

Streatley Church of England Voluntary Controlled School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109979
Local Authority	West Berkshire
Inspection number	325070
Inspection date	11 May 2009
Reporting inspector	Hugh Protherough

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)	108
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Hayley Gittins
Headteacher	Mrs Jill Hopgood
Date of previous school inspection	20 June 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	The Coombe Streatley Reading RG8 9QL
Telephone number	01491 872 399

Age group	4–11
Inspection date	11 May 2009
Inspection number	325070

Fax number

01491 874 372

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors. Inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues.

- What is the current profile of achievement in Year 6, especially in writing?
- How do the school's creative approaches to teaching and the curriculum support achievement and develop effective learning for pupils of all abilities?
- Do phase leaders have a secure oversight of pupils' achievements and the quality of provision in their areas of responsibility?

These issues were explored by gathering evidence from school assessment data, conversations with pupils, the analysis of their work and lesson observations, and discussions with staff, governors and parents. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail.

Description of the school

This small village school draws the majority of its pupils from the immediate area, though a few come from further afield. Of those families that choose to disclose their ethnicity, almost all are of White British or from other White backgrounds and speak English as their first language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. The needs of these pupils include specific learning, speech and language, and autistic spectrum. Very few pupils are eligible for free school meals.

At the time of the inspection a major building project to improve school facilities was close to completion. During the morning of the inspection Years 3-6 were involved in national and voluntary tests administered by staff in Key Stage 2.

The school has gained the Activemark and Healthy School Award.

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 an effective school that provides a good quality of education for its pupils. Since the previous inspection the headteacher has continued to provide strong and successful leadership through a period of considerable challenge. Significant changes to the staff team and an extensive building project have been well managed with minimum disruption to pupils' education.

Throughout the school pupils of all backgrounds and abilities are achieving well. By the age of 11 standards are exceptionally high in English, mathematics and science, and have been for several years. The school correctly identified the slight decline in pupils' performance in writing and has successfully addressed this. The inspectors' analysis of pupils' work and the school's assessment data shows that not only are a greater number of pupils working at the higher levels, but that many have made good progress from their starting points in Year 2. For instance, the needs of pupils with special needs and learning difficulties are effectively supported so that most are able to reach the levels expected of 11-year-olds.

The reasons for the school's continuing success lie in the good-quality teaching and imaginative approaches to delivering a broad curriculum. The core subjects of English and mathematics are well taught and, as a result, pupils' abilities to read, write and calculate develop rapidly. Pupils' work is thoroughly marked and the teachers' written comments not only tell the pupils how they can improve, but frequently refer them to their individual targets. The analysis of pupils' work shows that as they get older, pupils frequently make written response to this commentary and that they have a keen appreciation of their targets that helps them to make good progress.

The headteacher's creative approach to planning the afternoon timetable ensures that pupils receive maximum benefit from the considerable expertise within the small staff team. As a result teachers' specialist knowledge and skills in subjects such as science, French, music and information and communications technology are shared across the school. This approach is strengthened further through the regular provision of special events and themes such as 'history week', educational visits and visitors such as first aid trainers and local government officials. While current arrangements do much to enliven pupils' learning, there remains some variation in the quality of challenge offered to pupils. The inspectors' analysis of pupils' books and folders revealed a considerable volume of worksheet materials and too little of the types of independent research and extended writing of which the oldest pupils are clearly capable.

Under the strong leadership of the headteacher the staff team works together effectively, so that newly arrived colleagues settle swiftly into the school's systems and routines. The regular deployment of teachers in classes other than their own means that adults get to know the pupils very well indeed. Phase leaders are developing a good oversight of the work of the school. Assessment arrangements ensure that staff have a clear picture of the current attainment and progress of individual pupils. As a result the school is able to set and meet challenging and realistic targets in English and mathematics and demonstrates proven capacity for continued improvement.

