

Frogwell Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	126479
Local Authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	315568
Inspection dates	26–27 March 2008
Reporting inspector	Martin Kerly

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	364
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rachel Lambert
Headteacher	Avis Ball
Date of previous school inspection	8 September 2003
School address	Derriads Lane Chippenham SN14 0DG
Telephone number	01249 652815
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Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The number of pupils attending this larger than average primary school is declining in line with population changes in the area. Most pupils are taught in one of two parallel classes in each year group. Within the school there is a twenty four place specialist learning centre (SLC) for pupils with complex learning needs. Currently fourteen pupils attend this SLC full time and five part time from other schools. The school serves a residential area of Chippenham. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or physical disabilities is larger than average. The attainment of children on entry to the school is below that expected nationally for their age. There has been a significant turnover of teachers in the last two years. This continues with several teachers on short-term contracts.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This satisfactory school is improving. It has a number of good features but also several aspects in need of improvement. The effective leadership by the headteacher has established a clear sense of direction and purpose. Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. They learn to take care of themselves and almost all behave responsibly towards one another. The exemplary way the school cares for its vulnerable pupils is a strong feature in the overall good care, guidance and support for pupils in the SLC and throughout the school. Parents appreciate these good features. One reflected the feelings of others by writing, 'The school has instilled a caring, sensitive attitude in my children towards others as well as towards learning.' The school has recently developed effective ways of checking its own performance and involving more staff in these processes. It has an accurate view of its strengths and of what still needs to be done. This has led to significant improvements over the last year and the school is well placed to improve further.

By the time pupils leave the school, standards are a little below average and achievement is satisfactory. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 build successfully on their good learning in the Foundation Stage and progress well. Progress in Years 3 to 6 is more variable. Whilst most pupils make satisfactory progress, others, especially those of broadly average ability, make relatively slow progress, particularly in writing. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, and good in the Foundation Stage, the SLC and in Years 1 and 2. In Years 3 to 6 there is some good teaching but the quality is inconsistent. In some lessons, expectations of pupils are not high enough, the pace is slow and pupils are allowed to remain passive for too long. This slows their rate of learning. The school has introduced imaginative approaches to make the satisfactory curriculum more appealing to pupils by linking subjects into topics and making activities more relevant. Pupils say they like this a lot but the school recognises that teachers have not had enough guidance when planning this interlinked work to ensure that the skills pupils need, such as writing or using computers, are taught and practised systematically. The outdoor areas in the Foundation Stage are underdeveloped and this restricts children's opportunities to make choices and learn through independent play.

Leadership and management are satisfactory rather than good because, despite some good and developing features, the leadership team has not been able to secure good quality provision throughout the school. A contributory factor has been the substantial and ongoing staff changes, which limit the rate of progress in implementing some priorities, such as to ensure consistently good teaching and progress by pupils in Years 3 to 6.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children quickly settle into school following a carefully managed induction programme. A significant proportion enters with relatively low levels of personal and social development. The teachers and their assistants are led well and work effectively as a team. They plan imaginative experiences which capture children's interest and are based on perceptive observations and assessments. Children make good progress. The majority reach the learning goals expected by the end of the year, particularly in language and creative development. The internal areas offer a wide range of stimulating activities, with a good balance between teacher directed and child initiated experiences. Access to the outdoor area is difficult. Children are unable to move freely in and out of doors, unless accompanied by an adult. The school has draft plans to improve the

situation but currently this area is underused and somewhat neglected. This restricts the range of experiences available to children and their opportunities to develop independence.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning in Years 3 to 6 by consistently demonstrating high expectations of pupils, ensuring lessons have good pace and all pupils are required to think through and talk about their learning.
- Strengthen the planning of work linking different subjects by ensuring a systematic approach to teaching and practising the skills needed by pupils, such as writing and using computers.
- Make more use of the outdoor areas in the Foundation Stage to promote children's independent learning and extend their experiences.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement is satisfactory. Standards are a little below the national average by the end of Year 6. The rate of pupils' progress has increased, particularly in the younger year groups, where it is good. By the end of Year 2, standards in 2007 were average. Pupils currently in Year 2 are on track to maintain these standards, with more exceeding the national expectation than in previous years, and very few not attaining the standards expected for their age. Most older pupils make at least satisfactory progress, and some make good progress, particularly those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the most able. However, other Year 6 pupils are still catching up from periods of weaker progress in previous years and they, and a few in the middle years of average ability, continue to make less progress than they should, particularly in writing and occasionally in mathematics. Pupils in the SLC make good progress, as do almost all of the pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities because they benefit from good additional support. Last year pupils in Year 6 exceeded their very modest targets. The school is now setting more challenging targets, making better use of improved assessment information, and this is helping to raise expectations and standards. By the time they leave pupils have gained a satisfactory level of skills needed for the next stage of education and adult life.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils clearly enjoy school and talk proudly about their work in lessons, particularly the linked topics they are studying. They feel very safe in school, have a good awareness about healthy lifestyles and participate enthusiastically in the daily wake and shake activity. The school recently received the Healthy School award in recognition of its work. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and they have a keen sense of right and wrong. Almost all are thoughtful about the needs of others, enabling those with complex needs to feel valued members of the school community. Behaviour is good in lessons and around the school. The tiny minority with challenging behaviour is managed well to minimise any disruption for others. Most pupils attend well but overall attendance is average because a small minority of pupils do not attend often enough. The school works hard to address this with the families of these pupils. Pupils contribute conscientiously to the satisfactory range of opportunities to help around the school,

