

Cropredy Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123090
Local Authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	327845
Inspection dates	18–19 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Vanessa Ward

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	168
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 Rob Price
Headteacher	Mrs Daphne Elliott
Date of previous school inspection	13 June 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Station Road Cropredy Banbury OX17 1PU
Telephone number	01295 750210

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is smaller than average. Pupils enter the Early Years Foundation Stage in the September following their fourth birthday. Across the school, most of the pupils are from White British backgrounds. A very small number come from a range of ethnic backgrounds. No pupils are at the early stages of speaking English as an additional language. Fewer pupils than average qualify for free school meals. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational need, is below average. This includes pupils with moderate learning difficulties and others with speech, language and communication difficulties. The acting headteacher has been in post for two years. This situation is to continue for a further year, pending the appointment of a permanent headteacher from September 2010. The school works closely with a privately-run playgroup which is held in the same building as the school's Reception class.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Cropredy Church of England Primary is a good school. It provides a good education that enables its pupils to achieve well in their academic and personal development. Pupils enjoy their time in school. They are punctual and their attendance is above average. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils develop a strong sense of right and wrong, and learn about some of the more spiritual aspects of the world around them, for instance through the exploration of human values in assemblies.

Good teaching and a stimulating curriculum enable pupils to make good progress and to attain above average standards by the end of Year 6. From an excellent start in the Early Years Foundation Stage, standards have dipped in recent years by the end of Year 2. The school has begun to address this and unconfirmed results for 2009 indicate that this has begun to reverse. However, more work is needed to redress this underachievement. Results for writing have been lower than those for reading and mathematics for some years. The school has worked hard, and with some success, to raise standards in writing. Successful initiatives have included making meaningful links between writing and other subjects, such as science and history. The staff realise that this striving for improvement needs to continue.

Teachers make learning interesting through the new creative curriculum. This contributes greatly to pupils' enjoyment of learning. Younger pupils thoroughly enjoyed composing a rap about making bread, while older ones were very excited to use information and communication technology to manipulate sound and create different effects.

Leadership and management are good. The senior management team work well together to bring about school improvement. The middle leaders are very supportive of other staff but have insufficient responsibility for raising achievement in their subjects. The governing body has a good understanding of, and involvement in, school improvement. School self-evaluation is accurate and includes all stakeholders. Recent successful initiatives, such as the introduction of a more creative curriculum and target-setting for pupils, indicate that the school has good capacity to improve further.

The school provides good care, guidance and support for its pupils and this promotes their personal development well. Pupils feel safe in school and behave well, both in lessons and around school. They willingly take on responsibilities, such as in being playground buddies. Pupils know the targets that they are trying to achieve in their work. The school has developed a satisfactory marking system, but this is not applied consistently and does not always let pupils know how they can improve their work.

The school works well with parents and the majority support the school and appreciate the 'secure, caring environment' and the school's 'very friendly and happy feel'. However, in the inspection questionnaires, a substantial minority of parents expressed concerns. These included a perceived lack of challenge in some teaching, concerns about homework and the quality of communication between the school and parents. Although little evidence was found to substantiate these concerns during the inspection, the school is aware and is taking steps to rectify them.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children greatly enjoy attending the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are happy, inquisitive and feel safe. On entry, their skills are similar to those of most four-year-olds. They make excellent progress and many exceed the expected goals by the end of the year. As part of the school's focus on writing, the staff provide a range of activities to encourage the children to develop these skills. Welfare and safety have a high priority and there is a strong partnership with parents. Children enjoy eating healthy snacks and have plenty of exercise.

There is a strong commitment to learning through play and discovery. Children thoroughly enjoyed predicting whether objects put into water would float or sink. The indoor and outdoor areas are well organised and allow the children to access all areas of learning in both environments. Planning is good and includes the children's ideas and interests. Systematic assessment is closely linked to planning, and this ensures that children enjoy a wide range of activities. The adults work very well as a team and the key person system effectively supports children's learning and development. One of the strengths of the leadership and management is that there is constant review and a seeking to improve practice. The staff liaise closely with the private playgroup, sharing planning and, at times, allowing children to move between the settings. This helps the children to gain confidence and independence. Effective links with Key Stage 1 are helping to provide continuity for the children's learning when they move to Year 1.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that teaching in Years 1 and 2 builds on the excellent start provided in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Improve the consistency with which pupils' work is marked so that they know how to improve their work.
- Enable middle leaders to take greater responsibility for improving achievement.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Although standards are above average by the end of Year 6, and achievement is good, pupils' progress slows at times. This is sometimes due to frequent changes of staff and sometimes because of variations in the quality of teaching; it results in pupils having to catch up in the following year. This has been a particular concern in Key Stage 1, where standards fell in 2007 and 2008. The school is working hard to redress this and standards have begun to rise. Year groups are small and this means that variations in the performance of one or two pupils can have a marked impact on statistics, so the analysis of data must be made cautiously. The school tracks pupils' individual progress regularly and provides additional support for pupils whose progress has slowed. Tracking shows that, by the end of Year 6, all groups of pupils have made good progress. This includes those who have moderate learning difficulties and those with speech, language or communication difficulties.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are positive about school, are very sociable with each other and have good relationships with the staff. They understand the importance of staying healthy, and readily take part in

