

Shefford Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109975
Local Authority	West Berkshire
Inspection number	337415
Inspection dates	14–15 July 2010
Reporting inspector	Derek Aitken

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	40
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev. Mary Harwood
Headteacher	Remus Sawyerr
Date of previous school inspection	5 July 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one additional inspector. Three teachers were observed teaching five lessons. Meetings were held with governors, staff and groups of pupils and informal discussions were held with parents and carers on the playground. The inspector observed the school's work and looked through pupils' books. He also looked at documents, including policies and procedures relating to the safeguarding of pupils, self-evaluation records and assessment data. The inspector analysed 23 questionnaires from parents and carers, 32 from pupils and 4 from staff.

The inspector reviewed many aspects of the school's work. He looked in detail at the following:

- pupils' attainment and progress in writing
- the impact of pupils' attitudes on their learning and progress
- how well teaching challenges pupils
- the impact of partnerships between both schools in ensuring continuity and consistency in practice and in raising standards.

Information about the school

Shefford is a very small rural school. The vast majority of pupils are of White British origin. The school is federated with Chaddleworth St Andrews CofE (VC) Primary School and the schools share a governing body, headteacher and senior leadership team. Since September 2009, Early Years Foundation Stage children and Key Stage 1 pupils from both schools have been taught at the Chaddleworth site. Similarly, all Key Stage 2 pupils from both schools are now taught in two classes at the Shefford site. Both schools were inspected at the same time as part of a coordinated inspection. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, educated at the Shefford site, is high. The Chaddleworth inspection report evaluates the quality of education for Reception and Key Stage 1 pupils and is published simultaneously with this one. This report evaluates the quality of education for Key Stage 2 pupils. The school has Healthy School status.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

The last two years have been an unsettled period for the school, marked by reorganisation and staff changes. These factors have reduced opportunities for senior leaders to share good practice, press ahead with improvements to teaching and learning and embed initiatives. However, a more positive picture is now emerging as the reorganisation beds in and pupils from both schools settle down well to work together. The headteacher and governors share a determination to move the school forward. School self-evaluation is mainly accurate and this, together with the good quality of the school's development plan, provides the school with a satisfactory platform for improvement.

Pupils' attainment on entry to Year 3 is average and this remains the case when pupils transfer to secondary school. The staff have put in place some useful measures to improve pupils' reading and writing by assessing pupils' progress in these skills more closely, but the impact of these initiatives has been diluted by staffing discontinuity. Pupils' progress in mathematics is a little slower because pupils do not have enough good opportunities to develop their reasoning and problem-solving skills.

The curriculum promotes a few aspects of pupils' personal development well. Opportunities, however, are missed to promote pupils' self-esteem and community spirit, and some weaknesses in curriculum planning restrict opportunities for pupils to practise and extend basic skills, especially in mathematics. Satisfactory teaching ensures that pupils make satisfactory progress overall, but some variability in lesson planning and questioning skills holds back pupils' development. Insufficient use is made of some aspects of assessment, pupils' personal targets and reward systems to ensure that a fully productive dialogue is established with pupils and to increase their motivation.

The school has a whole-school tracking system, but assessment systems are not robust enough to ensure target-setting promotes good, as opposed to satisfactory, progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate pupils' progress in writing and mathematics by:
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to reinforce and extend these skills in other subjects
 - giving pupils more opportunities to develop their thinking skills in mathematics and apply their knowledge to solving problems.
- Raise pupils' aspirations and engage them more fully in their learning by:
 - making better use of oral feedback, marking and pupils' targets

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- ensuring teachers' questioning consistently probes and extends pupils' learning
- ensuring tasks are challenging and precisely matched to pupils' needs
- making better use of reward and praise systems to motivate pupils.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - providing better opportunities for sharing good practice
 - ensuring senior leaders rigorously monitor teaching and learning to enhance accountability for standards and pupils' progress
 - ensuring assessment systems are fully embedded so that better use can be made of target-setting systems.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Lessons seen during the inspection confirmed a picture of broadly average standards, satisfactory progress for all groups of learners and satisfactory achievement. The marked variation in standards in upper Key Stage 2 reflects the very high proportion of pupils with complex needs in the group and a few new pupils who are working at lower levels. A few more able pupils are articulate and use language imaginatively, but do not always translate these gifts into sustained oral or written contributions. Pupils of all abilities understand basic mathematical operations well and carry out calculations with ratios and percentages, fractions and decimals competently. Pupils are less secure with tasks which require them to manipulate and apply their mathematical knowledge in practical contexts. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress when directly supervised by the proactive teaching assistants, but their progress sometimes slows when they are required to work unaided. Standards in lower Key Stage 2 show less variation and pupils' understanding of French vocabulary is above average.

