

Cold Harbour Church of England School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110404
Local Authority	Milton Keynes
Inspection number	337492
Inspection dates	14–15 October 2009
Reporting inspector	Michael Sutherland-Harper

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	291
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Small
Headteacher	Louise Quantrill
Date of previous school inspection	7 March 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 19 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at documentation including a sample of pupils' books, school development plans, minutes of the governing body meetings, information about the monitoring of pupils whose circumstances have made them vulnerable, records of the school's arrangements for safeguarding and protecting pupils, policies and 170 parental questionnaire responses.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- Have standards been raised for all pupils, especially in English but also in mathematics and science since the last inspection?
- Are strategies to develop provision, especially in teaching and learning and in the curriculum, embedded and rigorously monitored?
- Do leaders and managers at all levels have a clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses and do they embed ambition in order to drive up improvement?
- What is the impact of mobility and behaviour on achievement?

Information about the school

Cold Harbour Church of England School, along with other schools, serves the small town of Bletchley near Milton Keynes. Pupils are drawn largely from the immediate surroundings, with some travelling from outside the normal area served by the school. The vast majority of the pupils are of White British origin. The number of pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly in line with national averages for the percentage of pupils with special education needs and/or disabilities including statements, and above average for those with statements. The number of pupils receiving free school meals is lower than the national average. Pupil mobility was high but is now below national averages. The headteacher has been in post since September 2009.

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

Cold Harbour Church of England School is a satisfactory school. Its supportive ethos with an emphasis on care of the individual is matched by a determination to do better. A teacher put it this way, 'We have moved forward because we want to be perfect' and that approach was matched in pupil responses such as, 'Everyone listens to everyone and cares about everyone' and 'It feels like a home to me.'

Children enter the school with skills and abilities at levels similar to those expected for their age. They make a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage where good provision is matched to their learning needs. Thereafter pupils make satisfactory progress throughout Years 1 to 6. Checks on progress have been strengthened since the last inspection and there is now greater consistency in the rate of progress made. Improved monitoring and review procedures together with a greater emphasis on differentiation, such as is already the result of setting in mathematics, are enabling the school to improve the effectiveness of its intervention strategies. This has been accompanied by the introduction of home-school link books which highlight pupils' present achievement and what comes next.

Teaching is satisfactory. Learning and progress overall are satisfactory with an increasingly clear whole school focus on learning objectives and success criteria. Lesson observations suggest that good progress is being made by some pupils because learning strategies are personalised and have made good use of praise and encouragement. Best practice is not consistent across the school. Inconsistencies have not been fully addressed because middle managers are not yet fully effective in the monitoring they undertake. Reviews of progress are not always frequent enough and the monitoring of teaching and learning is not always sufficiently sharply focused. Middle managers do not have easy access to centralised data. After recent improvements in science and mathematics following use of more focused strategies, the school has now targeted English, and specifically writing, as an area requiring further development. Weaknesses in writing remain due to a lack of consistency in the quality of written assessment. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported effectively by teaching assistants and other adults, and they make satisfactory progress. Planning and provision for special educational needs and/or disabilities are improving but are not yet consistent enough in meeting the needs of all pupils to ensure that outcomes are better than satisfactory. The curriculum is satisfactory in meeting learning needs but does not provide enough opportunities to reinforce learning through cross-curricular links. Staffing is now more stable, attendance has improved over the past year and mobility is now falling and below national averages.

Pupils say that they feel safe in school and this is reflected in the way they come into

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school in the morning and greet the headteacher who is waiting to welcome them. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good and is helping to move achievement on due to the more effective procedures now in place.

The clear, focused leadership of the new headteacher, ably supported by her assistant headteachers and in discussion with the local authority, has already resulted in a new sense of direction for the school which is recognised by staff, parents and pupils alike. The school has a satisfactory capacity for improvement. Leaders and managers are now clearer about the direction of the school, which is carefully shared with them by the headteacher. They recognise the skills they need to develop further and are now willing to take them on because of a shared belief in the school's potential. Self-evaluation is broadly accurate and with an increasingly sharper focus, encouraged by the new headteacher. She has rapidly identified and taken action in those areas most in need of development. The accuracy of her clear-sighted analyses and planning has been acknowledged by all colleagues.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Develop the skills of middle managers to enable them to more effectively address inconsistencies in teaching and learning by them undertaking:
 - more frequent reviews of progress (informed by improved access to data)
 - more sharply-focused observation of teaching and learning.
- Address weaknesses in writing by improving the consistency and quality of written assessment throughout both key stages.
- Provide pupils with more opportunities to reinforce their learning by further development of cross-curricular links.