sports and other physical activities. They know which foods are healthy and are aware of the benefits of a balanced diet. Pupils say they enjoy their lessons as well as the additional activities that they can take part in. The vast majority work well together in an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect. They are proud to help their community through the school council, or by acting as buddies for younger pupils in the playground. However, pupils on the school council have insufficient responsibility for recording what happens in the meetings and for displaying the minutes, so that all pupils can see what has been discussed. In the wider community pupils' contribution is good, through a range of fund-raising activities and charity events. Pupils' standards and progress in acquiring basic and social skills are such that they are well prepared for their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Particular features that increase pupils' learning include good management of behaviour, constructive relationships and the sharing of what pupils are expected to learn at the start of lessons. Pupils writing a legend worked very purposefully because they were motivated by the teacher's well-paced introduction; this enabled them to revise previous learning and then apply it to a new task. Teachers usually make sure that work is carefully matched to the individual needs and abilities of pupils. Regular assessment of pupils enables teachers to identify those who are making less progress than they should, so that they can provide additional support. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use resources, such as interactive whiteboards, to good effect to enliven their teaching. Support staff work successfully with small groups of pupils, often helping those with learning difficulties. Nevertheless, there is some inconsistency in the quality of teaching. Where teaching is weaker, this is often because there is too little focus on the pace of learning for each pupil. The school is aware of this and is working to rectify it so that pupils' progress becomes more uniform.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Planning is beginning to link subjects and skills together well, to make a more flexible and creative curriculum so that learning opportunities are more exciting. Meaningful links are made between writing and other subjects. Writing was made more relevant when pupils learning about teeth wrote persuasive sentences to promote reasons to care for our teeth. The school rightly recognises that its new curriculum needs to be evaluated and reviewed as it is developed and embedded. Pupils show enthusiasm for their lessons, though the impact of actions taken so far has yet to be seen in terms of consistently higher attainment throughout Key Stage 1. Some writing in Key Stage 2 is of exceptional quality. For example, a Year 6 pupil wrote, 'Molten red, the lava spreads over the dry landscape while the grey ash still rains on the blinding, tumbling river of scarlet.' The curriculum is enriched through residential visits for pupils in all year groups from Year 2 upwards, and these contribute to personal as well as academic development. In addition, the school makes good use of the expertise of visitors and themed events, such as Sports Week and Darwin Day.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils benefit from good support for their personal development, and this is reflected in their positive attitudes and behaviour. The school has constructive links with outside agencies to provide additional support for pupils when required. Procedures for safeguarding pupils meet statutory requirements and ensure that the school provides a safe environment. Relationships between pupils and adults are good and lead to pupils feeling confident in approaching adults if they need help or advice. Pupils are aware of their targets and are beginning to be involved in assessing their own and one another's work orally. The quality of written feedback they are given when the teachers mark their work varies considerably. This means that pupils often do not receive sufficient information about how well they are doing or what they need to do next to improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The senior leaders have a good understanding of the areas in which the school needs to improve and set challenging targets in order to raise standards. The monitoring of teaching by the headteacher generates helpful development points, and these are followed up appropriately. Equal opportunities are given high priority and are promoted very effectively. Governors understand the school's strengths and weaknesses and provide good support and challenge to the headteacher. They recognise the need for them to increase their monitoring role. Middle leaders attend training and provide advice to staff very effectively, but do not take the lead in driving improvement in their areas. The school's promotion of community cohesion is good within the school itself, in the local community and further afield. It is aware that it needs to evaluate more formally the impact of its initiatives.

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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?	2
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?	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?	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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
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	2

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?	2

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	3
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	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
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**

03 July 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Cropredy Church of England Primary School, Banbury, OX17 1PU

Thank you so much for welcoming us into your school and your lessons. You were very friendly and helpful and a special thank you goes to those of you who met us to tell us about your school. Many of you and your parents told us that you go to a good school, and we agree.

There are lots of good things about your school. Here are some of them.

- All of the adults take very good care of you and this helps you to feel safe and happy in school.
- You make good progress and, by the end of Year 6, your skills in English, mathematics and science are above average.
- Your teachers give you interesting things to do, and help you to understand how well you are doing.
- You eat healthily and enjoy taking exercise to keep yourselves fit.
- You behave well and show that you care for each other, and this helps you to feel happy in school.
- The children in the Reception class are given an excellent start to their school life.

To make your school even better, we have asked your headteacher, teachers and governors to do three things.

- We want them to make sure that children in Years 1 and 2 keep learning as well as they do in the Reception class.
- When teachers mark your work, we have asked them to give you more information about how well you are doing and what you need to do to improve.
- We have asked the school to improve the way in which teachers who are in charge of subjects can help other teachers, so that they can enable you to make even better progress.

You can help by working hard and always doing your best. We hope you carry on enjoying school and learning many interesting things.

Yours faithfully

Vanessa Ward

Lead Inspector