

Catherington Church of England Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116280
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	326354
Inspection date	9 December 2008
Reporting inspector	Judith Rundle HMI

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	Infant
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	86
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	Mr John Mosely
Headteacher	Mrs Melanie Williams
Date of previous school inspection	10 October 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	316 Catherington Lane Catherington Waterlooville PO8 0TD
Telephone number	02392 592263

Age group	4–7
Inspection date	9 December 2008
Inspection number	326354

Fax number

02392 591488

Age group	4-7
Inspection date	9 December 2008
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an Additional Inspector. Inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- the current standards of pupils, including the more able
- the extent to which the curriculum meets the needs and interests of all pupils.

Evidence was gathered from national published assessment data and the school's own assessment records, curriculum and planning documents, observation of the school at work, interviews with staff and pupils, and the parents' questionnaires.

Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Catherington is a very small school in a rural location and is oversubscribed. It has Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provision in the Reception class. The school has very few pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and none with a statement of special educational need. Very few pupils come from a minority ethnic background and none speaks English as an additional language. The school has gained Activemark, Eco-Schools Bronze and enhanced Healthy School status.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Catherington is an outstanding school where pupils thrive academically and in their personal and social development. This is because pupils and their learning are at the centre of everything the school does. All staff know the pupils and their individual needs very well; care, guidance and support are outstanding. Pupils are kind, courteous, articulate and polite both with staff and with each other. Behaviour is exemplary. Pupils were both interested and interesting in their conversations and bursting with enthusiasm for everything they do in school. One parent said, 'My son wakes up in the morning and asks if he is going to school. He is very disappointed when I say it is the weekend.'

Pupils, including those with learning difficulties and /or disabilities, make outstanding progress in their learning throughout their time at the school. Standards are exceptionally high. They have been significantly above average for the last five years, including the proportion of pupils attaining the highest levels by the end of Year 2. Work seen in lessons, in pupils' books and in displays around the school indicates maintenance of these high standards. Staff are ambitious for their more able pupils to attain even more than at present, particularly in boys' writing and girls' mathematics. Although results at Level 3 are above average in writing and significantly above average in reading and mathematics, relatively fewer boys reach the higher levels in writing, and relatively fewer girls in mathematics. The staff have a range of planned activities to promote improvements in these aspects. The 'challenge club' is an outstanding activity to support and extend pupils identified as gifted and talented. Pupils of all ages know how well they are doing in their work and how to improve further because of the consistently high-quality feedback they receive. The school's procedures to assess and track pupils' progress are simple yet robust and highly effective.

Pupils are able to make outstanding progress because of the quality of teaching throughout the school. Teaching is consistently outstanding in all classes, including the support provided by teaching assistants. Staff are always looking for the next challenging activity to introduce or alternative approaches to learning that ensure pupils are stimulated and eager to learn every day. One parent said, 'I see a change daily in my son's reading, writing and confidence in mathematics and more importantly in his general confidence and willingness to learn.'

The curriculum is innovative and extremely well planned to make links between subjects that excite and motivate pupils, leading to high levels of engagement and enjoyment in lessons. Teachers guide pupils very well, so they quickly become confident individuals and independent in their learning. They respond very well when using their 'thinking hats' in a wide variety of situations. The recently introduced 'trailblazer' initiative is leading to creative use of the outdoor environment, although this is still at an early stage of implementation. For example, pupils in Year 1 loved exploring different parts of the school field and garden to decide on suitable homes for small creatures. Teachers and teaching assistants steered them superbly though mature reasoning for their answers and pupils were excited about recording their findings in different ways. The school offers an extensive range of clubs, visits, visitors to the school and themed days to enrich the curriculum further. The recent themed week on India particularly helped pupils understand other cultures. One parent clearly shows the impact of this when she states, 'My child loves the special days held at the school, most recently the one on India. She has been full of it, bursting to tell us what she has found out.'

