

Seagry Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	126352
Local Authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	315511
Inspection date	28 February 2008
Reporting inspector	Paul Sadler

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	58
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Graham Lawrence
Headteacher	Jane Helyar
Date of previous school inspection	1 June 2003
School address	Upper Seagry Chippenham SN15 5EX
Telephone number	01249 720213
Fax number	01249 720213

Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This small school serves three villages and the surrounding area. Almost all pupils are of White British ethnicity and the proportion that speaks a language other than English at home is low. The proportions of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, or in receipt of free school meals are well below average.

A new headteacher took up her post in September 2007, having been acting headteacher since April 2007. The headteacher was absent on sick leave during the inspection.

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 in which pupils achieve well. Standards have improved rapidly since 2005 when they were significantly below average, following intensive support from the local authority. Children start school with the expected skills and abilities. They make good progress throughout the school. Pupils leaving Year 6 in 2007 attained above average standards in national tests in English and science, and average standards in mathematics. The work of current pupils shows that standards are continuing to improve, and are above average in all subjects including mathematics.

Pupils enjoy school and say that lessons have become more interesting recently as teachers make the tasks they are set are clearer. Although the attendance of almost all pupils is good, the school does not take sufficient action to improve the attendance of the very few who do not come to school regularly. Pupils behave well, especially in lessons, although a few report that bullying occurs occasionally. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep healthy and safe. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, because of the school's Christian ethos and the work done to broaden pupils' understanding of other faiths and cultures.

Teaching is consistently good throughout the school. Assessment is thorough and accurate, and is used well to plan work that is well matched to pupils' abilities. Assessment is especially good in the Foundation Stage, where detailed records clearly demonstrate each child's progress. Marking is a strength throughout the school. Teachers make helpful comments that enable pupils to improve their work, and pupils also assess their own understanding of what they have done, which is very helpful in identifying areas where further explanation is needed. Pupils are set targets, which enable them to understand their progress with even greater clarity. The curriculum is good because the work is matched well to pupils' needs and there is a good range of out-of-school activities, although owing to limitations in staff expertise there are weaknesses in some aspects of music and modern foreign languages, which the school is rightly seeking to rectify, for instance through greater collaboration with other local schools.

Leaders and managers have achieved a great deal has been over the past year, the priorities rightly having been to raise standards and improve teaching. Leaders and managers, with very good support from the local authority, have correctly identified necessary actions. Some things, however, have been missed, such as the need to ensure that all staff have up-to-date training in matters such as health and safety and child protection. The quality of subject and other middle leadership is good. The responsibilities of these staff have recently been changed significantly, but it is too early to assess the impact of these changes. The chair of governors provides dynamic leadership for a re-invigorated governing body which supports the school well. Effective action has been taken to improve leadership and management, although some statutory responsibilities have yet to be met in full such as the updating of policies concerning discrimination. Most parents recognise the positive impact of recent changes at the school, although some have yet to be convinced of the benefits to their children. Overall, there has been good improvement since the last inspection, especially more recently, and the school is in a good position for this to continue.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The Foundation Stage is effective because rigorous and thorough assessment is used well to ensure that children make good progress. There are good links with pre-schools and with parents, who help to record their child's progress. Teaching focuses appropriately on developing children's social skills and positive relationships with others. The teacher and teaching assistant work well together as a team. The curriculum has an appropriate range of play and more formal activities including a programme to develop children's knowledge of letter sounds. This gives them a good start to more formal learning. The Foundation Stage is resourced well with plenty of space indoors and out, although outdoor covered space is limited.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that the use of monitoring and evaluation, already effective in improving teaching and raising standards, is extended to other aspects of the school's work such as improving attendance.
- Ensure that all staff receive training in the current requirements for health and safety, and for child protection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils make good progress throughout the school. By the end of the Foundation Stage, most exceed the goals set for children of their age, with particular strengths in their creative development and their knowledge of the world. By the end of Year 2, they attain above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. In Years 3 to 6, they continue to make good progress, for instance pupils in Years 5 and 6 write at length with accuracy, flair and imagination and can calculate percentages and fractions with ease. All pupils make good progress in other subjects such as information and communication technology (ICT), drama and physical education. Pupils' attainments at the end of Year 6 have shown a marked improvement in the recent past and are now above average. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and the more able, make equally good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils have good attitudes to learning and behave well. A few younger pupils sometimes refuse to cooperate, but explanation and encouragement by staff soon have them working well. Pupils say they enjoy school and recognise recent improvements in the quality of teaching. Attendance is average, although almost all pupils have good attendance. The few cases of poor attendance are not followed up adequately, and the school does not always challenge requests to authorise absence for reasons other than the pupil's illness.

