

# Kennet Valley Church of England Aided Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	126446
<b>Local Authority</b>	Wiltshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	315551
<b>Inspection date</b>	15 October 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Jill Arnold

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	64
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	10
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Jane Davis
<b>Headteacher</b>	Kim Spencer
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	16 May 2005
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Lockeridge Marlborough SN8 4EL
<b>Telephone number</b>	01672 861202
<b>Fax number</b>	01672 861202

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This very small federated school operates on two sites: the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and Years 1 and 2 are based in the village of Lockeridge, and Years 3 to 6 are based approximately two miles away in the village of East Kennett. All pupils are White British. Although each year group varies, children's abilities on starting school are generally within the range expected for their age. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is much lower than that found in most schools. There is a privately run child care provision on the same site as the school called Bluebell Nursery.

## 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 that provides a good quality education and cares for its pupils well. Positive relationships, effective teaching and a varied curriculum ensure that pupils enjoy their learning and make good progress. Parents' responses to the inspection questionnaire, representing almost half of the pupils in the school, were overwhelmingly positive. One view was typical of the many expressing praise for the school: 'Kennet Valley School is a very warm and friendly environment for any child. My children are very happy at school and this is reflected in the progress they are both making.' Another commented: 'My son is very happy at school. He is really well supported in his learning and social needs and there is a wide range of extra-curricular activities. Staff are very friendly and caring too. Brilliant!'

Following the school's last inspection, there was an unsettled period when there were several changes of leadership. Although the staff and governors worked hard to maintain good levels of care and educational provision, pupils' progress during this time was not always as good as it should have been. However, the substantive appointment of the headteacher, decisive action and clear direction by her, and strong teamwork by staff and governors have resulted in rapid improvement. Challenging academic targets, rigorous monitoring of progress and sharply focused teaching have resulted in pupils' progress accelerating across the school. Standards of Year 6 pupils in the 2008 national tests were above average, all pupils having made good progress since their tests in Year 2. The school's detailed assessments show that the vast majority of pupils throughout the school have moved forward well in their learning over the last year, and some have made exceptional progress. Carefully targeted support for the few pupils with additional needs making slower progress ensures that they do not fall behind. The school now has a very clear understanding of where to focus its attention and good capacity to continue to improve further.

Pupils clearly enjoy their learning and achieve well because teaching is effective and the curriculum is planned carefully to meet pupils' needs and captivate their interest. Lessons are lively, interactive and productive. Pupils make good progress because they are actively involved in their learning and activities are interesting. Teachers successfully build on pupils' understanding and confidence in lessons by providing helpful guidance on what to aim for and how to improve. Marking is encouraging and thorough, but it is not always specific enough to help pupils' understanding of exactly what they need to do next to improve their work. Effective links between subjects to provide real-life contexts for pupils' learning have contributed to the improvements over the last year. However, the school rightly recognises the need to provide further opportunities for pupils to use their literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology (ICT) skills in different subjects. Pupils' preparation for their future economic well-being is good, given their strong personal development and well-developed literacy, numeracy and ICT skills.

The inclusive atmosphere in the school owes much to the positive relationships between adults and pupils. The school operates as a harmonious community where all feel welcomed and valued. Pupils behave well, are friendly and kind, and show respect for each other and the environment. Good organisational systems and rigorous procedures ensure pupils' safety and well-being. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress with the consideration and attention they receive, including help from outside agencies when appropriate. Partnerships within and beyond the local community are effective, including those with the church, other

schools and local authority services. Governors provide constructive support and play an increasingly effective role in holding the school to account and helping it to move forward.

## **Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

Good organisation and care, including thorough induction arrangements and liaison with parents, help children to settle well, learn routines quickly and grow in confidence. Parents appreciate the kindness and encouragement shown towards their children when they start. Good leadership, effective teaching and an interesting range of well-planned activities ensure that children make good progress from their starting points in all areas of learning by the end of Reception. Good attention is given to children's recognition of letters and sounds, identified by the school as a relatively weaker area of development. Currently, standards are above average. The staff work in effective partnership to ensure that the children receive a good balance of child-initiated and adult-led activities, indoors and outside. Positive relationships and the staff's patient approach successfully support children's personal development and well-being. Staff listen and explain things very carefully to the children, using their detailed observations and assessments to build step by step on children's learning and to develop their confidence. The children enjoy school and are keen to try out new experiences. They cooperate very well with each other, enjoy the company of the older children and display a good awareness of what it means to belong to the school community.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Make more opportunities for pupils to use and apply their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills in practical and real-life situations across the curriculum.
- In marking, provide pupils with precise guidance on how to improve their work.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

