

Vernham Dean Gillum's Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116321
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	338792
Inspection dates	30 June –1 July 2010
Reporting inspector	Diane Wilkinson

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	95
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Pike
Headteacher	Martin Lambert
Date of previous school inspection	16 July 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 10 lessons and observed four teachers. They held meetings with governors, staff, pupils and the School Improvement Partner. A small number of parents and carers bringing their children to school were also spoken to. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at analyses of pupils' progress, governor meeting records, development planning and monitoring, local authority reports, a range of policies and procedures including those associated with safeguarding, curriculum planning documents and a sample of pupils' work. They also scrutinised questionnaires returned by 64 parents and carers, 51 pupils and nine staff.

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

- the effectiveness of the school's actions to help pupils make consistently good progress
- how well the weaker aspects of pupils' attainment are being addressed, especially related to writing and mathematics
- the extent to which the school is helping pupils who are on the cusp of achieving a higher level to do so.

Information about the school

This is a small village school in which pupils are taught in mixed-age classes. A very large majority of pupils are of White British heritage with none at the early stages of learning English. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is slightly below average although this varies significantly between year groups. Their needs are mainly associated with learning, and speech, language and communication. A new headteacher joined the school just over a year ago. The school holds the silver Eco-school award. A significant minority of pupils travel from outside the school's catchment area.

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

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

The standard of education at this school is good. Some aspects are outstanding, especially the ethos which helps provide excellent pastoral care. Pupils know staff have their best interests at heart and thoroughly enjoy school, very enthusiastically participating in everything on offer. Attendance levels are high. Behaviour, both in lessons and around the school, is excellent. Pupils have an outstanding awareness of how to keep healthy and safe, being adamant that bullying is extremely rare and totally confident in the strategies used to prevent it. Community cohesion within the school and village is excellent although pupils are less aware of how they can contribute to the wider community in this country.

Pupils' individual needs are supported especially well. Some Reception children, especially girls, have lacked confidence, which limited their progress. More recently, a greater promotion of independent learning has encouraged them to attempt new things. Specific needs are exceptionally well supported, for example in groups supervised by very skilled teaching assistants. Pupils with a special talent are helped to flourish in subjects such as mathematics, art, music or sport. Strengths such as these help all pupils to achieve equally well. Parents and carers recognise this and are highly delighted with the school. In return, they support its work exceptionally well, with the high quality accommodation and resources, provided by parents and carers, being a testament to this.

The school benefits from the outstanding leadership skills of its new headteacher. In particular, his monitoring and evaluation skills are especially strong, resulting in very effective strategies being devised to successfully target weaknesses in aspects like writing and mathematics. His work in developing the quality of teaching has led to exceptionally strong features being evident in a number of lessons during the inspection. In these lessons pupils made excellent progress. Monitoring, however, indicates teaching and learning are not always as good. Very good procedures are in place for checking pupils' progress in English and mathematics although this is not so effective in other subjects like science. Very effective monitoring information helps both staff and governors to support improvement priorities well although their contribution to strategic direction is underdeveloped. Nevertheless, the increasing effectiveness of development planning means the school has a good capacity for further improvement.

Pupils get on exceptionally well together, cooperate especially well in lessons, want to please their teachers and make good progress. Exceptionally good use of learning targets inspires pupils to do their best so that those on the cusp of attaining a higher level are increasingly reaching it. This has helped attainment to rise well this year, with virtually all pupils reaching the level expected by Year 6 and around 50% exceeding this.

Attainment in the national tests for Years 2 and 6 pupils is on an upward trend and well placed to rise further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Build on and extend the improvements in progress and attainment, especially through:
 - consistently applying the strengths seen in some lessons to all lessons
 - encouraging Reception children to work independently and take risks in order to enhance their learning
 - extending assessment and monitoring systems used for English and mathematics to other subjects, particularly science
 - enabling staff with management responsibilities and governors to play a greater role in the strategic direction of the school.
- Forge links with other schools or institutions so that pupils clearly recognise how they can contribute to community cohesion in the United Kingdom.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Pupils' excellent personal outcomes significantly support their capacity for learning. Staff are now capitalising on this well to improve progress. Pupils are becoming more mature in how they approach their work, regularly seeking ways to improve it, especially in the older classes. Pupils work really well together, testing out and comparing ideas. By the time pupils leave they are exceptionally well rounded young people, with a very good understanding of how to do the best in their work. These strengths help prepare pupils well for their future. Mutual respect throughout the school community results in excellent relationships which help pupils recognise that diversity is a strength and to enjoy opportunities to learn about other cultures.

Pupils contribute very positively to school life, look out for each other and willingly take on responsibility. Many opportunities for physical activities, especially sport, and pupils' heightened food awareness ensure they have a really good understanding of how to achieve a healthy lifestyle. Safety awareness, for example with regard to the roads, handling animals or if there is a fire, is excellent. Spiritual development, as is evident in the very well constructed assemblies, is outstanding.

