

Launton Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 123103 |
| Local Authority | Oxfordshire |
| Inspection number | 327848 |
| Inspection dates | 2–3 July 2009 |
| Reporting inspector | Nick Butt |

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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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Voluntary aided |
| Age range of pupils | 3–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School (total) | 132 |
| 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 | Mrs Sue Wakelin |
| Headteacher | Mrs Lisa Moorhouse |
| Date of previous school inspection | 24 May 2006 |
| Date of previous funded early education inspection | Not previously inspected |
| Date of previous childcare inspection | Not previously inspected |
| School address | Bicester Road Launton Bicester OX26 5DP |
| Telephone number | 01869 253692 |
| Fax number | 01869 241738 |

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|--------------------------|---------------|
| Age group | 3–11 |
| Inspection dates | 2–3 July 2009 |
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This smaller-than-average school has Early Years Foundation Stage provision in The Early Years Foundation Unit that contains both Nursery and Reception aged children. Almost all pupils come from White British backgrounds. No pupils speak English as an additional language. Few pupils are eligible to receive free school meals. Half the pupils come from outside the school's catchment area. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. This includes pupils with speech and language difficulties. The school has the Healthy School and Activemark awards.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Launton Primary is a satisfactory school. It has strengths in the personal skills of its pupils and in the pastoral care that it provides for them. Achievement is satisfactory overall, although progress is uneven and tends to be better in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 than in Key Stage 2. This year, standards have stabilised and are now a little below average, representing satisfactory progress for the present Year 6 from what they attained in Year 2. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. While there are elements of good teaching, the pace of lessons is sometimes too slow and some tasks lack challenge, especially in writing. Parents have mixed views about the school. While most agree that their children enjoy school and are well cared for, some feel parents' opinions could be taken more into account when decisions are made.

The headteacher has a clear vision for the future direction of the school that is focused on raising standards and achievement. The impact of leadership and management is satisfactory. The headteacher has had a heavy teaching load at times and this has meant she has not been able to fulfil her monitoring role as rigorously as she would have liked. In particular, it has not been possible to assess the full impact of some of the initiatives the school has introduced to raise pupils' achievement. Other leaders have few opportunities to monitor their areas of responsibility. While governors are committed to supporting the school, their strategic role is less well developed, particularly in evaluating the impact of the school's work.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. They behave well and the older pupils help the younger ones. The school's family feel is one of its key strengths. Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay healthy and keep safe, with the school council very aware of potential health and safety risks. Pupils enjoy school, and attendance is in line with that found nationally. They contribute well to their local community, and are fully involved in village life. Pupils leave school with the expected basic skills and are ready for the move to secondary school.

There has been considerable development of the curriculum to make it more interesting for pupils. While provision is satisfactory overall, good features include the special events that are held, such as 'Let's Investigate Day' and 'Performance Arts Day', that involve all pupils in mixed-age groups. There is a good range of clubs and visitors to school, although visits tend to be to local places of interest, rather than further afield. The pastoral care of pupils is good; each one is known as an individual and adults provide good role models. Academic guidance is inconsistent, especially in terms of the extent to which marking shows pupils how to improve. There is satisfactory provision for pupils who find learning difficult. This area has been enhanced by the good management of a part-time advisory teacher, especially in the way systems have been improved to ensure all needs are being met.

The staff work together well as a tight-knit team dedicated to bringing about further improvement. The school has made steady progress since its last inspection and has a satisfactory capacity to improve.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Unit because of effective teaching and a strong team who work together well. Children join the Unit with skills and abilities typical

of those usually found, and make good progress so that most are reaching or exceeding the early learning goals expected by the end of the Reception year. They settle quickly, because their welfare is given high priority, and develop good personal skills, becoming able to share and cooperate with one another. The assessment of children's progress is outstanding, with very thorough systems in place, and a systematic approach that ensures all members of staff have a detailed knowledge of how children are progressing. This enables them to plan relevant and challenging activities that interest and excite the children. Good use is made of the spacious and well-resourced outdoor area to promote all six areas of learning. However, the large apparatus does not pose a sufficient physical challenge for the children.

There is a good mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities, and adults model language well, encouraging children to speak fluently. There are fewer opportunities for children to practise their early writing skills during independent play. Basic skills are taught well. For example, children were able to order cars and discuss why one car had gone further than another during a practical numeracy session. Children enjoy looking through their 'special books' and talking about what they have been learning. The Early Years Foundation Stage is led and managed well, with good progress since the last inspection.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing across the school by building more challenge into assignments.
- Improve the quality and consistency of teaching and learning so that all pupils achieve well.
- Increase the rigour of monitoring at all levels to measure the impact of initiatives on pupils' learning.