The small number of pupils and the varying abilities within each year group generate some fluctuations in standards from year to year. However, the standards reached by pupils at the end of Year 6 have been consistently above average for several years, apart from in 2007 when they fell below average as a smaller proportion of pupils attained the higher Level 5. Pupils' test results in English have been relatively stronger than in mathematics and science. Standards in Year 2 are generally above average. Mathematics is relatively stronger than reading and writing, with a greater proportion of pupils reaching the higher Level 3. Although girls' achievement at the school has been slightly weaker in the past, in 2008, all pupils made good progress in relation to their starting points. This improvement is the result of high expectations by the school, rigorous monitoring of pupils' progress and a concerted effort by teachers to engage all pupils effectively in their learning.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is good, promoted effectively through the school's educational provision and care. Pupils make a good contribution to the school and local community through their various responsibilities and activities, such as the coffee mornings, fund raising events and extra-curricular sports and music activities. They develop a strong sense of fairness and show consideration and respect for others, as well as expressing their own views

with confidence and courtesy. Pupils have a good awareness of the importance of a healthy lifestyle and demonstrate this in their enthusiasm for sports, their energetic playtimes and healthy eating choices. They appreciate how to behave safely, and how to look after themselves and each other to guard against danger. They are also confident in the knowledge that there is always an adult to turn to at school should they need help or support of any kind. The attendance and punctuality of most pupils are good. However, a small proportion of families taking term-time holidays generate absences that lower the overall attendance rate.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Lessons are carefully planned to take account of pupils' differing learning needs and to capture their interest. Teaching is typically lively, sharply focused and well organised. Clear explanations ensure pupils understand what they are learning and why, and questions are skilfully phrased to extend their thinking. Pupils benefit from good opportunities to collaborate, discuss and evaluate their work with each other. They particularly enjoy practical activities and those involving real-life situations that make learning meaningful. They take an active part in lessons, concentrate well and work productively. Teaching assistants provide effective and sensitive support, ensuring all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, make good progress in lessons. Teachers make effective use of assessment to inform their lesson planning and to set targets for pupils. Although there is a clear policy for marking, some needs to give more specific guidance to pupils about how they should improve their work.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is broad, balanced and enriched by a good range of educational trips, visitors to school and themed weeks to capture pupils' interest and make learning fun. Although there is a good emphasis on developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills, the school recognises the need to increase opportunities to apply these skills in different subjects and in real-life contexts, to extend further pupils' learning. In addition, it acknowledges the importance of pupils using a wider range of software to develop their ICT skills. Personal, social and health education is a strong feature of the curriculum and makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development. Provision for physical education is good, with regular outdoor exercise, specialist coaching, cross country running and use of the village hall to overcome the lack of a school hall. The range of clubs is good for a small school and the activities are very popular with pupils.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 2**

The school gives high priority to ensuring pupils' safety, security and well-being. There are rigorous procedures for child protection, health and safety and for ensuring pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive appropriate support. Supervision levels and relationships between adults and pupils are good, and well thought out induction and transition arrangements ensure that pupils are confident when they start and change schools. The school takes appropriate action to follow up absences and promote attendance. The introduction of more rigorous systems for tracking pupils' progress and setting of targets has resulted in clear improvements to pupils' achievement since the appointment of the new headteacher.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

The headteacher has provided clear direction for the school's improvement since her appointment just over a year ago. Rigorous self-evaluation, monitoring and improvement planning have resulted in improvements to pupils' learning. There is a shared sense of purpose amongst staff, with a commitment to ensuring all pupils enjoy their learning and achieve well. Leadership roles and responsibilities are clear, with all staff playing their part in driving up standards. Governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities and have a clear understanding of their critical role in the school's improvement, as well as providing practical support. Despite the constraints of a split site, there is a strong sense of a cohesive school family, which plays a significant part in local community life.

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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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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/or disabilities make progress	2

<sup>1</sup>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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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
The extent to which 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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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**

Dear Children

Inspection of Kennet Valley Primary School, Lockeridge, SN8 4EL

Thank you for your warm welcome when we came to inspect your school recently. We enjoyed visiting your lessons and hearing your views. I am writing to tell you what we found out.

Yours is a good school. The children in Reception get off to a very settled start and make good, all round progress. The people in charge do a good job of making sure you are well looked after and things run smoothly. You work hard to do your best in lessons and play happily together at break times. You enjoy your learning because teachers plan interesting lessons, with opportunities to discuss your work and share ideas. There are plenty of varied activities such as trips, visitors, special events and clubs that are fun and help you with your learning. We were impressed with your positive attitudes, your polite and sensible behaviour, and the consideration you showed towards each other.

The standards most of you achieve in English, mathematics and science are higher than in many other schools. Nevertheless, we have suggested two things the school should do to help you to make even better progress.

- Give you more opportunities to use your literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills in practical and real-life situations.
- When your work is marked, give you clearer advice on how to improve.

You can help too by acting on the advice your teachers give you. My best wishes for your future success.

Yours sincerely

Jill Arnold

Lead inspector