

Culworth Church of England School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122019
Local Authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	327623
Inspection date	2 February 2009
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 aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	116
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	Steve Allen
Headteacher	Sue Lawrence
Date of previous school inspection	29 November 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Culworth The Green Banbury OX17 2BB
Telephone number	01295 760610
Fax number	01295 760610

Age group	4–11
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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 mathematics for less able pupils in Years 3 to 6, and progress in science across the school
- enrichment of the curriculum and how well it contributes to pupils' enjoyment of learning and their responsibility taking
- the quality of subject leadership.

Evidence was gathered from observations of pupils at work and play, discussions 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

This small rural primary school takes pupils from the village of Culworth as well as from further afield. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities is slightly above average. Most of these pupils have moderate learning difficulties. Nearly all pupils are from White British backgrounds. There is one Reception class in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

An external provider offers childcare on the school site. This provision has been inspected separately.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school. One parent accurately captured its essence when commenting that, 'It is a very friendly school where the members of staff are always willing to help and really seem to care.' Pupils greatly enjoy school and develop a love of learning because there is a rich and vibrant curriculum and excellent teaching. This ensures that pupils flourish both socially and academically and consequently, are prepared exceptionally well for the next stage of their education and for later life.

Children get off to an excellent start in the Early Years Foundation Stage and make very rapid progress, especially in personal development. Pupils continue to make outstanding progress in the rest of the school, resulting in standards rising to well above average levels by the end of Year 6. Pupils' achievement is excellent and they nearly always meet or exceed the very challenging targets that they have been given. Pupils do especially well in science because they are curious and inquisitive and teachers encourage them to think like scientists by giving them many opportunities to carry out investigations and experiments. In mathematics, there are very strong systems for supporting less able pupils in Years 3 to 6, ensuring that they make the same excellent progress as others.

Adults provide very high quality care to the pupils and the school fully meets current safeguarding requirements. This ensures that pupils' personal development and well-being are excellent. Pupils are very proud of the school and their excellent attitudes and behaviour are key factors in its success. There is a delightful atmosphere in lessons and relationships between classmates and adults are brilliant, with everyone helping each other when needed. The school effectively encourages good attendance, although some parents still take their children on holiday in term time. Pupils are very appreciative of the wide range of visits, visitors and clubs that enrich learning. Residential visits contribute greatly to the way that pupils develop confidence and self-esteem. As one said of a recent trip to an outdoor pursuits centre, 'It was the best trip ever, where we learnt to conquer all of our fears.' Pupils have an outstanding understanding of how to stay safe. Pupils talk confidently about the importance of exercise and generally make healthy choices at lunchtime.

Throughout the school, teachers ensure that there is very good challenge in lessons, and work is very closely matched to pupils' differing abilities. Skilled teaching assistants make a significant contribution to the life of the school and give excellent support, especially when working with pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Teachers give pupils very clear guidance to help them understand how to improve, especially in English and mathematics. The school has made a good start to developing assessment procedures in other subjects, although these are not yet always detailed enough to help teachers to check progress over time.

The curriculum gives pupils many opportunities to take responsibility and they do so very enthusiastically. The very active school council helps pupils to contribute to the day-to-day running of the school. In lessons, teachers encourage pupils to think for themselves. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 recently wrote, edited, published and marketed a school newspaper, showing very good computing skills and excellent financial acumen by providing an enticing free gift with each edition. The school's contribution to community cohesion is good. The school successfully focuses on teaching pupils about their place in the wider world and there is an increasingly strong awareness of local, national and international issues. Leaders are working to develop this further by establishing even more links with schools in different areas. Pupils

already show an excellent concern for the needs of others by providing clothing for children in a school in Uganda and raising funds for local charities.

Leadership and management are excellent. The school is so successful because leaders at all levels have created an ethos in which all pupils are valued and respected. The school does not rest on its laurels and there is a very strong drive for improvement led by the inspirational headteacher. She constantly strives to innovate when she can see a benefit to the pupils. For example, the school has recently introduced a 'Values Framework', which is having a significant impact on both parents and pupils. It builds on existing excellent practice by helping pupils to think about the way they live together as a community and even some parents have talked to the headteacher about how they can apply the framework in their workplace.

Leaders have a very clear understanding of the school's priorities for development based on very thorough systems for checking effectiveness. Subject leaders are hard working and enthusiastic. Although many are new to their posts, they have already established a very good knowledge of strengths and weaknesses in their subjects. They are supported well in their work by an excellent governing body that provides very good challenge and manages a relatively tight budget very efficiently.

The sense of partnership across the whole school community is very strong and includes excellent links with outside agencies and other schools. The school is supported extremely well by parents who are almost unanimously delighted with every aspect of its work. Parents offer their skills, raise funds and help children with work at home, contributing enormously to the success of the school. The school has set itself very challenging targets for the next stage of its development and it is very well placed to realise these aspirations.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage has improved significantly since the last inspection. Children make excellent progress because both the quality of teaching and of care and support are exceptionally high. When children start school, the majority of children are working at the expected levels for their age and they reach above average standards by the start of Year 1. Children do especially well in personal development because of the high expectations of all adults. The quirky classroom that has many nooks and crannies is very well organised and all adults successfully encourage children to develop high levels of independence and confidence. Children are expected to do their best at all times and there is a purposeful buzz in lessons as children go happily about their work. Work across the different areas of learning is linked very imaginatively. For example, following a recent 'class wedding' taken by the local vicar, children write, draw and paint about the experience. Role play such as the class 'post office' helps children to develop an early knowledge of the world of work. Leadership of provision is excellent. There are very thorough systems for checking children's progress and very clear plans for future developments. For example, leaders are in the process of improving already strong outdoor provision by adding a canopy so that children can work outside, even in the worst weather.

What the school should do to improve further

- Build on existing excellent practice in English and mathematics to develop assessment systems in other subjects that help teachers to check pupils' progress over time.

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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	2
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	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
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?	2
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**

3 February 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Culworth Church of England Primary School, Culworth, OX17 2BB

Thank you for welcoming us to your school and for showing us your work. You were very polite and friendly and were very well behaved. We agree with you that your school is excellent, and that staff do a lot to help you.

Some of the things we found out about your school

- Excellent teaching helps you to learn new things very quickly throughout the school. You are doing really well at learning French.
- Younger children get a brilliant start in the Reception class, where you do many exciting things and work together very well. The 'wedding' looks as if it was great fun.
- You really enjoy school because adults make learning interesting by planning fun activities, and by providing many clubs and visits.
- The school is very successful at encouraging you to take responsibility. We were very impressed by the sensible way in which older pupils apply for 'jobs'.
- Your teachers and other adults are very kind and caring; they look after you very well and give you superb help if you are struggling with your work.
- Your headteacher, teachers and governors lead the school very well and they are working very hard to make the school even better.
- Your parents and carers are very pleased that you come to this school.

What we have asked your school to do now

- Teachers are already very good at checking your progress over time in English and mathematics and now need to strengthen this in other subjects.

We thoroughly enjoyed talking to you about your work and watching you learn, and we wish you well for the future. You can help the school by continuing to work hard.

Yours sincerely

Mr Mike Capper

Lead inspector