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

Standards in Year 6 have been broadly average or a little below in recent years. Pupils make satisfactory progress from Year 2, although the rate of progress varies. With improved provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, standards have been rising for the younger pupils so that, in 2009, provisional assessments indicate they are above average by the end of Year 2 in reading and mathematics. Standards in writing are below average across the school, particularly in the proportion attaining the higher levels. A lack of challenge in the tasks set, or not enough time to write at length, contribute to this. Pupils who find learning difficult, including those who have speech and language difficulties, make satisfactory progress towards their individual targets, receiving appropriate support. There are no significant differences between any groups of pupils. A project run by the headteacher to raise boys' achievement was successful in helping Year 6 boys to make good progress in their literacy.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They have a good understanding of other cultures, enhanced by occasions such as 'Worldwide Friendship Day' when pupils wrote pen-pal letters to children at a school in Kenya. Pupils get on well together and all ages know one another. One pupil said, 'When you walk past someone, you know who they are'. Pupils

take plenty of exercise, including regular swimming lessons, and have earned the Activemark Award for their commitment to physical activity. They enjoyed their sports day, enthusiastically participating in the races and sportingly cheering one another on. They know all about keeping healthy, being a Healthy School, and are looking forward to growing their own vegetables in the newly acquired allotment. Pupils take part in church services and help organise the village fete. The school council takes its role seriously and has been involved in organising anti-bullying events. Pupils also take a keen interest in making the school more eco-friendly. Pupils have a good understanding of keeping safe, including road safety. They become confident individuals, given the basic skills they need for a life of learning.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

There are positive relationships between pupils and adults, establishing a purposeful environment for learning. Good use is made of discussion, involving the whole class, groups and pairs, to consider the objectives for the lesson. Teachers use interactive whiteboards effectively to enhance learning and to make lessons interesting. In some lessons, the discussion goes on too long, so that pupils do not have enough time to put down their ideas in writing, or to write at length. There is sometimes insufficient challenge for the more able pupils, and the overuse of worksheets in subjects such as history and geography limits what pupils can produce.

Expectations of what pupils can do and achieve are not always high enough. Teaching assistants often make a valuable contribution in helping pupils who find learning difficult make satisfactory progress towards their individual targets.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Whole-school topics provide a stimulating way into the curriculum for pupils, with some good links across subjects. Year 2 pupils produced high-quality fabric collages following a visit to the Oxford Botanical Gardens as part of their work on growth. Year 6 pupils constructed astrolabes in the Tudor style, which they used to measure the school field. Although provision for literacy and numeracy is satisfactory, expectations of what pupils can produce are not always high enough and pupils are praised too readily for unremarkable work. There are strengths to the enrichment of the curriculum, with older pupils learning the violin and cello, and a wide range of clubs for pupils to enjoy, including cricket, young engineers and creative arts. There are not enough visits to places of interest, although older pupils do have the opportunity to take part in a residential trip to Wales.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Good pastoral care ensures that the social and emotional needs of the school's most vulnerable pupils are met well. All pupils enjoy good relationships with staff and with one another, and the older pupils help the younger ones in many ways. The school's positive ethos is grounded firmly in its Christian values, which helps to make it a harmonious community. A parent commented, 'I value the caring, cooperative atmosphere that the head and her teachers engender in the school'. All safeguarding arrangements are in place. The provision for pupils who find learning difficult, including those who have speech and language difficulties, is satisfactory

and improving. This is mainly down to the clear lead given by a visiting advisory teacher, who has put systems in place to ensure that pupils' needs are identified and met. The quality of support is not yet consistent in all classes. Academic guidance varies. While there are helpful comments in some books to show pupils how to improve, these are not widespread. Not all pupils understand what their targets for improvement are.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Staffing shortages have meant that the headteacher has had to take on a heavy teaching load at key times, with the result that monitoring has not always been thorough enough. This is why there are inconsistencies in the provision and the rate of progress has been no better than satisfactory. For similar reasons, other leaders have had few opportunities to leave their classrooms and monitor what is happening in their subjects in other parts of the school. Leaders have a clear understanding of where improvement is required, and have begun to put in place actions to help this come about. They have not yet measured the full impact of these initiatives to see what works well and what needs to improve further. Strategic plans reflect the school's priorities appropriately. Leaders provide good role models and have been successful in sustaining the school's caring atmosphere, which contributes favourably to pupils' good personal development and well-being and their enjoyment of school. Governors are keen to support the school, but have not taken a sufficiently strategic lead in evaluating the effectiveness of its provision. There are inadequacies in the accommodation, particularly in a small mobile classroom that has reached the end of its effective life. The school works well with its local community and has established some good international links, but could do more to help pupils understand what life is like in contrasting parts of the United Kingdom, such as the inner cities.

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

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| 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

| | |
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| 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? | 3 |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements | 3 |

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

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|---|---|
| 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? | 2 |
| How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop? | 2 |
| How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted? | 2 |
| How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed? | 2 |

Achievement and standards

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| 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

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|---|---|
| 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 | 3 |
| 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

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| 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

14 July 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Launton Church of England Primary School, Bicester, OX26 5DP

Thank you for making me so welcome when I visited your school. Yours is a satisfactory school and here are some of its strengths.

- You behave well and are keen to take part in lessons.
- You have a good understanding of how to keep healthy and stay safe.
- You enjoy school and take full advantage of all the clubs on offer.
- There are some exciting themed days for you to take part in.
- You get on well together, with the older pupils helping the younger ones.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Unit get off to a good start.
- The school cares for you well, especially if you are having problems.

You have plenty of opportunity to discuss what you are going to do in lessons, sometimes too long. I have asked your teachers to make sure you have enough time to write down your ideas and to have really interesting things to write about. While you make satisfactory progress in your studies, not all of you do as well as you can and I have asked your teachers to ensure that teaching challenges you to do your best. I have also asked the headteacher, other leaders and the governors to check really carefully how well you are doing so that the school improves at a faster rate.

Thank you once again for your help. My best wishes for the future.

Yours faithfully

Nick Butt

Lead Inspector