

Old Sodbury Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109175
Local Authority	South Gloucestershire
Inspection number	324918
Inspection date	13 November 2008
Reporting inspector	George Logan

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.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	75
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	8
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Andrew King
Headteacher	Chris Williams
Date of previous school inspection	22 November 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Church Lane Old Sodbury Bristol BS37 6NB
Telephone number	01454 313682

Age group	4–11
Inspection date	13 November 2008
Inspection number	324918

Fax number

01454 320850

Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

All pupils in this small village primary school are of White British heritage. Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) in Reception and their skills on entry vary significantly from year to year because of the small numbers involved. In 2007 and 2008, their skills were significantly higher than in the previous three years and above the level expected for their age. While the overall proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is lower than in many schools, this group often includes pupils with profound social, learning or developmental needs, some of whom enter the school in Year 1 or later.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Old Sodbury Church of England Primary School provides a satisfactory education. It has several strengths. Many parents value the inclusive ethos, the sense of community and the good support for individual pupils. As one commented, 'This is a lovely school with a wonderful community spirit.' Pupils develop positive attitudes to learning and their personal development is good. They behave well, feel very safe and are confident that adults will help them. They have a good understanding of how to stay healthy. Although many aspects of care are good, there are some weaker aspects relating to pupils' welfare. Attendance is satisfactory.

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall, but good in the EYFS. In 2008, almost all exceeded the expected levels by the end of Reception, because of the good curriculum and effective teaching. Planning, assessment and the overall provision in the EYFS are good, although the outdoor area offers a restricted environment for children to learn. Good teaching occurs in Years 1 to 6, but its impact on achievement has been inconsistent. Progress in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory and standards are broadly average by the end of Year 2. Progress is more variable in Years 3 to 6, although satisfactory overall, so that standards remain broadly average at the end of Year 6. Reading is a significant strength and pupils generally make good progress. The school successfully tackled pupils' unsatisfactory progress in writing in 2007, leading to significant improvement in 2008. Their progress in mathematics has been a weakness for several years, with able children in particular doing less well than expected. Pupils' performance has not been tracked with sufficient rigour, and expectations have not been high enough. Only now is there some sign of improvement. Pupils with additional learning needs receive effective support, so that they make at least satisfactory progress. Many aspects of the curriculum are good and meet pupils' needs well. However, weaknesses in mathematics mean that the curriculum is only satisfactory overall. Pupils enthusiastically support the impressive range of extra-curricular activities, which add much to their personal development and enjoyment of school.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher has a great commitment to the school and it runs smoothly. However, school self-evaluation lacks rigour and is unrealistic in its judgements. This means that there is no urgent shared vision for improvement. That said, the recent significant rise in writing standards indicates that the capacity to achieve change does exist. Although governance is satisfactory, governors, while willing, do not receive enough information about the school's performance. Neither do they have sufficient access to the self-evaluation process to fulfil their role as critical friends, holding the school's performance to account.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children in Reception achieve well. They settle in quickly because of effective transition arrangements and the high level of staffing. Relationships are supportive, leading to good gains in children's personal and social development. Children behave well, have positive attitudes and confidently initiate activities. They are cared for well, although welfare arrangements are only satisfactory because toilet facilities are inconveniently located in a separate building. Links with parents are effective.

Good teaching ensures that children develop independence and make good progress in all areas of learning. The EYFS curriculum covers the areas of learning well. Although the designated

