

Overton Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116305
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	319471
Inspection dates	5–6 March 2008
Reporting inspector	Lily Evans

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	296
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Geoff Potter
Headteacher	Mrs Fiona Wyeth
Date of previous school inspection	14 February 2007
School address	Court Drove Overton Basingstoke RG25 3ES
Telephone number	01256 770249
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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 school is larger than average. Most pupils come from the local area and are well supported at home. The proportion of pupils eligible for free meals is below average. A higher than usual number of pupils have statements of special educational needs but overall the number of pupils with learning difficulties /disabilities is lower than average. Few pupils speak English as an additional language.

Over the past two years there has been a complete change of staff, many of the teachers have joined the school since the last inspection. Nine teachers joined the staff in September 2007.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

In accordance with section 13(5) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI are of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

Overton is a rapidly improving school, which now provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. A large majority of parents hold favourable views of the school. One parent commented, 'I have seen a lot of improvement in all areas of the school since the last Ofsted visit.'

Since the last inspection the leadership team have made changes that have resulted in significant steps forward. Unsatisfactory teaching has been eliminated. Pupils are now making better progress. There is a determination to eradicate underachievement whilst ensuring pupils' personal development goes from strength to strength. Standards are rising and are above average but are not yet as high as they should be in English, mathematics and science. In an increasing number of lessons there is a strong focus on problem solving. This is developing many aspects of pupils' work and is having a positive impact on their academic and personal development. Pupils are thoughtful and responsible.

Improvements to the curriculum have greatly extended the use of information and communication technology (ICT). The teachers are now developing the pupils' skills in a range of topics and themes. Similarly, literacy and numeracy skills are now being extended throughout the curriculum. Each pupil has targets for reading, writing and mathematics, which they say they find very useful in helping them to improve. Most know what they are and what they have to do to reach the next level. Although pupils have clear learning targets, for example in writing, there is inconsistency in marking work against the success criteria.

The headteacher and staff share a vision for moving the school towards achieving excellence. All have clear roles and responsibilities within 'excellence teams'. Close working relationships resulting from good induction programmes allow them to rigorously plan, evaluate, assess and monitor progress in important areas such as teaching phonics, writing and mathematics. There is an acute awareness of the importance of tracking pupils' progress. Detailed ongoing assessment highlights those pupils at risk of not reaching the standards they should. This enables teachers to plan lessons and support, which meet the needs of different abilities. This is helping pupils to make progress at faster rates than before. Teachers ensure that the most able pupils are well challenged. Learning support assistants who are well-briefed, provide effective support for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities.

The school receives good support from the local authority. A culture of openness in monitoring the quality of teaching is fostering further improvement. The headteacher makes effective use of models of excellent practice. Governors give strong support to the school and to parents. They are prepared to challenge and are seeking the best outcomes for the pupils. With such a united and ambitious team the school has achieved much in a short time and has good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Pupils enter Reception at expected levels for their age and make good progress through well-planned activities. Teachers plan together giving pupils problems to solve such as building a bridge for goats, finding the correct size of cave for the Trolls or describing a troll to a police officer. All pupils can write their names, and most know the sounds of letters. A few are aware

of capital letters and full stops and are writing simple sentences. Daily progress is routinely recorded, collected and collated showing overall good progress in the areas of learning for this stage.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and achievement in English, mathematics and science.
- Ensure teachers' marking consistently helps pupils to improve and achieve the next step in their learning.

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 S5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils enter Year 1 with a good range of skills expected for their age. Progress from their starting points is now satisfactory for all pupils. Standards are above average by the end of Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics and in Year 6 in English, mathematics and science. The school is tireless in its tracking of pupils' progress and seeking to ensure every individual makes at least expected gains, aiming for good achievement for all. The data shows that through rapidly improving teaching, many pupils are making better than expected gains, which is helping to them catch up and tackle previous underachievement. There is evidence to suggest that standards in reading and writing are rising rapidly because of the effective teaching strategies being used. For example, in all classes in Years 3 to 6 pupils have a daily challenge of developing a simple sentence into a complex one.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils have good attendance and enjoy school partly because as one said, 'The teachers make learning fun'. Their behaviour in and around the school is good and they know how to stay safe. Some excellent behaviour was seen in classrooms. Teachers choose tasks that engage pupils well and as a result they are keen to learn and concentrate well. This is helping to improve achievement and raise standards. Pupils show good levels of spiritual, moral and social maturity. Assemblies based on themes such as humility contribute well to this. Pupils are proud of their responsibilities within the school community, for example as prefects and playground buddies. As members of class and school council, they have had a voice in bringing about changes such as those to lunch and playtime arrangements. Pupils are knowledgeable about healthy lifestyle and increasing numbers are taking advantage of the healthy school meals prepared on the premises.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Many changes of staff and a drive for improvement, shared by all, have resulted in much better teaching, which is making inroads into the legacy of underachievement. Many teachers are adept at managing groups very successfully but occasionally groups working independently are left a little too long without adult intervention. The teachers are using a wide range of

approaches to engage and capture the interests of the pupils. Interactive whiteboards are used widely and effectively.