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

Achievement of pupils is satisfactory. Lower pupil mobility and improved behaviour have helped to ensure improved consistency in pupils' progress and achievement. Pupils enter the school with broadly average skills and leave with average standards. Support for individuals is effective and consequently pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress. Similarly the very few pupils who speak English as an additional language also make satisfactory progress. The school places considerable emphasis on the personal development and well-being of the individual. Successful intervention strategies have resulted in higher standards in mathematics and science although standards are not as high in English. The school has responded to this by identifying a range of strategies to address weaknesses in writing. Girls perform as well as boys but are sometimes more hesitant in classroom contributions and independent working. Progress in all lessons is satisfactory or better and all pupils have opportunities to contribute to their own learning, for example pupils explaining what they are doing and why. In a Year 5/6 mathematics lesson, they outlined the steps required to determine shapes because the teacher insisted she was an uninformed visitor from another planet. Where progress is best, as in a Year 5/6 science lesson,

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pupils have opportunities to advance their learning in a variety of ways and are fully engaged by the range of resources in use. This wide range of learning opportunities is not typical and consequently enjoyment in most lessons is satisfactory. Pupils understand the factors which contribute to healthy lifestyles through the taught curriculum and visitors to the school. Healthy lunches, in evidence at lunchtimes, were cited by pupils as evidence of their determination to keep to a healthy lifestyle and to stay healthy. Attendance has improved and is in line with national expectations. Pupil mobility has decreased and this has helped to raise attendance and ensure consistent progress. Pupils feel very safe and know that staff take good care of them. The inspection team found no evidence of bullying. Pupils make a good contribution to the school as in the way older pupils help younger ones and in the way they look after the school office at lunchtime. The school council feel that their role in the school is important and valued. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory and they are respectful of each other. Behaviour in the classroom and around the school is good because pupils have learned to listen to and respect each other, thereby enabling them to be better prepared for their future education.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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	3
Pupils' behaviour	2
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

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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How effective is the provision?

Teaching is satisfactory with good features. Lessons have an increasingly clear focus on objectives and success criteria. In some lessons, there is good pace with good collaboration between teachers and pupils, and between pupils. The pace of learning in the majority of lessons is satisfactory but in a few there is an overemphasis on whole-class teaching that limits individual learning opportunities. Sometimes opportunities for discussion are enhanced when pupils consider in groups what to do or look for next. Attitudes, behaviour and relationships are all positive. Use of questioning is growing and there is some strong development of oral assessment which is not yet matched consistently by written assessment. Information and communication technology (ICT), when available, is used well to enhance learning and enjoyment. Planning of lessons is satisfactory and improving, but inconsistencies remain in matching activities to the precise learning stage of each learner. Some good practice in self-assessment regarding gifted and talented pupils is beginning to enable these pupils to reach the highest levels in writing. More thorough marking and careful monitoring in some classes are now helping pupils to gain a fuller understanding of their own learning. The curriculum is satisfactory in meeting pupils' needs. Materials covered contribute effectively to pupils' personal development and well-being, with good enhancement through a range of extra-curricular clubs and special provision, like book and music weeks. Cross-curricular links are limited and do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to reinforce their learning. Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. Pupils settle well into the school and say they feel supported in their learning. The learning environment in classrooms is welcoming, stimulating and celebrates children's achievements. Pupils report that effective action is taken against any rare examples of bullying. Vulnerable pupils are supported appropriately to enable them to make satisfactory progress in their learning and development.

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?