Pupils' personal development is outstanding because of their wide variety of opportunities to take responsibility for themselves and others. The school council is active in decision-making about the school. All pupils appreciate the buddy system and taking turns to be school helpers. Pupils enjoy raising money for charity and sponsoring children in Indonesia. They have a very good understanding of how this helps others less fortunate than themselves. Pupils show high levels of understanding in distinguishing right from wrong and not hurting each other's feelings. Relationships are excellent through the school and, because of this, pupils all say that they feel safe, well cared for and know they can talk to any adult if they have a concern. They are confident that any issues are dealt with swiftly.

The headteacher is inspirational in her leadership. She is focused and driven and has developed a reflective and ever-improving school. All staff are involved in setting and leading improvements. Together they make an ambitious and formidable team that demonstrates clearly that every pupil is not only known but is nurtured to attain their best at all times. Staff and governors accurately recognise the outstanding aspects of the school's work and priorities for improvement because of a rigorous monitoring programme. Developments since the last inspection have been numerous, such as the introduction of 'trailblazers', wider teaching strategies and pupils' independence in learning. These demonstrate outstanding capacity to make even further improvements. Because of strong leadership, superb teaching and very high expectations, pupils want to be in school and to learn new things. Parents' support for the school is overwhelmingly positive. One parent summarises this and reflects what many others say: 'This is a wonderful school; there is always laughter, fun and love in the school. Our daughter has come on in leaps and bounds and loves going to school.'

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children make an excellent start to their education in the EYFS. Most children start with the expected skills and knowledge for their age and make excellent progress. By the time they are ready to enter Year 1, the majority exceed the expected levels. As one parent commented, 'In the past three months my daughter has gone from a fairly shy girl to one with confidence and a huge interest in learning. We are amazed at her already developed interest in reading and writing.' This is because teaching is developing children's language, mathematics, thinking and social skills in a very creative way. For example, children were excited and very engaged by the use of a parachute to develop mathematics through bouncing toys off the parachute. This quickly led to counting to 10 and back, while the teaching assistant continually challenged the pupils and stressed the importance of thinking about how to add and subtract to 20. Meanwhile, another group with the class teacher used the outside area to hunt for numbers and order them in an exciting and innovative way. As the children returned to the class, one was heard to say, 'I'm doing some clever maths, and thinking hard.' The well-focused support, based on extensive assessments, is giving them a firm grounding for their later stages of education. Leadership of the EYFS is outstanding. The EYFS leader is not complacent and uses her expertise in early years very well to bring about continuous improvements in provision and to ensure children achieve the highest of standards.

What the school should do to improve further

- Implement and embed the planned arrangements to increase further the number of boys attaining Level 3 in writing and girls attaining Level 3 in mathematics.
- Extend the use of the trailblazer initiative.

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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?	1
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?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
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?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	1

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?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
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?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
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**

18 December 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Catherington Church of England Infant School, Waterloo, PO8 0TD

I am writing to say thank you for making us feel so welcome and for talking to us when we came to visit your school recently. I also want to tell you what we found out about your school.

You are very lucky to go to such an outstanding school, where all the adults know you very well and always help you to achieve your best. You all told us how much you love being in school and learning new things. You especially enjoy using the field to learn outside the classroom through the new 'trailblazer' activities. Both your teachers and inspectors think you could use the outdoors even more in the future. We think that you all behave really well and take great care of each other, especially when you are a 'buddy'. The school gives you many opportunities to take responsibility and to work together. This is helping you to become confident and independent.

You all work very hard in lessons, know your targets and make a lot of progress when you are at the school. Teaching is of the very best and helps you reach the highest standards in your work. Although a lot more of you than average reach Level 3, fewer boys do this in writing and fewer girls in mathematics. Inspectors have identified this is an area for improvement, although the school already has plans in place to address this. You can help by listening hard and continuing to use your 'thinking hats'. You have lots of different activities in your lessons and teachers are always finding new ways to make you excited about learning. Lots of you go to school clubs and you told us how much you enjoy learning from your visits, visitors and themed days, such as the India week.

Your headteacher and all the staff are ambitious for you and are continuously looking to make your outstanding school even better. What do you want to be best at? What is your ambition?

We hope that you continue to work hard and keep enjoying school. Thank you once again for telling us so much about your school.

Yours faithfully

Judith Rundle

Her Majesty's Inspector