

Madley Brook Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	134136
Local Authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	328839
Inspection dates	2–3 October 2008
Reporting inspector	Bernice Magson

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)	245
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	70
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Trevor Smith
Headteacher	Mrs Katherine Spencer
Date of previous school inspection	9 November 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	The Bronze Barrow Cedar Drive Witney OX28 1AR

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	2–3 October 2008
Inspection number	328839

Telephone number
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Madley Brook is an average sized primary school, serving a range of private and social housing in Witney. The school shares its premises with a special school for pupils with complex learning difficulties. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) includes a Nursery class with fully integrated provision for children from both schools, and also a Reception class. Pupil numbers have increased significantly and there is considerable variation in the number of boys and girls in most cohorts. Almost all pupils are of White British origin, with a small percentage from minority ethnic groups. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is less than found in most schools, and include behavioural and emotional needs, moderate learning difficulties, and physical disabilities. A new headteacher took up post in February 2008. The school has achieved an Activemark Award for sport, and a Silvermark as an Eco school. Out of school care is available on the site each evening and in the holidays, managed by a private provider.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This school is providing its pupils with a satisfactory education. From its initial opening in 2003, the school has established a clear identity and developed an excellent and inclusive ethos. There is an outstanding sense of community spirit among pupils, staff, governors and parents. Excellent links exist with the co-located special school and pupils work and play together extremely well. They show outstanding levels of cooperation, respect and tolerance towards people with different needs. Parents are very positive about the school and how it cares for their children. One parent reflected the views of many when commenting, 'We couldn't have wished for a better start to our children's education. This is a great school.' Attendance is excellent.

Pupils have an eagerness to learn and participate fully in all the school has to offer. Behaviour is excellent. Pupils are fit and healthy and feel safe and secure. They act responsibly when undertaking tasks around the school, fully aware of their responsibilities in addressing the needs of a diverse school community. The school council are pro-active in ensuring pupils have a voice and know that they are trusted to make the right decisions. The Eco group and gardening club work hard to improve the school environment.

Standards are average by the end of Years 2 and 6 and achievement is satisfactory. Standards have varied significantly over time, because of the high numbers of pupils joining the school. The school has accurately identified that there are inconsistencies in learning, particularly of more able pupils, which leaders are starting to address. Standards have started to rise. Strategies to raise standards in reading have already proved effective and, in the latest national tests, more pupils in Years 2 and 6 attained the higher levels. The school is now focused on improving the quality of teaching and the curriculum for writing and numeracy, which are satisfactory. Recent monitoring by the headteacher has identified that there is some improvement in teaching and pupils are progressing at a more rapid rate, although this is not yet consistent. Assessment information is not always used rigorously to ensure that pupils are challenged in lessons, although this is improving. In the better lessons, pupils have a clear understanding of what they have to achieve, because of detailed modelling of learning tasks by the teacher. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are achieving well, because tasks are well matched to levels of ability, based on a rigorous assessment of progress. The school's monitoring shows that more pupils are on track to attain the higher levels in 2009.

The governing body have identified the school's aims and vision, which they have shared well with parents, who are very positive in their support. The recently appointed headteacher has a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, based on her own monitoring, and she is providing a clear direction in school improvement. An enthusiastic team of assistant headteachers and subject managers support her, but have been insufficiently involved in monitoring. The school has recognised that systems of monitoring and evaluation lack sufficient rigour. There is a shared commitment to bring about improvement and, already, good evidence of successful outcomes with improved standards in reading. This demonstrates that the school has a good capacity to improve.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

In this good EYFS setting, children are eager to learn. 'I have nothing but praise for the adults who are so caring and understanding of my child's needs.' commented one parent expressing the views of many. Indeed, because of the warm and friendly welcome created by the staff team, children are happily settled and comply well with school routines. In a high quality and challenging learning environment, children are encouraged to explore the world around them. Teaching is good overall, although there is a lack of challenge in some reading, writing and number activities in Reception and then the pace of learning is slower. In the Nursery, tasks are well planned to meet each child's individual needs, and a supportive staff team ensure that all children are included in the full range of curriculum activities. The monitoring of progress is rigorous throughout EYFS and information is shared regularly with parents. Children make good progress from average starting points and most now reach the expected goals or exceed them by the end of the Reception year. Leadership and management are only satisfactory, however, as insufficient time is allocated to enable the EYFS manager to fulfil her role. This prevents her from building further on the current good provision to make it outstanding.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of teaching and the curriculum further in order to raise standards in writing and mathematics, particularly of more able pupils.
- Use assessment information more precisely to ensure that pupils are challenged consistently in their learning.
- Extend the roles of leaders at all levels in strategic planning, monitoring and self-evaluation.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils are making satisfactory progress overall and standards are rising. The latest national tests show a significant improvement in standards in English by Year 6, where more pupils attained the higher level 5, although standards fell slightly in mathematics and science from the previous year. The current Year 6 are on course to maintain the upward trend in English, and with improved standards in mathematics and science. Standards are average by Year 2. However, with a stronger curriculum focus on reading, writing and numeracy, there is evidence that pupils are progressing more rapidly. Nevertheless, actions to bring about improvement are not yet fully embedded, such as in the use of assessment data to track progress and ensure that all pupils are challenged effectively. As a result, progress is still inconsistent, because sometimes teachers' expectations are too low.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils make good progress in their personal development. They have excellent attitudes to learning and outstanding moral and social understanding for their age. Pupils promote school and community cohesion extremely well, identifying all people as equal. It is not unusual to see pupils with diverse needs supporting each other in lessons and around the school. Indeed, they have requested greater integration with pupils from the special school, such as at break times. Pupils are courteous and considerate to each other and to adults. During the inspection, older pupils organised skipping in the playground in which boys and girls co-operated superbly.

