

# Carswell Community Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	123080
<b>Local Authority</b>	Oxfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	327844
<b>Inspection dates</b>	24–25 March 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	George Falconer 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.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	212
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
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Karen Cackett
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Susan Gore
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	20 October 2005
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Bostock Road Abingdon OX14 1DP
<b>Telephone number</b>	01235 521578

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	24–25 March 2009
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**Fax number**

01235 550460

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

Carswell is an average-sized school serving a wide area. The intake is diverse with pupils coming from a range of social and economic backgrounds. There is an increasing number entering with learning and behavioural issues. The mobility of pupils is much greater than seen nationally. The school serves a local army barracks. There is an increase in the proportion of children from minority ethnic heritages, bringing the figures up to near the national average. The percentage of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is higher than found nationally. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is lower than the national average. A breakfast club and an after school club are provided by the governing body. The school has retained its Investors in People Award.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

This satisfactory school is in an important phase of its development with strong leadership and management by the headteacher guiding the staff towards improved quality of provision. Pupils are happy and parents are appreciative.

A parent wrote saying that the teachers are always helpful and friendly, while another wrote that the headteacher is a real asset to Carswell.

Leaders are developing their roles satisfactorily but realise they are not yet fully developed. Governors are supporting the school soundly with the chair of governors taking a keen interest in the strategic development. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall.

At the heart of the improvements to raise achievement is the more focused approach to monitoring the quality of teaching and learning, with a greater emphasis on the pupils' learning. This is leading to satisfactory progress for the majority of pupils, including a large percentage who join the school at different times throughout the year. Some pupils make good progress. Standards are, however, still below average in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. The school recognises this and sees the importance of raising attainment levels in core subjects and of developing writing skills across the curriculum.

The tracking of pupils' progress is becoming more rigorous. Staff are held more accountable for their actions and have a better perspective on pupils' levels and how to meet their needs. This is not yet consistent across the school, but staffing is now much more stable than in previous years and staff work well together.

Personal development and well-being are good. They are a strength of the school and pupils receive good personal support. The level of pastoral care is equally well developed and is good. Guidance and support in academic work is growing stronger and is satisfactory overall.

Although the quality of teaching and learning is variable, no lessons observed were inadequate; they ranged from satisfactory to outstanding during the inspection. However, this does lead to some uneven progress. The curriculum is broad and balanced and serves the pupils' needs satisfactorily. It is improving, as assessment for learning focuses more clearly on individual needs, but it is not as engaging and imaginative as it could be.

Opportunities for enrichment are good. The caring after school club plays an important part in continuing pupils' feelings of being secure and helps to develop them socially, as well as promoting aesthetic and creative skills. Pupils enjoy their time and are well supported by adults.

The school has a satisfactory capacity to improve.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 3

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with low and sometimes much lower than expected levels of attainment. The effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory with good elements. The classrooms and outdoor areas are well used and well resourced. There are attractive displays and interesting equipment to match children's needs and interests and promote learning across all areas of the curriculum. There is a good balance between teacher-led and child-initiated activities. Staff focus particularly on activities to improve

children's skills in communication, language and literacy, as well as their personal and social development.

Thorough assessments of children's learning enable staff to plan appropriate activities to build on knowledge and understanding. As a result of the satisfactory and good teaching, children make steady progress overall with some children making good progress in their learning. By the time they enter Year 1, they have a firm foundation on which to build. Staff meet welfare needs well, and behaviour management is good. Because children are well cared for and happy, they make good progress in their attitudes and their willingness to become involved in learning.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Raise attainment levels for all pupils in English, mathematics and science, and increase the opportunities for writing across the curriculum.
- Develop the roles and responsibilities of the leadership team so that they gain a more strategic perspective on whole-school issues and become more focused in progressing the quality and continuity of learning across the school.
- Refine assessment procedures, including assessment for learning, and make sure there is greater consistency in practice across the school in order to raise achievement.

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**

Achievement is satisfactory overall with an increasing proportion of pupils displaying satisfactory levels of progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. Some pupils are making good progress, although writing is an issue across the school for many.

The attainment of pupils by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage reflects the below-average ability on entry for many, compared to other pupils of a similar age. Some pupils enter with well below-average expectations.

Pupils therefore begin Key Stage 1 with some catching-up to do in reading, writing and mathematics and most make satisfactory progress by the time they enter Key Stage 2. Some are making good progress, but standards are below average overall.

The school data tracking system is developing satisfactorily. This, combined with a greater degree of consistency in the quality of teaching and learning, makes sure that progress for the majority of pupils in Key Stage 2 is satisfactory overall. However, standards remain below average. Current data indicate that the gap between boys and girls is closing and there are no marked variations between other groups of learners.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Personal development and well-being are good. They are areas of strength and reflect the degree of importance the school attaches to pupils' overall development. This is important in a school where pupil turnover is high and where an increasing number enter with behavioural difficulties. Children are happy, well behaved, feel safe and secure and can discuss issues concerning them. Circle time and assemblies promote the importance of respecting children

and adults from all cultures and attitudes to learning are positive. Social and moral education is good and pupils are helpful towards each other and their community. Spiritual and cultural elements of learning are satisfactory but developing well, with pupils learning about other cultures and religions.