Staff and governors work closely and provide an excellent range and variety of information for parents and carers about the work of the school. They report regularly on the school's performance, share information about the curriculum and offer advice to parents on how they can help their children's learning at home. Around a half of families returned a questionnaire. The inspector's analysis of these, and conversations with parents at the start of the school day, reveal that they are overwhelmingly supportive of the work of the school. They are delighted

by the quality of education and the standards that their children manage to achieve and are virtually unanimous in agreement that the school is well led and managed. The headteacher and governors are keenly aware of parental views and in particular the recently expressed concerns about the accessibility of staff to parents and carers. Despite a recent meeting to discuss this issue, there remain a minority of parents (more than a third of questionnaire responses) who would like opportunity to engage more frequently in dialogue with the school.

The school makes excellent provision for the care, guidance and support of the pupils. The overwhelming majority enjoy school and make the most of the opportunities provided. Those who spoke with inspectors say they feel safe, happy and secure. Pupils' behaviour is excellent and they welcome visitors in a friendly, open manner. They play a full part in the life of their local community and have contributed ideas and suggestions to the parish plan. Their knowledge of the increasing range of faiths and cultures represented in Britain is good and the school is also developing an international dimension to its work through links with a school in Uganda.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children in the Reception class make a good start to their education and achieve well. Most arrive at school with levels of knowledge and skills in advance of those expected nationally. Thorough induction arrangements and a strong focus on the children's social development ensure that they settle swiftly in to the routines of school. Harmonious relationships are clearly in evidence when they gather at the start of each day, singing greetings to each other as the teacher checks the register.

Children make good progress because staff plan thoroughly and ensure a successful blend of activities covering each of the areas of learning in both indoor and outdoor classrooms. There is a good balance of activities that children choose for themselves and those that adults lead. The introduction of new approaches to teaching children about letters and sounds is clearly having an impact as children's early reading skills are developing well.

The adults' use of role play has a significant impact upon children's learning and their ability to speak and listen to each other. In one lesson every child had to prepare a small news item about themselves and then perform to the class from behind a model television. There was laughter and enjoyment throughout as the teacher and her assistant 'changed channels' with the 'remote.' They ensured that every child participated and demonstrated shrewd questioning skills that developed the children's speech and vocabulary. It is through this type of imaginative response that recent concerns about the communication, language and literacy skills of a group of boys are being successfully addressed.

In the midst of such busy and purposeful activities, the adults make careful, focused assessments of each child. The class teacher ensures that this information is shared with the new phase leader and the progress of individuals is carefully recorded and tracked. At the time of the inspection, all of the children were working comfortably within the early learning goals and a good proportion were exceeding them, representing a very good level of overall achievement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase opportunities for pupils to apply their excellent basic skills in a greater variety of independent study and research.
- Review arrangements by which parents and carers can meet with staff and share their views and ideas.

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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?	1
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 ¹ reached by learners	1
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

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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	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?	1

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 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	1
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**

22 May 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Streatley Church of England Voluntary Controlled School, Reading, RG8 9QL

Thank you very much for the friendly welcome you gave to the inspectors when we visited your school. From the moment we arrived we appreciated your polite and courteous behaviour. We enjoyed speaking with you during the day and your comments and observations were extremely helpful. We agree with you that yours is a good school.

Although Years 3-6 were busy with their tests for much of the day, it was clear to us from looking at your books, that you have been working very hard this year. You are achieving high standards in English, mathematics and science. When we sat down to talk with the school council and Year 6, it was good to discover that you enjoy your lessons and that most of you know your targets and what you need to do to make your work even better. We were also pleased to hear about the many other things that make school so enjoyable: history week, school productions, visits to places of interest, football coaching and judo.

The reason you do so well is because you have the support of really good teachers and teaching assistants. We particularly like the way that the staff use their talents across the school during the afternoons, helping you with information and communication technology, science, music and French. By the time you reach Years 5 and 6 most of you have very good basic skills in literacy and numeracy. We think it is important that you to have greater opportunities to develop the independent study skills of which you are capable and to write at greater length. This will help you as you prepare for secondary school, university and life beyond.

You are fortunate to have parents and carers who are interested in your education and who support your school in all sorts of ways. We have asked the governors to find ways to make this partnership even stronger.

With every best wish for summer and your future success.

Yours faithfully

Hugh Protherough

Lead Inspector