

Alderbury and West Grimstead Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	126445
Local Authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	315550
Inspection dates	28–29 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Richard Blackmore

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	179
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Nick Gardener
Headteacher	Patrick Macey
Date of previous school inspection	1 July 2002
School address	Firs Road Alderbury Salisbury SP5 3BD
Telephone number	01722 710464
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Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is a little smaller than most other primary schools nationally. It offers a before and after school club. Most pupils are of White British background. Pupils enter the Foundation Stage with the standards expected for 4-year-olds. The proportion of pupils having learning difficulties and/or disabilities and pupils with a statement of educational need is below average. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is low, as is the percentage for whom English is an additional language.

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. Pupils' achievement is good and standards are above average by the end of Year 6. This is a school that knows itself well. It understands the areas for improvement and has learning and care as a key focus for its work. One parent wrote that her child 'loves the school community and learns well in the school environment'. The staff work well as a team to provide an environment in which pupils succeed. The school has made good progress since the last inspection and has good capacity for further improvement. However, the school knows it has work to do in raising standards in the Foundation Stage because children's current progress is satisfactory rather than good. This is partly because of insufficient opportunities for independent learning.

Successful learning in Years 1 to 6 is developed through good and sometimes outstanding teaching. There are good links made between subjects which make the learning of key skills more meaningful. There are good examples of pupils' writing in history, including high quality and thoughtful poems written about Remembrance Sunday. Pupils study the full range of subjects, which are enhanced by visitors, trips and effective use of interesting resources. Teachers use challenging questions to develop and sharpen thinking in a range of subjects. For example, Year 4 pupils in a religious education (RE) lesson were asked to consider the suitability of the same rules for different groups of people. Pupils have an extensive range of opportunities to learn new skills through the good range of clubs that pupils talk about positively, including music lessons which cover an impressive range of instruments. However, the Foundation Stage curriculum does not sufficiently encourage pupils' physical development through the use of the outside area. Child-initiated learning activities are too limited and restrict children's progress.

A key factor contributing to the school's success is the effective system for providing academic guidance. The performance of pupils is assessed termly in English, mathematics and science, and targets are regularly reviewed as a result and openly discussed with pupils. Consequently, pupils know how they are doing and know how to improve. This has helped to ensure that the underachievement of boys is being addressed. Pastoral care is good and a high priority is given to moral and social understanding, which contributes to the pupils' positive attitudes and good behaviour. One pupil said, 'You've got to respect other people whose beliefs are different.' There is a strong sense of belonging, and pupils' enjoyment of school is outstanding. The school and pupils are actively involved in the life of the village, including the village pantomime both with acting and poster design. Pupils develop a good sense of responsibility through having an active voice in the different school councils that meet regularly. Staff and pupils value these meetings. Pupils' awareness of healthy lifestyles is good. They know how to keep themselves safe and understand that they 'have boundaries'. The standards reached by the time pupils leave the school prepare them successfully for their future life and learning.

Document reference number: HMI 2507 01 September 2007 The senior staff and subject leaders monitor the work of the school and know the priorities for the future. The school is aware of the need for the Foundation Stage to have its own distinct leadership to improve its effectiveness.. The governors have a good grasp of the school's position and effectively challenge, ask questions and give support. The school sets itself challenging targets and this has led to a rise in standards in the last 18 months. The staff and governors work hard to create a happy and purposeful learning environment. Most parents are very supportive of the school.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

The Foundation Stage provides a satisfactory level of education, with some good features. Progress of children is satisfactory and most meet the goals they are expected to achieve by the time they start Year 1. The Foundation Stage is well resourced both inside and out. Staff teamwork is of a high standard, with all staff contributing to the continuous assessment of children. Pastoral care is good. As a result of the school having no clear leadership of the Foundation Stage, there is insufficient monitoring of teaching and learning and the curriculum provided. The curriculum offers insufficient opportunities to develop independence and the outdoor area is used more as a playground than as an integral part of the classroom.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide effective and distinct leadership for the Foundation Stage.
- Ensure the curriculum for the Foundation Stage includes sufficient opportunities for child-initiated learning and that full and appropriate use is made of the outdoor classroom.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils reach above average standards and make good progress by the end of Year 6. In 2006 standards fell, which was recognised by the school. Test results in Year 2 have been in decline over the last four years but inspection evidence shows that standards and progress are now good by the end of Year 2. Pupils make particularly good progress from Year 2 onwards. This is due to the high priority being given to the school's knowledge of the pupils' performance and provision of interesting and practical experiences for pupils to write about and use their basic skills within. The school uses well organised systems to ensure pupils progress as they move through the school. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' enjoyment of their time in school is outstanding. Attendance is above average and pupils behave well in and out of the classroom. They are well aware of the importance of a healthy diet, the need to take exercise and how to keep themselves safe. One pupil commented that there was 'a balanced diet for hot school dinners'.

