diagnosis of need, targeting of specific resources and well chosen strategies help overcome

individual difficulties. Discussions with pupils about the methods that have helped them the best really make them feel valued and promote their keenness to overcome problems. The technique to get them to teach others the concept they have learned imaginatively checks out their understanding to the full and raises their self-esteem.

Staff have good subject knowledge in English and raise pupils' appreciation of literature with well chosen texts. The teaching of reading is a real strength. Year 6 pupils, for example, studying a text by Dylan Thomas, could select images from his work and explain them. Consequently, they were able to create their own images, such as 'Flakes of snow like crystals in the pale of the moonlight'. Staff provide well for the mixed-age classes and pupils' different capabilities. Art is taught well and pupils have a good range of experiences throughout the school which allow them to try out some of the techniques and styles of master artists. Their artwork is retained and treasured in individual and well maintained portfolios.

Assemblies are very spiritual, reflect the school's Christian character admirably and have a real sense of occasion. Pupils' keen involvement in them, such as in action songs and participation in discussion, adds to their interest. The assembly observed had variety in creation as its focus. It emphasised the uniqueness of individuals and their different characteristics and skills. The colourful and visual approach, including outstanding use of modern technology, enthralled the pupils and gripped their attention throughout.

The headteacher's own teaching commitment earns her respect, enables her to know the pupils well, to keep abreast of changing curriculum requirements in action and so resolve issues that arise with a first-hand knowledge. The school's self-evaluation is effective. It has led to current initiatives to improve writing and to develop pupils' global awareness through supporting a link project in Africa. The governing body is well led by its chair. It fulfils its statutory responsibilities and has a good committee structure. Several governors are new but there is a keenness to improve further so that they can contribute more to the school's strategic development. The school has made good progress since the last inspection and has a good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children's attainment on entry is broadly in line with the levels expected for their age. They make good progress in the Reception class where the complementary skills of the two part-time teachers and their shared good leadership provide the children with a good range of experiences. Teaching is good. Children used 'small world' models to re-enact the story of 'Three Billy Goats Gruff' and with adult support, increased their knowledge of letters by writing a simple phrase to stick on their paintings of the troll. Most children reach the expected learning goals by the end of the Reception class with strengths in their physical and creative development. The staff's ongoing assessment of the children's progress is especially good in communication, language and literacy and in their mathematical development. Planning and assessment are not as thorough in other areas of learning. Children relate well to one another and form good relationships. The outside provision is very limited but staff use the playground effectively at set times to compensate. Children are adept at choosing their own tasks and independently keep to the number of children allowed to pursue different activities at any one time. They use their time profitably.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve pupils' writing skills so that they make similar rates of progress to those that they make in reading.
- Improve the quality of teachers' marking and the use of pupils' individual targets and track pupils' progress more rigorously across the school.

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	1

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	1
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	1
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	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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you for the warm welcome that you gave me when I visited your school, for showing me your work and for talking to me about what your school is like. You attend a good school and clearly enjoy it, shown by your excellent attendance. Most of you find learning fun. You certainly appreciate the extra activities that the staff provide and the visits that they arrange for you to places of interest, such as to farms and museums.

You are developing well as young people. I was most impressed with your excellent attitudes to learning. Your behaviour is outstanding both in class and around the school. I was very pleased to see the good progress that you are making overall. Those of you who do not find learning easy are making very good progress because of the special help you receive.

You achieve well in your work and, overall, results are better than those in the country as a whole. Although you attend a good school, there are some things that the school can do to help you to do even better. I have asked your teachers to help you to improve your writing more because your progress in this is not as rapid as that in your reading. I have also suggested that they can be more helpful when they mark your work so you know how you can make it even better. I have also requested staff to set you targets for improvement more regularly in mathematics and English and to track your progress much more closely during your years in the school. This will help staff to find out which pupils are not making expected progress and help them to catch up. It will also enable staff to challenge those of you who are doing really well.

Thank you once again for your friendly welcome and help. I wish you all very well for the future. I hope that you will continue to work hard and so reach the ambitions you have for yourselves.



29 November 2007

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Lea and Garsdon Church of England Primary School, Lea,
Malmesbury, SN16 9PG**

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Yours sincerely

Peter Sudworth
Lead inspector