for example with recycling activities and serving as school councillors, and are positive about the school's support for charities such as Shades Day.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The proportion of good teaching, although growing, is distributed unevenly, with the greatest concentration in the Foundation Stage, the SLC and Years 1 and 2. Careful planning ensures similar experiences are provided for pupils in parallel classes in all years. Teachers carefully adapt plans to meet the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, whose learning is supported well by the teaching assistants. Teachers are increasingly making good links between subjects and pupils respond well to these and to practical experiences, such as when describing mystery 'germs' wrapped in black plastic sacks during a literacy lesson which built on work in science. Nearly all teachers provide lots of prompts and guidance on classroom walls to help pupils with their learning. Teaching is satisfactory rather than good because in some lessons, most frequently in Key Stage 2, expectations of pupils are not high enough and activities, for example in writing, are not always fully adapted or matched to the different needs of pupils. Sometimes teachers rely on volunteers to respond or offer ideas, rather than target specific pupils, and so they miss opportunities to ensure all pupils are involved, for example in sharing their ideas in pairs, or drafting quick responses on mini-whiteboards. This enables some pupils to remain passive for long periods and at these times, the pace of learning slows.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is improving and has some good features. It is adapted well to meet the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and for pupils in the SLC, enabling them to participate fully. There is less in place to reflect the needs of more able pupils. Imaginative materials promote pupils' personal, social and emotional development. The school is developing a broad and balanced curriculum and reducing an over emphasis on English and mathematics by introducing innovative approaches to linking subjects through topics. Pupils are proud of the work in their topic books, for example on space or mountains. The school recognises that at present there is insufficient guidance for teachers on how to plan coherently for the systematic progression of key skills needed across different subjects, for example practising writing in different contexts or the use of computers. There is a satisfactory range of extra activities to enrich pupils' experiences, such as clubs and visits, and, for example, the annual trip to the Isle of Wight.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care, guidance and support is good throughout the school for all pupils, and the level of support for specific pupils is sometimes exemplary. All the procedures designed to safeguard pupils are implemented rigorously. Parents value this level of care and support. One wrote, 'It is clear the children are well cared for.' Another with a child in the SLC wrote, 'The staff have been a huge support to my son...he has made fantastic progress.' The school works effectively to involve parents and external professional partners in supporting the well-being of pupils. Teachers provide good guidance about how pupils can improve their work, although there are

inconsistent ways of marking the interlinked work in topic books. Most pupils are clear about their short-term targets in literacy and numeracy and appreciate the prompts and displays around their classrooms.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher has established a strong team approach despite ongoing staff changes. The provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is coordinated well, as is the SLC and Foundation Stage. Phase leaders are welcoming their increased responsibilities, although the new development teams have not been in place long enough to make a difference across the whole school. The process of involving staff in producing a new strategic plan and a very clear learning and teaching policy have helped to clarify expectations. The school has improved the way it tracks pupils' progress and, after a period of some inconsistency, is now using this more effectively to set challenging targets in order to raise standards. There are comprehensive procedures for checking all aspects of the school's performance throughout the year. This information is used well and has led to important improvements in, for example, providing carefully targeted support for pupils and raising achievement. Governance is satisfactory. The new chair has a good grasp of the role and is supported well by a small group of governors. Governors have a reasonably accurate view of the school but some aspects of the school's performance are not reported on in sufficient detail to enable them to fully hold the school to account.

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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?	3
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?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
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	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
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?	3
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	3
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	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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

2 April 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Frogwell Primary School, Chippenham, SN14 0DG

Thank you for making us feel so welcome when we recently visited your school. We enjoyed talking with you and seeing some of your work. Yours is a satisfactory school. There are several things that are already good and others that are improving. There are also some that need to improve. Here are some of the highlights.

- You behave well around the school and take care of yourselves and each other.
- You obviously like school and most of your lessons, particularly the topic work.
- You all make progress and many of you are learning a lot, especially in your first few years in school and when receiving extra help from teachers and the teaching assistants.
- The teachers plan interesting things for you to do and work together well in their teams to make sure everyone in your year group does similar things.
- Everyone who works in the school makes sure you are safe and there is always someone there to help you if you have a problem. We were pleased to find you realised this and many of your parents wrote to us to explain how well the staff look after all of you.
- The headteacher and the other leaders have lots of ideas about how to improve the school and everyone knows how they can play their part.

Even though the school is improving, we have suggested three things that we would like the headteacher, staff and governors to work at together to make it even better.

- Ensure the Key Stage 2 teachers always set you challenging work and find ways of making sure you are all involved throughout the lessons.
- Help teachers with ways of planning all the exciting topic work to make sure they give you plenty of ways to use, for example, your writing and computer skills. We think this would help some of you make even more progress with your writing than you do at present.
- Make more use of the outdoor area in the Reception classes so children can move freely in and out of doors and have more things to choose from.

I am sure you will have some ideas of your own about how you can help in these things and have other ideas about ways to improve the school further.

Yours sincerely

Martin Kerly Lead inspector

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