

Titchmarsh Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121994
Local Authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	327617
Inspection date	6 November 2008
Reporting inspector	Mike Capper

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	4–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	64
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	Mark Lee
Headteacher	J Milton
Date of previous school inspection	8 November 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	School Lane Titchmarsh Kettering NN14 3DR
Telephone number	01832 732874

Age group	4–9
Inspection date	6 November 2008
Inspection number	327617

Fax number

01832 732353

Age group 4-9

Inspection date 6 November 2008

Inspection number 327617

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Introduction

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

progress in writing and in mathematics across the school

pupils' attitudes towards learning and their contribution to the life of the school and the wider community

how well pupils understand how to improve their work.

Evidence was gathered from observations of pupils at work and play, discussion with staff, governors and pupils, scrutiny of documentation and an analysis of parents' views. 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

Just over a half of pupils come to this very small rural primary school from the villages of Titchmarsh and Clopton, with the rest travelling from further afield. The proportion identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average. The number eligible for free school meals is below average. There is one Reception class in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Pupils transfer to the local middle school at the end of Year 4.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Parents are justifiably proud of this good school that helps pupils to flourish both socially and academically. The school is successful because leaders have created an ethos in which all pupils are valued and respected. Several parents commented on 'the family feel' of the school and this is reflected in pupils' outstanding personal development and well-being. Pupils learn good values and they behave exceptionally well. They support each other very thoughtfully in and out of lessons and have very positive attitudes towards learning.

Pupils achieve well because teaching and learning are good. Teachers successfully meet pupils' differing needs in lessons, ensuring that there is generally good challenge in literacy and numeracy lessons. Teaching assistants give good support to pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, ensuring that they make good progress. Children get a good start in the EYFS where they learn quickly and this good progress is then maintained in the rest of the school. Consequently, standards are well above average by the end of Year 4, with most working beyond the expected levels for their age in English and mathematics. Pupils do especially well in mathematics and make rapid progress in developing basic numeracy skills. Provision in mathematics has been a recent focus of school development and the impact of this can be seen in pupils' confidence in numeracy lessons. Children and parents speak very positively about the new 'mathematics library' which they use to share and borrow games. Recent meetings with parents have kept them well informed about how they can help their children with numeracy work at home and again this has been very helpful in supporting learning. In English, progress in writing, although generally good, is not quite as fast as in reading. This is because an overuse of unchallenging worksheets in subjects other than literacy restricts opportunities for pupils to practise and improve their writing skills.

Adults provide very high quality care, guidance and support for the pupils and encourage them to become responsible citizens. Pupils have an outstanding understanding of how to stay safe and healthy. They grow their own food in the school garden and voted against having a 'fizzy fountain' in classrooms because it 'could lead to tooth decay' or 'cause hyperactivity'. Pupils greatly enjoy school, with comments such as 'we do fun things every day' and 'the teachers are very kind and caring' being typical of their views. Pupils especially enjoy the exciting range of activities that is provided outside lessons. The large number of clubs is greatly appreciated and activities such as a recent information and communication technology day help to bring subjects alive.

Pupils are brilliant ambassadors for the school. Relationships between classmates and adults are superb, and there is a delightful atmosphere in lessons because pupils always try their best. Pupils' awareness of the importance of looking after the planet for future generations is developed extremely well through various eco-projects. For example, the school has recently purchased a water butt and eco-councillors monitor its use carefully. Pupils are very keen to take responsibility and when given the chance, through activities such as the school council, they do so exceptionally well. However, in subjects such as science, history and geography, teachers do not do enough to encourage pupils to think for themselves and to take responsibility for their own learning by carrying out research or investigative work. This is a comparative weakness in teaching and learning across the school.

Leadership and management are good. The reflective and purposeful leadership of the headteacher has ensured that the school has continued to move forward quickly since the last

inspection, demonstrating that there is a good capacity for further improvement. The headteacher is supported well by hardworking and enthusiastic subject leaders and governors who have a clear understanding of the school's priorities for development. Systems for checking effectiveness are thorough despite some minor inconsistencies in subjects such as science.

