

Carterton Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123015
Local Authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	327830
Inspection dates	23–24 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Joy Considine

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	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	233
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 Ron Bach
Headteacher	Mr Mike Curtis
Date of previous school inspection	30 January 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Burford Road Carterton OX18 3AD
Telephone number	01993 842502
Fax number	01993 840964

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Carterton is an average size primary school and has provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage for children in the Nursery and Reception classes. The school serves the local community and draws a proportion of pupils from service families based at RAF Brize Norton. Mobility is higher than average because many pupils arrive and leave on a weekly basis. A minority of children have had no pre-school experience. Attainment on entry is below average. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is about average. Of these, most have moderate learning difficulties or behavioural and emotional needs. Almost all pupils have White British heritage. The school has gained the 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: 3

Carterton Primary School provides a safe and welcoming environment in which each child is well cared for. The school is situated in delightful grounds which are being developed to create an attractive outdoor learning resource for pupils. Pupils are happy and they enjoy school. This is reflected in the positive attitudes they show and the good behaviour they demonstrate in lessons and in the playground. They have a good understanding of how to live a healthy lifestyle and are keen to make a positive contribution to the community. They are developing skills that will enable them to become responsible citizens of the future. Most parents are pleased with the school. One parent wrote, 'the teachers and staff are friendly and there is a sort of and;quot;family spiritand;quot; in the school'.

Achievement is satisfactory. The school has recognised that standards are not high enough and that rates of progress, along with the use of assessment to improve teaching, need to be improved. At the end of Year 6, standards in English, mathematics and science were below average last year, although there was a marked improvement in mathematics. Standards in writing are lower than in reading and mathematics. The school recognises this and has implemented several initiatives such as 'Big Writing' to raise standards. This is already beginning to improve pupils' writing skills although there is more work to do. For example, in one piece of descriptive writing one pupil wrote, 'Glimmering in the bright morning sun, a magnificent glowing crystal stood proud in the depths of the running stream'.

Teaching is satisfactory and helps pupils make satisfactory progress. Usually, teachers use imaginative methods to capture pupils' interests but sometimes the learning activities are too easy to challenge all pupils. Teachers plan lessons carefully but they do not always make the best use of assessment information and so lessons do not always meet the learning needs of all pupils and their progress slows. There are increasing opportunities for pupils to apply their skills with literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) in other subjects and this is helping to improve standards. The curriculum is satisfactory in meeting the learning needs of pupils. It makes effective use of the local environment and places further afield to provide wider experiences for pupils.

Leaders and managers have an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They have prioritised the right actions for improvement and have plans in place to bring these about. Senior leaders monitor the work of the school but this sometimes lacks rigour so that there are inconsistencies in practice across the school. For example, the school improvement plan does not have clear specific targets or success criteria and so it is difficult to measure how effective the actions taken have been. The school makes good use of partnerships to support its work. For example, there are close links with the county autistic service and this has improved the expertise of staff in school. The school participates in the local community by entertaining groups of older people and providing gifts of food following Harvest Festival. Pupils also raise funds for local charities such as 'See Saw' - an organisation that deals with child bereavement. The school adequately promotes community cohesion through its local and European links and has clear plans in place to extend this work to places further afield and to encompass the different faith groups represented in Britain today. The school has improved since the last inspection and is well placed to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children enter the Nursery, and some directly into Reception, with knowledge and skills below those expected for their age, particularly in speech and language. They settle into school quickly and feel secure within the setting. Staff involve parents in their children's learning and this has been particularly beneficial in support of children's emotional development. Parents of Nursery children receive individual learning plans and are asked to contribute to the assessment of their children's learning and development. The curriculum provides a thematic approach to learning, supported by a range of well-considered activities and attractive displays. These are focused on the different areas of learning and are particularly evident in the Reception class. There is a good balance between adult-led and child-initiated activities. Children become confident in choosing their activities, working and playing happily alongside each other. Teaching overall is satisfactory. Where it is better, adults interact well with children, encouraging them in their spoken language; assessments are more regular and enable staff to provide the right level of support and challenge to children. When the children enter Key Stage 1, their standards are below average but they have made satisfactory progress. The Early Years Foundation Stage is led and managed satisfactorily. Priorities for development are appropriate but they are not set out clearly enough in an action plan that is specific to the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are not monitored or evaluated rigorously enough to impact on children's progress and development.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and achievement in reading, writing and mathematics throughout the school.
- Improve the use of assessment so that teachers plan learning that is well matched to the needs of all groups of pupils.
- Make monitoring and evaluation more robust to ensure that all staff follow agreed procedures so that there is a more consistent approach to developments throughout the school.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory, but which have areas of underperformance, will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

