

Great Bedwyn Church of England School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	126391
Local Authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	315527
Inspection date	4 December 2007
Reporting inspector	Lorna Brackstone

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	195
School	
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Gordon Stone
Headteacher	Anne Davidson
Date of previous school inspection	23 March 2004
School address	Farm Lane Great Bedwyn Marlborough SN8 3TR
Telephone number	01672 870482
Fax number	01672 870482

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: ways the school is improving writing skills, exploring the role of governors and evaluating the accuracy of the school's self-evaluation. Evidence was gathered through classroom observations, work sampling and discussions with pupils, staff and governors. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were modest, and these have been upgraded where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This average-sized school serves the local village. Nearly all pupils are of White British heritage and all speak English fluently. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD) is below average. Pupils are taught in one class per year group. The school has been awarded numerous nationally recognised awards, including healthy schools and high standards in art and physical education. Children start school with standards that are as expected for their age group.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This school provides an outstanding quality of education. Most parents endorse this view and 'feel very fortunate to have such an excellent school' for their children. Pupils' achievement is outstanding and they attain exceptionally high standards by the end of Year 6. Preparation for the next step in their education is excellent. Pupils enjoy learning because their teachers make lessons extremely interesting. Challenging questions ensure that pupils are fully engaged in their exciting work which is planned meticulously to meet all their needs. The most able pupils benefit from specialist group activities where the teachers ensure that there is a successful extension of their skills.

The curriculum promotes pupils' personal development and well-being extremely well. Pupils know how to keep healthy but not all take advantage of the home cooked, nutritious meals on offer. Regular physical education lessons, high quality after-school sporting events and the daily 'wake and shake' sessions ensure that they understand the importance of keeping fit. The effective teaching of key skills, which are developed through interesting and stimulating topics, link subjects together exceptionally well. For example, Vincent Van Gogh's painting of 'Under the Stars' has been used to develop a themed approach to studying light. This has included work on the moon and stars and featured a dance presentation of 'Starlight Express'. Excellent use is made of visits to places of interest, such as Hampton Court and the National Portrait Gallery, to promote learning and motivate the pupils. First-hand experiences of cultures and faiths other than their own are appreciated during a 'diversity week' and through the richness of provision for music and dance. These activities have a significant impact on their learning. By linking with a school in Gambia, they have developed a very good understanding of living within the wider community. This prepares them very well for living in the modern world.

Pupils are confident learners because there is a mutual respect for everyone's views and opinions. As one parent explained, 'The school has a great atmosphere which encourages them to learn.' Consequently, the children happily participate in class discussions and collaborate extremely well with their partners. For example, pupils explored a painting of Queen Elizabeth II and discussed with ease why certain features had been painted in a particular way. Pupils are sensible and maturely adopt safe practices in and around school. There is a very clear understanding of the school rule that emphasises everyone should be kind to each other. This ensures that behaviour is of an extremely high standard. Pupils are valued and the outstanding relationships throughout school enable them to feel very safe and extremely well cared for and supported. As one parent summed up, 'The staff obviously care about the welfare of every child.' The very good verbal feedback pupils receive from teachers ensures that they know how they have done in individual lessons. However, whilst some teachers provide pupils with good levels of information on how they can improve their written work, this is not a consistent feature throughout the school.

Leaders and managers have an accurate view of the areas requiring development but are modest about the school's effectiveness. Those teachers with responsibilities for subjects or aspects of the school's work carry them out effectively by gathering evidence on what works well and what needs to be improved. This contributes well to the improvement of pupils' achievement. For example, the school is fully aware that pupils' writing skills in Year 6 are not as high as the standards achieved in reading, mathematics and science. They have already introduced a greater use of drama and role play in stimulating writing and make sure that topics interest boys and

girls. A systematic approach to the teaching of letter sounds has been devised to support the development of writing and improvements have been measured against these initiatives. Pupils of all abilities are set very challenging targets to improve their learning and pupils have a good understanding of what is expected of them. Exceptionally good use is made of governors' professional knowledge and expertise to evaluate the work of the school and secure on-going improvements. The school has made a good improvement since the last inspection. It has an excellent capacity for improvements in the future.

Staff and pupils benefit from the excellent collaboration with other local schools. This develops staff expertise because good practice is shared. Pupils' social skills are promoted well through football and netball tournaments. Close links with a local restaurant provided a unique opportunity for the older pupils to learn workplace skills. They worked alongside the restaurant staff as team members and developed their perseverance and problem-solving skills. This prepared them exceptionally well for their future economic well-being.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Very good planning and teaching means that children in the Reception class achieve well. Most reach, and sometimes exceed, the goals expected of them by the end of the year. An excellent choice of suitable themes for learning ensures that the children are engaged and motivated in their learning. For example, a topic on nursery rhymes supports children's recognition and use of money skills when they talk about 'Sing a Song of Sixpence'. Support staff and other adults who volunteer their time contribute well to children's development. The outdoor area is very well resourced. It is used extremely effectively to promote children's confidence, independence and physical development.

What the school should do to improve further

- ensure that the marking of writing is of a consistently high standard across the school so that all pupils know what they need to do to improve their skills.

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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?	1
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	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
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?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
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	1
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

4 December 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Great Bedwyn Church of England School, Marlborough, SN8 3TR

A big thank you for making me feel so welcome at your school. I enjoyed spending time with you and finding out about Great Bedwyn School. I would like to say a special thank you to those pupils who talked with me about your school.

Your school provides you with an excellent education. Your work is of an exceptionally high standard and your achievement throughout the school is outstanding. I was very impressed with the way you use your literacy and numeracy skills across all your subjects. The art work you produce when you study different topics, such as 'Mr Gumpy's Motor Car', the Tudors and 'Movement' is outstanding. You use your exceptional talents to produce high quality music and dance performances to illustrate what you have learnt. Your teachers have excellent skills and make sure that you are always engaged in your learning.

It is very clear that you take a full part in the life of the school and enjoy coming to school. The teachers plan extremely interesting activities that are meaningful to you. I enjoyed hearing about the visits you go on and was very interested to learn about your residential trip to Wales when you are in Year 6. You have a good knowledge of how to keep fit and healthy. You feel safe because the school looks after you well and you told me there is always someone you can talk to about a problem.

Your headteacher and the other adults involved in leading and managing your school do an excellent job. They make sure that you receive the best possible education. I have asked your teachers to make sure that they explain to you how you can improve your writing skills when they mark your work.

Once again, thank you for your help. Keep doing your best and working with the adults in school to make sure that Great Bedwyn School gets even better.

Best wishes

Yours sincerely

Lorna Brackstone Lead inspector

4 December 2007

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Lorna Brackstone
Lead inspector