Since the last inspection, members of staff have successfully strengthened academic support and the tracking of pupils' progress. Leaders analyse data in detail to identify and give extra support where it is needed, and teachers are making increasingly good use of targets and marking to help pupils understand how to improve their work. Consequently, pupils are able to talk confidently about the next stage of their learning, especially in mathematics, where the use of targets is particularly well established.

Leaders are very strongly committed to ensuring that all pupils do equally well and the school's contribution towards community cohesion is outstanding. The school has recently won an 'International Schools Award' in recognition of its work in this area. Members of staff have worked extremely hard to ensure that pupils learn about life beyond the Nene Valley through the 'Connecting Classroom' project. There are excellent links with schools in Kenya and South Africa and these have had a very positive effect on pupils' cultural awareness. Pupils also make an excellent contribution to the local community. They participate very enthusiastically in village events such as the 'May Day' and the annual 'fun run'. They show great concern for the needs of others by organising fundraising events for different charities.

The school works extremely closely with outside agencies to safeguard pupils' well-being. The school has outstanding links with parents, who make a very strong contribution to their children's learning by working with them at home. One parent summed up the almost unanimous views of others by writing, 'I am pleased that my son is getting such a great start to his education.'

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Good EYFS provision ensures that children achieve well. Adults plan exciting activities that successfully motivate and engage children and ensure that there is a happy and purposeful buzz in lessons. On entry to the EYFS, most children are working at the levels typically expected for this age group, but good teaching means that children's standards rise to above average levels by the start of Year 1. Children make especially good progress in personal, social and emotional development because adults give their welfare a very high priority and provide calm and sensitive support when it is needed. In lessons, members of staff explain tasks clearly, enabling children to gain good knowledge and to become confident about asking questions. However, there are occasionally missed opportunities to extend children's learning when they are working independently. Good leadership and management ensure that provision is reviewed regularly and action taken as needed. Leaders are now working to ensure that the well-resourced outdoor area is used even more fully in the different areas of learning. There are good induction procedures that ensure that children settle quickly when they start school. For example, Year 3 pupils visit the village pre-school providers so that the new children will know some faces on the playground on their first days in school.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that there are more opportunities for pupils to think for themselves and to develop and use research and investigative skills in subjects such as science, history and geography.
- Reduce the use of worksheets and ensure that pupils are able to practise and improve their writing skills by using them in different subjects.

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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?	1
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?	1
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?	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	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	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**

7 November 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Titchmarsh CE Primary School, Kettering NN14 3DR

Thank you for welcoming us to your school and for showing us your work. You were polite and friendly and you behaved extremely well. We are pleased that you attend a good school and are able to learn in such a lovely setting.

Some of the things we found out about your school.

- Good teaching helps you to learn well and to make good progress across the school.
- In the Reception class, children work together well and adults plan interesting work for you to do.
- You are taught all the things you should be and you greatly enjoy school, especially the many clubs, visits and visitors.
- You have an excellent understanding of how to stay safe and healthy. The gardening club sounds great fun and it is brilliant that you are being so careful about looking after the environment. Well done on getting the 'Green Flag' award for your work in this area!
- All adults in school are very kind and caring and they give you good help with your work.
- Your headteacher and governors are leading the school well and are working hard to make it even better. They have established some brilliant links with schools in other countries and this is helping you to understand what life is like beyond your school.
- Your parents and carers are very pleased that you come to this school.

What we have asked your school to do now.

- Make sure that teachers plan activities that will encourage you to think for yourselves and help you to develop and use research and investigative skills.
- Make less use of work sheets so that you get more opportunities to practise your writing skills in different subjects.

We thoroughly enjoyed talking with you about your work and watching you learn. We wish you all the best for the future. We hope you continue to help your teachers by continuing to work hard at all times. Yours faithfully

Mike Capper Lead inspector