In 2008 standards were below average in reading and writing and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1. Pupils' progress in these subjects is satisfactory. At the end of Key Stage 2, standards in English and science were below average and were at a similar level to those gained in 2007. Standards in mathematics improved considerably in 2008 but remain below average. Analysis of data shows that pupils made satisfactory progress in English and science and good progress in mathematics. Although pupils make satisfactory progress as they move up the school, it is sometimes uneven between years. Scrutiny of pupils' current work indicates that they are on track to meet or exceed their targets in 2009. Pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy coming to school and this is reflected in their positive attitudes and good attendance. They are friendly, polite and well behaved and they have a good understanding of right and wrong. Their spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory and their moral and social development is good. Pupils rightly say that bullying is rare but that adults deal with inappropriate incidents quickly and fairly. Pupils have a caring approach and show consideration and respect towards each other. They value the opportunities they have to contribute to community events and learn about the importance of citizenship through the Junior Community Citizenship Scheme. Their work as school councillors enables them to contribute towards school improvements by undertaking activities such as fundraising to improve playground facilities. There is further scope for pupils to take on more responsibilities to develop their initiative and independence. Pupils have a clear understanding of the need for safety, exercise and healthy eating and the school has received the Healthy School Award in recognition of its work. Given these good personal qualities and their satisfactory academic achievement, pupils are adequately prepared for their future life and learning.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Pupils enjoy their lessons because teachers use a variety of methods and resources to actively involve pupils in their learning. The quality of teaching overall is satisfactory and sometimes good. In better lessons, teachers plan activities that interest and engage pupils and inspire them to work hard. In other lessons where pupils are not challenged and the pace slows, there is some restlessness and inattention. Planning shows activities for different levels of ability but some teachers' expectations of what pupils can do are sometimes too low and this restricts the progress that pupils can make. Relationships between teachers and pupils are good and this encourages pupils to try their best. In some lessons teachers are skilled in asking pupils questions to challenge them and to develop their understanding. For example in one lesson, the teacher asked pupils probing questions about how characters from a text might be feeling. The pupils then had to take on the role of a character from the story and write a diary account expressing their thoughts and feelings. Teachers mark pupils' work but they do not always provide enough guidance for pupils about how they can improve their work or identify the next steps in learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school provides a curriculum that meets the needs and interests of most pupils. Teachers are beginning to make links between subjects to make learning more relevant for pupils. This was seen in a display of work from one class in which pupils were learning about the Romans through literacy, art and information and communication technology (ICT). The school makes good use of local places of interest to engage pupils and widen their experiences. For example, pupils visited Woodstock museum to learn about making toys with winding mechanisms. Pupils enjoy the wide range of extra-curricular activities and are quick to realise the positive attributes of a fit and healthy lifestyle. Pupils are given increasing opportunities to apply their skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT across the curriculum and this is leading to an improvement in standards in these subjects. Pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities are provided

with focused support from skilled teaching assistants but this is not always built on by class teachers.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school provides good pastoral support for pupils. Policies and procedures to protect them are rigorous, ensuring that arrangements for their safety, care and welfare are secure. Procedures for safeguarding pupils, including child protection arrangements, are secure. Staff have a good understanding of the needs of pupils and relationships are good. The school provides sensitive well-focused support in the form of nurture groups to help pupils who need support with their personal, social and emotional skills, and to help their families. Academic guidance is satisfactory. Pupils' progress is well recorded and tracked, but this information is not used consistently by all teachers to plan learning and to ensure that all pupils are appropriately challenged. It is used to set targets for literacy and numeracy but pupils are not sufficiently aware of them or of their purpose in helping them to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management have set a clear direction focused on raising standards and achievement in English, mathematics and science. The newly established leadership team has already identified key priorities to raise standards and coordinators have produced action plans to support these developments. These plans are detailed but the actions and success criteria lack the necessary focus and clarity to drive the improvements. Senior leaders monitor teachers' work but this sometimes lacks rigour and this makes improvements patchy and inconsistent. The school uses data and other information to evaluate its performance and has an accurate understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. The school has established links with the local community and with countries in Europe through the Comenius project. It has plans in place to extend these links to the wider world beyond and to encompass the different faith groups represented in multicultural Britain. The school makes good use of external partners such as local authority advisers to support its work. Governors take a keen interest in school but several are engaged in active service and this means that they are not always able to provide the time to monitor and challenge the work of the school.

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?	3
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	3

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
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?	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	3

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	3
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	2
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	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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 April 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Carterton Primary School, Carterton, OX18 3AD

Thank you very much for making us so welcome when we visited your school last week. We enjoyed meeting you all and finding out how well you are learning and how well you all get on together.

Your school is giving you a satisfactory standard of education. Your teachers care for you a great deal and they have worked hard to make your school safe, bright and attractive. They have also provided you with lots of activities to do after school which help to keep you healthy and fit. They enjoy being with you and have helped you to learn how to behave well. They try to make lessons interesting but we found that sometimes they do not always give you work that is hard enough and some of you do not do as well as you could.

So that more of you can make faster progress we have asked your school to:

- give you some more difficult work in English, mathematics and science
- make sure that you know how well you are doing and what you need to do to further improve your work by using assessment information to plan your lessons
- improve the way that school leaders monitor the teachers' work.

We know that you enjoy learning and that you will do your best to make Carterton Primary an even better school.

Yours faithfully

Joy Considine

Lead Inspector