The new headteacher has worked quickly with her senior management team to drive up standards and achievement by increased rigour in procedures. She is ambitious for the school and this determination has been transmitted to parents, colleagues and pupils who support her goals. Assessment and tracking have become more rigorous and are

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now at the centre of planning. Intervention strategies which have led to recent improvements in mathematics and science are now being applied to English. The school now has a clear focus on driving up standards and achievement because the new headteacher has been able to pull together the efforts of senior managers and subject leaders in a vision of where the school wants to get to and what must be done; in the words of one staff member, 'We are moving forward together.' The school acknowledges that middle leaders are not yet fully effective in their monitoring role. Governors fulfil their statutory duties and hold the school to account satisfactorily. Members of the governing body meet regularly with the headteacher to discuss the way forward; their role as a critical friend to ensure the school's effectiveness is more focused than previously. Equality is promoted satisfactorily among the different groups which make up the school. The school ensures that all learning opportunities are available to all pupils. The school is determined to tackle any possible discrimination so that Cold Harbour remains a harmonious learning community. Provision for community cohesion is satisfactory. Policies have been reviewed and the school is working out from its strong local links, which are bringing an increasingly strong sense of community into the school, to national and global levels. Parents come into the school to help with the range of activities on offer and make a valuable contribution.

Safeguarding procedures are satisfactory and health and safety checks are fully in place. Parents are now strong in their support for the school as reflected in the large number of questionnaires returned and in the positive responses made. The headteacher places great emphasis on the roles of parents as shown by her presence at the gate, her active recruitment of parents to the parents' association and the detailed newsletters which now go home to enhance the home-school partnership.

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
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

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Early Years Foundation Stage

The overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Children make good progress in skills development from the expected starting point for their age. The progress tracker sheets in use throughout their time in the Early Years Foundation Stage include interventions put in place to ensure that children reach their predicted levels of achievement. Action is taken quickly to eliminate any disparities in learning. Staff have good knowledge and understanding of individual children. They keep detailed notes of progress and evidence of that progress. Support staff work very effectively with teachers to develop the children's skills through activities such as differentiated work in phonics and use of mini-whiteboards. By the end of Reception, children are working well within the early learning goals with particular strengths in number work. Children develop good personal skills; they respect each other, listen to each other and behave well. They make good progress because activities are constantly reviewed to ensure they are interesting and relevant to their needs. A good balance of adult-led and child-initiated learning is facilitated by good use of indoor and outdoor areas. Safeguarding policies and procedures are secure and ensure that children's welfare is paramount. Learning and development are promoted well and planning is a good mix of short, medium and long-term initiatives. Expectations of work and behaviour are clear. Leadership and management are good because of the experience and thoroughness of the leaders. Links with parents and carers are good and parents are positive about the start their children make.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Approximately 58% of parents and carers responded to the parental questionnaire and the majority expressed satisfaction with the school, especially about the way that concerns are dealt with under the leadership of the new headteacher. A number of parents expressed concerns about the way bullying allegations had been followed up but this invariably referred to the past. Inspectors followed up this point and found no evidence of bullying or poor behaviour in the school now. The new headteacher is working actively to ensure that parents are better informed about their child's progress and how to help them advance their learning, an issue raised by parents in the questionnaire responses.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Cold Harbour Church of England 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 170 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 291 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	94	55	70	41	5	5	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	96	57	71	42	1	1	2	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	65	39	86	52	12	7	4	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	59	36	86	53	16	10	2	1
The teaching is good at this school	63	38	95	57	7	4	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	56	34	92	55	17	10	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	69	41	92	55	5	3	1	1
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)	49	33	95	63	6	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	45	28	104	64	12	7	2	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	39	26	90	59	16	11	8	5
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	46	31	89	59	13	9	2	1
The school is led and managed effectively	53	34	96	62	7	5	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	74	45	80	49	8	5	3	2

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 inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

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 were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

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 October 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Cold Harbour Church of England School, Bletchley MK3 7PD

I am writing to thank you for the happy, friendly welcome you gave us when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed talking to many of you and hearing what you thought about your life in school. These are the things that we liked about your school:

- You look after each other and the school. The office was well run by the pupils each lunchtime.
- You work well with your teachers and the other adults who help you and as a result you are making satisfactory progress with your learning.
- You have plenty to say when you discuss aspects of your learning. You listen to each other so everyone has a chance to contribute.
- Your new headteacher and her colleagues are working very hard to make your school an even better place for learning.

In order for your school to continue the improvement it is now making, we have asked your teachers to improve their skills as middle managers so they can check on the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects even more effectively. We feel that they could improve their assessment so that your writing becomes even better. We would also like them to plan more links in the curriculum for you to reinforce your learning. Then, everyone might well say what one pupil stated, 'I love this subject because learning is such fun.'

It was lovely to see the happy way you come to school each day and to meet some of your parents. The other inspectors and I send you all our best wishes for your future success.

Yours faithfully

Michael Sutherland-Harper

Lead inspector

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