Pupils' attitudes to learning vary. The majority of pupils enjoy their learning and work productively either singly or in pairs. The concentration and application of other pupils, including the more able, waver. This sometimes results in low-level disruption which slows pupils' progress. Most pupils feel safe and have a good awareness of what acting safely means. Pupils practise healthy lifestyles well, as reflected in the Healthy School award. Pupils make a good contribution to the school as councillors, for example, in helping to bring about improvements to the playground and in collecting for charities, but in other respects the pride they take in the school and their sense of shared community is only satisfactory. Pupils' average standards set them up satisfactorily for secondary education and later life.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is underpinned by satisfactory subject knowledge and satisfactory, and often good, relationships. However, there are some weaknesses in assessment practice and this constrains teachers' ability to adapt work consistently to the needs of all pupils. While teachers are industrious in supporting pupils in their independent work, pupils do not always receive enough oral feedback as a whole class to foster a strong sense of teamwork or to sustain the momentum of their learning. Although pupils have targets, insufficient use is made of them and marking does not consistently indicate to pupils how they can improve their work. Good practice in teaching is characterised by the use of carefully chosen resources which stimulate pupils' interest and enthusiasm and enable them to learn well.

The curriculum is currently being reorganised to increase the opportunities for pupils to acquire a wider range of transferable skills and to broaden pupils' cultural horizons. It enables pupils to acquire core skills and pupils have some useful opportunities to make connection in their learning through other subjects. For example, Class 3 has designed some interesting art work and masks based on the work of an Italian mediaeval painter, while Class 4 has used information and communication technology effectively to compose poems on the theme of food. However, these opportunities are not yet welded sufficiently into a coherent whole to have a significant impact on pupils' standards.

The school provides satisfactory pastoral support for its pupils and some links with outside agencies have been effective in meeting the needs of individual pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable. The school has recently implemented a new behaviour policy, but this has not yet fully bedded in, and this is reflected in some

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inconsistencies in practice.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	3

How effective are leadership and management?

School self-evaluation is mainly accurate and is now informed by the views of a wider range of stakeholders, including pupils and parents and carers. The school development plan is centred on an appropriate range of priorities, but actions taken to achieve these, especially with regard to raising standards, have had varying degrees of success. The headteacher's energies have largely been taken up by organisational matters, such as balancing the budget, managing reductions in staffing and dealing with the repercussions of these actions. Responsibilities for curriculum leadership are widely spread in a very small staff team and these have been compromised by staffing discontinuity. These staff changes have also held back plans to ensure cohesion and continuity across the two federated schools. The school's arrangements for vetting adults are fully compliant with current safeguarding requirements but some policies require updating and some records, such as for fire drills, are incomplete. The school promotes equal opportunities satisfactorily as reflected in the outcomes for pupils' achievement and personal development. The school makes a satisfactory contribution to community cohesion. It has yet to plan purposefully to develop the national and global aspects of this work. Governors have supported the school effectively through turbulent times and have drafted some useful ideas to enable them to acquire more first-hand information on teaching and learning.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms	
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Views of parents and carers

The responses of parents and carers indicate a variable degree of satisfaction with the school's work. While parents unanimously believe their children enjoy school, significant concerns were raised with regard to communications with school and the management of pupils' behaviour. School leaders acknowledge that they need to communicate better with parents to enable them to see how their views and concerns are being acted on. The inspector found that challenging behaviour was adequately managed during the inspection. Nonetheless, inspection evidence indicates that the school could develop more positive strategies to promote pupils' self-esteem and mature behaviour and this is reflected elsewhere in the report.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Shefford Church of England Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 23 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 40 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	12	52	11	48	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	10	43	9	39	3	13	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	8	35	13	57	2	9	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	7	30	11	48	4	17	1	4
The teaching is good at this school	11	48	11	48	1	4	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	3	13	15	65	2	9	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	5	22	16	70	1	4	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	7	30	11	48	3	13	1	4
The school meets my child's particular needs	4	17	16	70	2	9	1	4
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	7	30	7	30	7	30	2	9
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	5	22	10	43	7	30	1	4
The school is led and managed effectively	3	13	13	57	4	17	1	4
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	6	26	15	65	1	4	1	4

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



16 July 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Shefford Church of England Primary School, Hungerford RG17 7DB

I would like to thank you for your help when I inspected your school and to share with you what I found out.

Key Stage 2 pupils receive a satisfactory education. By the time you transfer to secondary school you have made satisfactory progress in your learning and your standards are in line with pupils at other primary schools. You have a good knowledge of healthy lifestyles and how to stay safe.

To make the school even better I have asked the school to:

- give you more opportunities to develop your writing and mathematical skills in other subjects
- give you more opportunities to practise your mathematics through solving practical problems
- make sure that teachers make more use of your targets and give you better feedback in lessons and when they mark your work
- make sure that when teachers question you they make you think hard
- make sure that the work stretches all of you to do your best
- think more carefully about how they could encourage all pupils to have really good attitudes to learning.

I have also asked school leaders to share good practice effectively and, in particular, to check up carefully on your learning and make better use of the records they keep on your progress. You can help by trying your best to work closely with school leaders when they make these changes.

Yours sincerely

Derek Aitken

Lead inspector

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