Pupils' knowledge about staying healthy is good. After school clubs provide good opportunities for a range of activities and are well led by enthusiastic staff. All Key Stage 2 children participate in swimming.

Close links with the Educational Social Worker are maintained and the home-school link worker offers very effective support. Attendance is satisfactory and improving. Pupils make a positive contribution to the school community as well as developing satisfactory skills for their future economic well-being.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall and ranged from satisfactory to outstanding during the inspection. This results in some uneven progress. The school soundly tracks pupils' progress and ensures pupils get extra help whenever they need it in order to address underachievement. Teaching assistants play a valuable role in the classroom.

In outstanding lessons pupils are well motivated by the approaches to teaching and the pace of learning is fast. Pupils are able to show that they can work well on their own or in groups. They are attentive. Time is not wasted. Progress for many is good and the teaching inspires pupils to do their best. Enjoyment levels are high and the teachers know how to get the best out of individual pupils. However, there are still occasions where teaching does not take full account of individual pupils' needs and there are missed opportunities to extend pupils' thinking sufficiently. This slows the rate of progress for some pupils.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum is satisfactory overall. The strong emphasis on developing literacy and numeracy skills is beginning to make a difference to pupils' learning in these subjects. There is a good range of activities to enrich the curriculum and pupils particularly enjoy participating in clubs. Specialist teachers for music and sports provide further opportunities to extend learning. The school has a new drama club and pupils enjoy the residential elements of the curriculum at Hill End Camp.

In the most successful lessons the curriculum is practical and investigative activities engage pupils' interest and enthusiasm; for example, making a smoothie helped Year 1 pupils to plan clear and accurate instructional writing. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used appropriately to engage pupils, especially the use of the interactive whiteboards. At other times the curriculum is not as engaging and does not always capture pupils' imaginations; consequently progress slows.

## Care, guidance and support

### Grade: 3

The quality of care is good. Guidance and support are satisfactory. There are effective systems to ensure the smooth induction of new pupils, many of whom arrive other than at the usual time, so they quickly feel part of the school family. They settle quickly into school routines and value those pupils appointed to help them make friends. The arrangements to support social and emotional well-being are good and contribute much to pupils' development. Child protection and health and safety procedures are thorough and meet requirements at the time of the inspection. Risk assessment and the measures to safeguard pupils are effective. Many pupils are clear about their targets in English and mathematics and the tracking of pupils' progress is developing; however, it is not yet consistent enough throughout the school to give pupils a consistent, clear understanding of what they must do to improve.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

The leadership and management of the headteacher are strong. Leadership and management is satisfactory overall, with a developing senior leadership team that is beginning to be more accountable through the school's performance management structures. The special educational needs coordinator plays a key role putting in place extra help that is closely monitored for impact.

Clear ideas on the development of the school are actioned and analysed regularly for impact. The school development plan focuses on improving achievement and standards through improving the quality of learning. Pupil review meetings are central to improved progress for many. Challenging targets are set for pupils. Monitoring and tracking of new initiatives within the overall development are strong features of the headteacher's leadership. The school self-evaluation portrays an accurate assessment of the current picture.

Governors work satisfactorily and continue to develop their responsibilities, with the chair of governors providing appropriate support and specific challenges for the headteacher.

Community cohesion is satisfactory, with a developing programme that engages pupils in understanding their place in society within an ever-changing world. The school now has a renewed focus on this development.

Equality of opportunity is promoted satisfactorily and discrimination is dealt with appropriately. Resources are deployed soundly and achieve satisfactory value for money.

**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](http://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 <sup>1</sup> 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

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<sup>1</sup>Grade 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

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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 Carswell Community Primary School, Abingdon, OX14 1DP

Thank you very much for such a good welcome and for helping us to inspect your school. Our first thoughts were about how lucky you are to be in such a caring school with a warm environment where the teachers and all the other staff put so much time and energy into supporting you and making you happy. Our second thought was about how good you were. You are well behaved and eager to learn. You are also kind to each other and polite to adults.

Teachers work hard at helping you all to develop as individuals and they provide good opportunities for you to join a variety of clubs, including the various sports clubs and the new drama club. Not only is there a breakfast club but also an after school club that works well for you too.

The school rightly looks closely at developing your knowledge and understanding as well as teaching you new skills. The headteacher is good. She works hard to give you the best possible education, as do the rest of the staff. Your headteacher is also very sensible. She knows that a lot of improvement over the last 18 months has happened in teaching and in your learning. Mrs Gore also realises that there is a lot more work to do before the school will be completely satisfied with what it provides for you.

We discussed some important areas to develop, to make the school a good school. This includes getting all your grades up as much as possible in English, mathematics and science. We also agreed that the school needs to work particularly hard at improving your writing. The teachers are going to look at how they can work even smarter than they do now and they are all eager to be able to see how learning is developing for you across the school. This will give them clearer ideas of how to plan your work so it is just right for all of you, all of the time. Speaking of which, in order to do that, teachers will also want to improve the way they assess your progress in learning. They have already made a really good start with this, but they know that they can be better, just as you can in your learning. You can help a lot by thinking carefully about how much you are improving and about the areas where you think you need more support.

Yours faithfully

George Falconer

Her Majesty's Inspector