

Fairford Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115622
Local Authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	326235
Inspection dates	13–14 May 2009
Reporting inspector	Martin Kerly

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)	216
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	Guy Bailey
Headteacher	Jane Sparling
Date of previous school inspection	20 March 2007
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	The Park Leafield Road Fairford GL7 4JQ
Telephone number	01285 712543

Age group	4–11
Inspection dates	13–14 May 2009
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Fax number

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is a little smaller than average and the number of pupils on roll is declining steadily following a governors' decision to move towards being a one form entry school. Last year, the school reduced from nine to eight classes. A few pupils in Years 5 and 6 are taught in a mixed-year class. All other pupils are taught in single-year classes, including the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. There is provision for pupils to attend a breakfast club before school. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities has increased and is now broadly average. The large majority of pupils are White British and almost all speak English on entry to school. The headteacher has been in post for some time but all other members of the senior management team have been appointed recently.

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. The pupils' enjoyment of school and their preparation for the next stage of learning are exceptional. They talk about the varied and stimulating activities with great enthusiasm and are rightly proud of the many ways in which they help out around the school. Pupils of all abilities make good progress and achieve well. The care, guidance and support of all pupils are good and the care for individuals with particular problems is exemplary. This contributes to the pupils' good personal development and well-being. The large majority of parents who replied to the inspector's survey acknowledged the school's many qualities and sustained improvement. Views such as, 'every day my daughter looks forward to going', 'very impressed' and 'the school continues to move forward not stand still' were common threads in the comments received. The school is well led and managed. The headteacher provides very clear leadership. Together with other leaders, she carries out systematic checks on the school's performance and has an accurate view of all aspects of its performance and which areas need more attention. The school has maintained and further strengthened the many good features identified two years ago, when it was found to no longer require special measures, and is well placed to improve further. The attainment of children on entry to the Early Years Foundation Stage is a little above that expected nationally for their age. Children make good progress in their first year in school. Older pupils also achieve well. Standards are above average and are continuing to rise. Standards in mathematics are also rising, but not as fast as in other subjects, and the rate of progress in this subject is more varied. Teaching and learning are good overall and on occasion outstanding, particularly in Key Stage 1. In Key Stage 2, the quality of teaching is less consistent. While there is much good teaching there are also a minority of lessons within Years 4 and 5 where teaching is barely satisfactory because work is not always sufficiently matched to the needs of different pupils, there is poor organisation and at times the pace of learning drops. The curriculum is good and is being further improved by imaginative new approaches. The recent ECO Green Flag award is testimony to some outstanding practice. The range and quality of enrichment experiences is outstanding, with exceptional provision and opportunities outdoors for pupils in Years 1 to 6. The school is aware of the need to improve outdoor arrangements for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage by providing them with a secure designated area.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

There are sensitive procedures to help children enter school and these enable them to quickly begin exploring and learning. Children play well together, for example when preparing the lighthouse keeper's lunch, or testing out how much water different containers will hold. The teacher and teaching assistant have high expectations of the children within a nurturing environment in which their welfare is constantly promoted well. Children make good progress from their starting points, most frequently a little above national expectations, and by the end of the year more complete the learning goals expected for this age than is usually found. This year, a significant proportion are on track to exceed national expectations. The adult team carefully observes and regularly assesses the children's learning and uses this information well to plan new experiences, making good use of the extensive internal accommodation to set up different activities. This good planning is a strong feature of the good teaching and learning. Learning outdoors is much more limited. At present, there is no designated secure outdoor area with shelter from rain or sun or purpose-designed surfaces. This prevents spontaneous

movement in and out of doors and restricts the children's opportunities to play and learn independently. The school has outline plans to establish a designated outdoor area later this year in order to address this shortcoming and improve overall provision. There is good leadership and close liaison between the senior management team and classroom practitioners and the class teacher is taking on increasing responsibility for implementing new ideas.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of teaching in Years 4 and 5 to match the consistently good teaching in all other parts of the school.
- Redouble its efforts to increase pupils' progress in mathematics.
- Establish a designated outdoor learning area for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards are above average and they are continuing to rise, as indicated in national tests at the end of Years 2 and 6 and in pupils' work. Standards in writing are particularly strong following a school focus on this aspect of learning. Pupils of all abilities achieve well and make good progress in nearly all lessons. The school has comprehensive systems for assessing and tracking their progress and this is used well to identify those pupils who are not making expected progress or require additional help. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities benefit from this identification and the subsequent additional support in class or within a small group in the atrium, and this helps them make good progress. Standards in mathematics throughout the school are not as high as in other subjects and progress is not as rapid or consistent. Nevertheless, pupils make at least satisfactory progress in mathematics and a significant proportion are beginning to make good progress. The school has developed clear plans designed to increase the rate of progress in mathematics but it is too soon to see what difference they are making. The school sets challenging targets for pupils. These are kept under constant review and this is helping to maintain high expectations and raise standards further.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy all aspects of school life a great deal. Attendance is above average. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and they relate to one another exceptionally well. They feel confident adults take their concerns seriously and are approachable. Behaviour is good and, often, pupils' attitudes to work are outstanding. There are many ways in which pupils make a significant contribution to the school community, particularly within school. The school councillors take their role very seriously. Older pupils have many other ways to take responsibility, as eco-warriors, helping to serve lunch, or caring for younger ones in the playground. They also run their own lunchtime clubs for younger pupils. All classes select a charity annually and choose their own ways to raise money for it. All these experiences and opportunities, along with good skills such as using a computer, problem solving and working collaboratively in groups, prepare them exceptionally well for the next stage of education and adult life. Pupils have a keen awareness of how to keep themselves safe and healthy, although not all of them fully appreciate the high quality school lunches, even though these sometimes incorporate produce grown by the pupils. The school has Healthy School and Activemark awards in recognition of its good work in these aspects.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