Teachers question and challenge the pupils well. They encourage pupils to think for themselves and find solutions to problems. In a well-managed and organised lesson the youngest children were 'in search of a troll' whilst the oldest pupils, in an equally well prepared lesson, were asked to find a solution to the problem of arranging fixtures for a tennis league.

To help pupils to improve their writing some teachers give them clear criteria so they know exactly what they have to do to be successful. This involves the pupils in assessing their own work before the teacher marks it. This has a positive impact on pupils' progress. However, this strategy is used inconsistently. Marking has some good features but is similarly inconsistent. All work is marked and the teacher's comments are positive and helpful. However, the 'next steps' pupils need to take to improve their work are not always set out clearly.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school has worked successfully to address the deficiencies found in the curriculum at the time of the last inspection. The richness of learning experiences are increasingly having a positive impact on pupils' achievement. The implementation of systematic teaching of phonic skills is already having a good effect on standards in reading in Year 2 and is used effectively to help less secure readers in Year 3.

Exciting activities are planned and measures have been put in place to ensure that skills in all subjects are developed progressively. Good use is now made of ICT. A particular strength is the extent to which personal, health and social education (PHSE) contributes to helping pupils to feel more confident and improve the way in which they tackle their work. For instance, pupils are taking more responsibility as learners. The curriculum now meets the needs of all pupils. It is appropriately adapted for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities enabling them to make similar progress to their peers.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Members of staff show a strong commitment to caring for pupils. This helps children to feel valued and safe. A recent local authority audit shows that the arrangements for ensuring the health and safety of pupils are effective. The pastoral support that pupils receive is of good quality. The school makes good provision for pupils' emotional and behavioural development using specialist programmes. Good behaviour at lunch times is rewarded with a place at the Golden Table on Friday. Good provision to tackle any bullying that might occur includes 'worry boxes' in Key Stage 2 classrooms. Arrangements for playground friends and friendship buddies ensure that pupils are supported well during breaks.

Good assessment leads to appropriate target setting for individuals. Pupils know their targets and how much progress they have made over the year. The school recognises that targets for pupils with learning difficulties are often in language which is too difficult for pupils to understand.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher and her deputy provide strong and dynamic leadership. They have established a clear and shared vision for the school. They have accurately identified what needs to be achieved and have already improved planning, monitoring, target setting and tracking systems. The impact of all of this is a sharp increase in the quality of teaching and learning and, consequently, pupils' progress. The performance management of teachers is sharply focused on improving the progress of the pupils. The leadership team carefully monitors the work of the learning support assistants. In its drive to raise standards, the school has made good use of advice from the local authority. The school also collaborates effectively with local schools, tapping into areas of expertise to supplement their training, for example, in teaching phonic skills.

Governors give good support and guidance to the school. They make themselves readily available to parents and join in staff training. They are monitoring the impact of initiatives such as, how pupils are challenged to use their thinking skills to resolve problems.

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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?	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	2
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	3

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	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	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?	2
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	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 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	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

14 March 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Overton Church of England Primary School, Basingstoke, RG25 3ES

Thank you for making my colleagues and I so welcome when we came to visit your school. We enjoyed seeing you at work and play. It was especially good to see you thinking hard and talking about how to solve problems in the different lessons that we visited. We agree with you that teachers make learning exciting and interesting. We think the staff are kind and caring. They make sure you are happy and safe in school. We could see that you were enjoying healthy lunches and you know about being healthy and safe.

We were particularly pleased to hear that you enjoy doing duties around the school and playground, taking part in class and school council and in making sensible suggestions for some good changes. When we looked around your classrooms, it was good to see your writing, poetry and art work. We also enjoyed hearing the tuneful singing at choir practice.

Most of you know what you need to do to improve your work because of your learning targets. We have asked your teachers to remember to tell you whether you are making progress towards your targets when they mark your work. This will help all of you to improve as well as you can. In most lessons we thought you made good progress but agree with your school that you could do even better. Your teachers want you to strive to be excellent in your English, mathematics and science by the time you leave Year 6.

We think you could help your teachers to help you, by continuing to work hard in all your lessons and to do your homework as well as you can. We think your parents do a good job in helping with homework.

With best wishes for your future,

Lily Evans

Lead Inspector