Pupils make a good contribution to the school and wider communities, for instance as members of the school council, by helping younger pupils or by collecting for charity. They know a lot about healthy diet, the need for exercise and of how to keep safe. The skills they will need in adult life, such as literacy, numeracy and ICT, are developing well. The school's good Christian ethos is evident through assemblies and displays. Pupils show tolerance and understanding of those with different beliefs and lifestyles.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is consistently good in all classes. A particular strength is the use of a variety of forms of assessment that are used well to plan appropriate work. This enables all pupils to make good progress in classes where there is a wide range of age and ability, although on a few occasions the most able pupils find the work easy. Pupils collaborate well, discussing their work with maturity and enthusiasm. They use the teachers' very good marking, their own assessments of their understanding of the work, and the targets set in discussion with teachers to ensure they continue to make good progress. Teachers also use assessment information well to identify those who can benefit from additional support, or who have particular abilities, which can be met through partnerships with other schools, for instance in sport or mathematics.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum meets the needs of pupils because of the effective planning of work based on information from assessments. There is a good range of additional activities including educational visits, clubs and sport. In a few areas, such as music and modern foreign languages, provision is weaker, in part because of the limited expertise of staff in these areas. The school is developing partnerships with other local schools in order to improve the curriculum. Pupils already recognise that this is leading to more opportunities for competitive sport and staff are working with others to ensure that skills such as literacy are developed through an exciting range of activities in other subjects.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Staff know the pupils and their parents very well and always make their care and welfare a high priority. However, some aspects of the required systems to ensure the care and welfare of pupils are not as rigorous as they should be. For example, some staff have not received up-to-date training on requirements for child protection or concerning health and safety, although plans are in place to rectify the former.

Pupils receive good academic guidance because of the effective use of marking and targets that show them how to improve their work and what they need to learn next. The pupils have a good understanding of the purpose of these approaches and older pupils say that they feel well prepared for secondary school. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive good guidance through their individual education plans, and hence achieve well.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leaders and managers, with good support from the local authority, have brought about rapid improvements in teaching that are leading to improved progress by pupils. This is the result of accurate monitoring that has correctly identified what needs to be improved. Subject and aspect leaders are now clearer about their roles, and are having a good impact on raising standards.

This effective monitoring and evaluation has not yet extended to all aspects of the school's work and as a result, some areas, such as attendance and aspects of staff training, are still in need of attention. The governors have taken difficult decisions effectively and with decisiveness. Some of the requirements for policies required by law, such as to tackle discrimination, still need some attention. They set challenging targets that are usually achieved. The target for mathematics attainment was missed in 2007, but the school's data on the progress of current pupils indicate that it is likely to be achieved in 2008.

Some aspects of leadership and management are innovative and dynamic, especially given the size of the school. These include the work to promote and improve partnerships between schools in the area. The rapid pace of change at the school in the recent past has understandably caused disquiet among some parents. However, it is clear that leaders and governors have made great efforts to communicate well with parents, for instance through the excellent school website.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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?	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	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?	3

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	3
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

Dear Pupils

Seagry CE Primary School, Chippenham, SN15 5EX

We very much enjoyed talking to you and seeing your work when we visited your school recently. We want to thank you for spending time with us. We especially enjoyed talking to you as we found you confident, friendly and able to express your views very clearly. We especially enjoyed hearing your poems and prayers for mothers in assembly.

Yours is a good school. These are some of the most important things about it.

- You all make good progress and pupils in Year 6 get above average results in tests and assessments, except in mathematics where results are average.
- Teaching is good. You told us you are now clear about what you have to do. The teachers' marking helps you to improve your work.
- You know a lot about how to keep healthy by eating the right food and taking lots of exercise. You have a good understanding of right and wrong and of how to keep safe.
- Your behaviour is good and we were particularly impressed by the way you listen to each other and comment on each other's work, and on how well you listen to teachers. You told us that there is a bit of bullying, but that you are working with the staff to stop it.
- You told us that you enjoy school a lot, especially all the different activities on offer including trips and sport.
- Teachers tell you how to improve your work by setting you targets, which you understand well.
- The headteacher, other staff and governors lead the school well. All the staff play an important part in making Seagry CE Primary a good school.

We have asked the school to improve by making sure that you all attend school when you should, and that the staff have training on some recent changes in the law. You can help by making sure you always come to school unless you are ill.

Yours sincerely

Paul Sadler Lead inspector

4 March 2008

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