There are some outstanding features in many parts of the school but practice is less consistent in Key Stage 2 where much of the teaching in Years 4 and 5 is satisfactory rather than good. In the large majority of lessons, teachers have high expectations of the pupils, carefully plan stimulating activities that capture their imagination, and make sure pupils are clear about what it is they are learning. Excellent examples seen included Year 3 pupils drafting high quality sentences inspired by Lewis Carroll, Year 1 pupils very confidently discussing the characteristics of three-dimensional shapes and Year 6 reflecting exceptionally thoughtfully on the meaning of 'belief'. Teachers often use good techniques to involve all the pupils, for example by working with their talking partners, and many pupils are keen to volunteer their ideas. Teachers assess progress well. They are beginning to encourage pupils to assess their own learning and think carefully about how they could improve. Marking in books is usually detailed and helpful, giving good guidance about how to improve. In a few lessons, the work set is not challenging enough. A scrutiny of pupils' books showed groups of pupils, in one class in particular, with average and above average abilities frequently being set the same tasks. This, along with muddled explanations, occasionally related to limited subject knowledge, and poor use of time in a few lessons, tends to slow the progress of pupils and is in contrast to the good and sometimes high quality practice in the large majority of lessons.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is broad and balanced. An imaginative approach to linking subjects and developing key skills is being introduced effectively. It is not embedded throughout the school but is already appreciated by pupils and parents. Routine lessons and subjects are supplemented by an outstanding range of enrichment activities, including an exceptional outdoor environment which features not only a wide range of interesting play equipment, but also chickens and fruit and vegetable gardens where the pupils help to grow some of the food they will eat for lunch. Imaginative materials and approaches are used to promote pupils' personal development. Singing has a high profile. The school has an award for this and the outdoor singing post is an innovative feature. Provision for art and design is satisfactory and less strong than the other creative arts. There is a wide range of clubs and activities available. All classes go on off-site visits and anyone in the neighbourhood with useful knowledge is pressed into service to talk to the pupils, from Arctic exploration to tarantulas. Visitors from different cultures are welcomed, including a Ghanaian drummer and a Bollywood dancer. Year 6 have a residential visit to an activities centre where they meet pupils from many different backgrounds, helping to promote their understanding of Britain's cultural diversity.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. The sensitive and individualised care for pupils who experience difficulties is outstanding. Staff work diligently to get to know every pupil and their family and good use is made of outside agencies to provide additional support when necessary. Systems for advising pupils on their academic progress are good in almost all classes. Pupils are becoming involved in setting their own targets, and assessing their work. Good support

strategies are in place to help individuals who have special educational needs or language difficulties. The arrangements for safeguarding pupils are robust and there is on-going staff training. The large majority of parents are very appreciative of the support they are given by the school, and feel confident that their children are in good hands. The breakfast club is helping to meet the needs of the community and it offers a good service. It is well organised and provides a calm and nurturing start to the school day.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher provides a very clear lead for the school, setting ambitious aims for the pupils and the school as a whole. Together with the effective governing body, she has recruited and established a new leadership team whose members, individually and collectively, are already playing a full role in leading new initiatives, such as the development of an innovative curriculum. They are fully involved in the extensive range of procedures to check the school's performance and are gaining a good overview of the school. Detailed systems for tracking pupils' progress are being developed in each part of the school. These are used well for setting targets but the systems for recording the information are not totally consistent and best use is not being made of computer technology to increase the efficiency with which the information can be shared and analysed by the leadership team as a whole. Governors fulfil their roles well. The chair ensures governors are kept well informed and are actively involved in key decision making and strategic thinking. The school has effectively considered how to promote community cohesion at all levels and is very active locally, nationally and internationally, for example through involvement in the annual Fairford festival and the choir's planned tour of Sweden later this term.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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?	3
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	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

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	1
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	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?	2

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	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**

20 May 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Fairford Church of England Primary School, Fairford GL7 4JQ

Thank you for the way you made us feel very welcome when we visited your school. We thoroughly enjoyed talking with some of you and visiting all of your classrooms. Fairford Primary is a good school and your parents are pleased you are able to go there. Here are some of the highlights we found during our visit:

- It was very clear to us that you like school very much. We could see this as we went around the school. Many of you told us this and so did all your parents who replied to our survey.
- You behave well at all times in lessons and during the school day. We were very impressed by the way you care for one another and how so many of you help out around school doing important jobs such as being eco warriors, school councillors or leading clubs for younger children.
- We were pleased to find that you know how important it is to look after yourselves and keep fit by doing lots of exercise and eating healthy food. Your school lunches are excellent, even on those days when the things you grow in school are not on the menu.
- You work hard in lessons, are good at working in pairs or small groups and make good progress with your work, especially your writing.
- The teachers plan lots of interesting things for you to do, and in nearly all lessons they make sure you are clear about what it is you are learning and that the work is not too hard or too easy.
- There are very few schools indeed that have so many interesting things for you to do around the school grounds, such as caring for chickens, growing fruit and vegetables or singing by the post when you feel like it.
- Your headteacher and the school's leaders and governors work well together and are always thinking of new ways to improve the school.
- We have asked the headteacher, staff and governors to work together on three things to make the school even better.
- Make sure that the quality of teaching and learning is good in all year groups.
- Find ways of helping you to make even more progress in mathematics.
- Set up a special area outside Ash class so that the children can play and learn outside just as well as in their classroom.

We know you will want to talk with your school councillors about your own ideas of how to improve the school.

Yours sincerely

Martin Kerly

Lead Inspector