Pupils have a good awareness of other cultures than their own. Their acquisition of workplace and other skills is currently satisfactory, because not all pupils are skilled at assessing their own learning, or in making independent choices in their work.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Some teaching is excellent and much of the teaching is planned carefully so that learners make good progress. Behaviour is managed extremely well so that all have an opportunity to learn. In many lessons, pupils understand what they need to do to reach learning objectives, but this is not consistent across the school. There is not enough challenge and pace in some lessons, particularly for pupils that are more able. Some teachers spend too long on explaining things and telling pupils what they are going to do. As a result, pupils then have insufficient time to practise their skills and learn independently. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities learn well. Teaching assistants give effective support.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum has undergone a recent review to improve accuracy, consistency and progression for pupils with a wide range of needs and disabilities. There is now a good emphasis on the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills and the impact on pupils' learning is increasing. Whole school themes have been introduced to make the curriculum more relevant, such as my local environment or the wider world. The good number of visits and out of school clubs are popular with pupils. There are some cross-curricular links but the school has correctly identified that the curriculum needs greater flexibility and depth to make it good. The curriculum incorporates a good range of visits locally and satisfactory use is made of the school grounds. A holiday homework topic has encouraged pupils to explore local facilities and write, draw or photograph them.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pastoral care and support are outstanding. Staff know pupils' needs well and have established excellent relationships with them. Systems for health and safety, risk assessment, first aid and child protection are securely in place and there is rigorous monitoring of attendance and punctuality. Assessment information is used to measure pupils' standards, but there is limited analysis of the progress of some groups of pupils, and the guidance provided to them about how to improve is only satisfactory. There is recent improvement in target setting and teachers' marking, but systems are not yet fully embedded or consistent. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive extremely good support through appropriate programmes for reading and spelling, and their progress is tracked well.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The governing body have managed well the development of the school, including the appointment of staff to cater for the rapid increase in numbers of pupils and, recently, of a new leadership team. The headteacher has a clear aim to inspire pupils to achieve better standards. Since her appointment, she has evaluated school provision well, and introduced measures to make the curriculum and teaching more stimulating and exciting. Standards are starting to improve, particularly in reading. Planning for the longer term has started, but it is at early stages of development. The three assistant headteachers and staff are supportive of the school's efforts to raise standards, but are not yet fully effective in their leadership and management roles and professional development is needed. Their contribution to self-evaluation is limited because they are not sufficiently involved in monitoring standards or provision. The management of finances in relation to resourcing a new school has been good and the school is able to support new priorities, including staff development.

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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?	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?	1
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?	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?	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	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	1
The attendance of learners	1
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	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?	2

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	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
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**

16 October 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Madley Brook Community Primary School, Witney, OX28 1AR

Thank you for making the inspectors so welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed seeing all the interesting things you are doing. It was a pleasure to join parents and carers at your harvest service and see all the exciting things you are doing. We thought the singing of 'The Dingle Dangle Scarecrow' by the Reception children was excellent and they were so good at doing the actions too. We think that you have a satisfactory school but one that is improving rapidly.

Here are the things we liked about your school.

- You are friendly and very welcoming.
- Relationships and behaviour are excellent.
- You are kind, considerate and courteous to others.
- You work hard in lessons and standards are improving, particularly in reading.
- Your headteacher and all the adults are working hard to make your school better.
- Your parents and carers are very glad that you go to this school.

To make your school even better we have asked your headteacher, staff and governors to do three things. We think that in some lessons you could learn at a more rapid pace if activities challenged you more. We would like the teachers to check how you are progressing more carefully so that they can give you extra help if needed, or encourage you to learn more on your own. Also, we think that the headteacher, staff and governors need to check on how things are improving more often.

We hope that you carry on enjoying your school. We are sure that it will continue to improve.

Yours sincerely

Bernice Magson

Lead Inspector