outdoor learning area provides limited opportunities, good use is made of the grounds and main school facilities to compensate for this. In 2008, most children entered Year 1 with above average standards. Writing is a particular strength, reflecting a systematic approach to teaching children how to link sounds and letters together. Standards continue to rise because of the drive and good leadership of the EYFS leader. However, the school recognises that constraints of accommodation limit the integration of outdoor learning within the otherwise good play-based curriculum. Thorough assessment procedures effectively identify the next steps in learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the consistency of pupils' achievement across the school, particularly in mathematics.
- Implement a rigorous self-evaluation process, making more effective use of available data, so that identified shortcomings in provision or performance are tackled promptly.
- Attend to the welfare, health and safety issues brought to the attention of school leaders during the inspection feedback. A small proportion of 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, although pupils make inconsistent progress. Small numbers in each year group give rise to some variability in standards. Pupils make steady progress in Years 1 and 2 and standards in Year 2 are broadly average, although lower overall in 2008 than in 2007. Standards in Year 6 are also average, with a significant improvement in writing in 2008. This reflects well upon the school's action to address poor performance in writing in 2007. Targets in English were exceeded slightly in 2008. Although the overall target was achieved in mathematics, too few pupils attained the higher level. Progress in Years 3 to 6, although good in reading and now satisfactory in writing, has been barely adequate in mathematics. While their problem-solving skills have improved, the school has given insufficient priority to other aspects of mathematics, resulting in some underperformance, especially by more able pupils. The tracking of pupils' progress has not been sufficiently rigorous and teachers' expectations have not been high enough. The available data largely supports the school's view that pupils are now making better progress in mathematics. With effective support from teaching assistants, pupils with additional learning needs make at least satisfactory progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are enthusiastic, sociable and enjoy school. They behave well. Pupils feel secure and say that bullying is rare. Attendance is satisfactory, although figures are affected by holidays in term time. Pupils' moral and social development is good. Spiritual development is promoted well through the school's good links with the church. Pupils have a satisfactory awareness of ethnic and cultural diversity and the school continues to work to develop its international links. While pupils' opinions are sought informally, the school council meets infrequently so that its formal role is underdeveloped. Within school, there are supportive links between year groups and pupils undertake many classroom 'jobs'. They have a good awareness of safe practices in relation to the internet. Relationships with the wider community, through links with local schools, are well developed. Pupils' good personal qualities contribute well to their economic well-being but this is only satisfactory because of inconsistent progress in basic skills.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Although there are examples of good teaching, the quality of teaching and learning overall is satisfactory. Teachers motivate pupils well. The work is carefully planned, paying regard to the needs of identified groups, and behaviour and relationships are good. Lessons have a reasonable pace, although the more able pupils in particular do not learn as quickly as they might. The checks on pupils' progress are not frequent enough to ensure that staff are aware of what pupils need to do next. Over time, imprecise tracking of progress has contributed to variable achievement. Recent improvements in the marking of work, clearer guidance as to the next steps in learning and more consistent use of individual targets provide the basis for improving achievement further. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to evaluate the quality of their work. They feel that they would enjoy more activities that allow them to learn independently.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum for Years 1 to 6 has been revised to provide more practically-based opportunities. A modified 'forest school' approach has been implemented for younger pupils. The effective teaching of literacy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills through other subjects enriches learning. Practical science activities are well developed and all pupils benefit from learning French. However, inconsistencies in achievement in mathematics indicate that the curriculum in this subject is, at best, satisfactory. The provision for pupils who need additional support is effective and carefully focused on what they most need to learn. The school makes satisfactory provision for pupils identified as gifted or talented, drawing on activities within the school's cluster group. The unusual breadth of extra-curricular provision, including a residential visit to France, is supported well. Instrumental teaching, including ukulele for all Year 4 and 5 pupils, after-school clubs and activities such as St John's Ambulance all have a positive impact on pupils' personal development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

In some respects, pastoral care is a strength. Training and procedures in relation to child protection and first aid are thorough. Parents feel that the support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is particularly good. Staff value individual children, contributing strongly to their good personal development. Through its specialist worker, the school effectively supports families with particular needs. Links with external agencies are good. The partnership with parents is generally good, though some feel that the school's communication with them could be better. Despite all these positive features, the inspection identified shortcomings in some aspects of welfare and health and safety, relating to a lack of signs and to clutter and cleanliness in some areas,, and these were reported orally to school leaders for action.

Academic guidance is satisfactory. Pupils have individual targets in literacy and, occasionally, in numeracy. Most older pupils know their targets and some can evaluate their progress. However, targets are implemented inconsistently and their impact on achievement is too variable. The school has rightly focused on improving teachers' marking to provide consistent guidance to move learning forward more briskly.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall, but there are strengths in the leadership of the EYFS and of the provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The headteacher has established a cohesive team of staff and has the support of most parents. However, insufficient priority is given to formal school self-evaluation or to the rigorous analysis of the school's performance. As a result, some aspects are overvalued. There is not a sufficiently shared corporate vision for what the school needs to do to improve. The monitoring of teaching has not had a consistent focus upon learning and achievement. That said, the most recent school improvement plan identified most major priorities, leading to successful action to tackle shortcomings in writing. This indicates a satisfactory capacity to make improvements when necessary. The school's contribution to community cohesion is satisfactory. Governors are conscientious but their effectiveness is constrained because they are given too little information by senior leaders and have not been sufficiently involved in evaluating the school's work.

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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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

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?	3
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	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/or disabilities make progress	3

¹Grade 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

How good are 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
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	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 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?	3

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	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	4
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

15 November 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Old Sodbury Church of England Primary School, Bristol BS37 6NB

Thank you for making us welcome when we visited your school recently. We very much enjoyed meeting you and briefly sharing your lessons. We found that your school is satisfactory overall and has a number of good features.

- The main things that we found are these.
- Almost all of you behave well in lessons.
- Standards are broadly average, and are particularly good in reading. However, many of you could make faster progress in mathematics.
- Although there are good examples of teaching, over time, the progress you make through the school is not consistent enough.
- The Reception class provides really well for the youngest children.
- You are very aware of the importance of eating healthily and taking regular exercise, and the school makes sure that you are cared for well.
- While some aspects of the curriculum are good, particularly the wide range of out-of-school activities, there has not been enough focus on mathematics.
- Those in charge of the school make sure that it runs smoothly.

We are asking the school to make three changes so that you can do even better.

- Ensure that you make more consistent progress through the school and reach higher standards, particularly in mathematics.
- Ensure that school leaders work together closely to review all the information they have about how well the school is doing so that they have a clear view of what it does well and what needs to be improved.
- Put right some issues relating to your welfare and health and safety.

You can help by continuing to work hard and do your best. We hope that you will have every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

- George Logan
- Lead Inspector