Document reference number: HMI 2507 01 September 2007 Pupils are thoughtful and articulate, and express themselves well. They are generally very aware that they live in a multicultural society and take a great interest in learning about other countries and cultures, including the study of Kenya, the country and its people. However, younger pupils' awareness of cultural diversity, knowledge and understanding was not as good as older pupils'. Overall, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils readily get involved in community activities in and out of school. Their teamwork and cooperation is particularly good. Good standards achieved by the end of Year 6 prepare pupils well to be good citizens and well placed for future employment.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers have high expectations, lead effective discussions and have good subject knowledge which contributes to good progress being made in most lessons. Overall, work set is closely matched to pupils' particular needs and this has a positive impact on individual pupil progress. However, the level of challenge for younger pupils is not always high enough to stretch all pupils. Occasionally activities rely too heavily on teacher direction and restrict pupils' progress, especially in independent learning. Teachers ask probing questions that stimulate pupils to produce high quality work. Such questions spark their imaginations and encourage them to think for themselves. Teaching assistants play an important role in guiding thinking and keeping pupils focused. Pupils' behaviour in lessons is good and they have confidence in their own ability. For example, in a Year 6 literacy lesson pupils carefully, thoughtfully and accurately described the importance and use of a relative clause.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Carefully planned provision ensures that all pupils access the curriculum and fully participate in lessons. However, the Foundation Stage curriculum does not develop pupils' independence and children do not move between the indoor and outdoor learning areas as part of lessons and the school day. This impacts negatively on Year 1 where more use could also be made of the Foundation Stage resources. The school has no information and communication technology (ICT) suite, but makes the best possible use of a laptop trolley to support pupils' learning in ICT. There is a good range of popular clubs that contribute to pupils' enjoyment of school. The curriculum is enhanced by visitors which pupils talk about enthusiastically.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Good arrangements are in place for safeguarding pupils and their health and safety. Pupils are supported well by an experienced and effective team of support staff. There is good communication between staff so that pupils who are experiencing difficulties are swiftly identified and their needs met. The effectiveness of provision is enhanced by productive links with external agencies, for example speech and language support.

Document reference number: HMI 2507 01 September 2007 Pupils say they feel safe in school and feel there is always an adult to help them overcome any difficulties. The school generally provides strong academic guidance and this is robustly used to ensure pupil progress. Opportunities for pupils to discuss their learning targets are a high priority. However, this is having less impact for the younger pupils. The achievement of these pupils is not as good as in other year groups.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher has a clear sense of direction and evaluates the school systematically. The leadership and management have made effective use of a good range of information to raise standards, particularly in mathematics. Science leadership has methodically monitored this subject and has a secure knowledge of the areas where pupils perform less well. The role of the Foundation Stage leader is not distinct or well defined. It has been merged with the role of the Key Stage 1 coordinator and this limits effectiveness due to the size and nature of the role. Equality of opportunity is strongly promoted and the school has a truly inclusive ethos. Resources including staff are well deployed to achieve value for money. Procedures for safeguarding learners meet government requirements. The school's good self-evaluation and assessment procedures have enabled it to set challenging targets to raise standards.

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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	3
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	1
The attendance of learners	2
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?	3
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	3
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

1 December 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Alderbury and West Grimstead Church of England Primary School, Wiltshire, SP5 3BD

Thank you for being so welcoming to us when we came to your school. You were all so friendly and helpful in answering our questions. You all helped us get to know your school really quickly.

You go to a good school and we can see why you enjoy it so much. Your hard work helps you to make good progress and your work gets better and better as you move through the school. The best things about your school are the way your teachers assess what you have learnt before deciding what to teach you next and the way you know your targets that will help you improve. You are taught well and we were impressed with your behaviour in your classes and in the playground.

Your school is well led and managed by your headteacher and the deputy headteacher who work well as a team with your teachers. You are also part of that team which is why you are involved in setting targets and checking your progress towards them.

To be an even better school this is what we have asked your school to do.

- Provide someone to be in charge of the Foundation Stage and no other year groups.
- Make sure the youngest children use the outdoor area more and do more activities by themselves.

Yours sincerely

Richard Blackmore and Frances Hurd Additional Inspectors