The school's very good tracking data and pupils' work books clearly show that progress is consistently good throughout the school, including for those pupils with learning, language or behavioural needs. Reception children achieve well in all areas of learning although in some years their writing and social skills are underdeveloped. Recent changes are improving their progress in these aspects. Good progress in Years 1 and 2 helps virtually all pupils reach average levels, with higher attaining pupils writing very effectively, using accurate punctuation and spelling. By Year 4, pupils work confidently with fractions and decimals, the higher attainers accurately comparing these with percentages. By Year 6, pupils very competently use these skills, for example, when

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

working out the number of slabs required for the surround of different shaped swimming pools. Their descriptive writing is often of exceptionally high quality. For example, figurative language such as, 'the candle light flickering with fright' is used especially well in their poetry. Progress in science, although not a priority this year, has also improved because greater emphasis is being place on learning concepts through investigative work.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

How effective is the provision?

Adults' excellent knowledge of individual pupils helps them to respond swiftly to changing needs. Learning assistants are especially good at helping younger or less able pupils understand what they have to do and how to go about it. Support for pupils with emotional or behavioural needs is outstanding, significantly supporting excellent behaviour. Recent changes to induction procedures, including home visits, help encourage exceptionally strong relationships with parents and carers, enabling them to be very effective partners in their child's learning. Pupils moving on to secondary school feel very well prepared.

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

Teaching, which varied in quality in previous years, is now uniformly good and continuing to improve even further. This has been considerably helped by the common approach to planning challenging activities, well matched to the ages and stages of different pupils. The use of lesson targets and identification of what is needed to achieve them is excellent. Teachers make it clear that all pupils are expected to achieve the lowest level, some to exceed this and a few to do really well. Because of their high commitment to learning, virtually all pupils try their very best to achieve the middle target and increasingly the highest one, which is one reason why so many pupils reach the level expected for their age. Where teachers constantly refer back to these in lessons progress is outstanding. Marking, however, is not always as good, rarely indicating how pupils can achieve a higher target. Teaching in science, where this approach is not consistently used, is not as good. Excellent monitoring of lessons by the headteacher has identified that Reception girls are much less confident in having a go at really challenging work and this is beginning to be addressed. The curriculum has been adapted well to support important improvement priorities in English and mathematics and take good account of the age and ability range in each class. Activities are enhanced by linking subjects together and choosing topics relevant for pupils' lives. However, topics have yet to capitalise fully on pupils' different interests.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has an excellent capacity for getting the best out of the staff. Alongside this, his skill in collecting, collating and analysing evidence on the quality of provision and progress is exceptionally good. This means, for example, that the school can pinpoint very accurately what needs to improve and put in place effective strategies to address it. For example, excellent monitoring by the headteacher of Reception children's responses in lessons clearly identified what it was that was allowing boys to outperform the girls, and is beginning to address this. An excellent analysis of what is working in lessons and why has led to rapid improvement in the quality of teaching. Staff respond very well to advice, for example through watching the headteacher's skilful modelling of how it should be done. A reflective culture has increased staff and governors' willingness to participate in self-evaluation and start to be proactive in helping to drive forward improvement. These developments ensure the school is well placed to do so. The outstanding engagement with parents and carers benefits pupils exceptionally well. Parents and carers feel very much part of the school community,

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

willingly giving of their time and expertise such as helping to run the very popular gardening club which supports pupils' health and ecological awareness.

Governors are well informed and very supportive, playing a very effective role as critical friends in this small school. Development planning for community cohesion is good, with plans in hand to develop partnerships with other schools in order to increase pupils' awareness of how they can support cohesion in this country. Partnerships in other areas support pupils' education and welfare very well. The caring family ethos helps ensure that no pupil is discriminated against and their equality of opportunity is good. Pupils are especially well cared for through the rigorous attention paid to safeguarding them. Effective procedures are in place to support this although there are a few minor discrepancies in some policies.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

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

Parents' and carers' considerable respect for the school is a strong factor in the excellent engagement the school has with them.

In particular, parents and carers are very satisfied with:

- how well individual children's needs are met
- the way children are looked after and kept healthy
- the standard of behaviour
- how well the school keeps them informed about their children's progress
- the quality of the headteacher's leadership.

Inspectors fully agree that these are strengths of the school.

A very small minority of parents and carers raised negative points. In the main there is little pattern to these although a few parents and carers would like more suggestions for ways to help their children at home. Inspection evidence shows that staff are willing to work closely with parents and carers on ways to accommodate this.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Vernham Dean Gillum's 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 64 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 95 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	45	70	19	30	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	40	63	23	36	1	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	21	33	43	67	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	26	41	34	53	3	5	1	2
The teaching is good at this school	29	45	33	52	2	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	23	36	33	52	6	9	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	32	50	32	50	0	0	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)	31	48	30	47	1	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	31	48	30	47	3	5	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	30	47	33	52	1	2	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	26	41	31	48	5	8	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	38	59	25	39	1	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	40	63	23	36	1	2	0	0

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.



2 July 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Vernham Dean Gillum's Church of England Primary School, Andover, SP11 0JY

Thank you for welcoming us to your school. We very much enjoyed our time with you. I particularly want to thank the pupils who gave up their lunchtime to talk to us. We think your school is good and are delighted that you and your parents and carers agree.

Here are some of the things we found out that were especially good about the school:

- Staff take excellent care of you, give you really good advice on how to improve and support those of you who need extra help especially well.
- Your behaviour is excellent and you all get on really well together.
- You enjoy school very much and try really hard to do your best.
- You are well taught and activities help you to do well.
- Your parents and carers do a lot of really good things to help the school, like running the gardening club or building the fort for you to do activities in.
- Your headteacher is an excellent leader, and staff and governors are helping him to make your school even better.

Here are some of the things we have asked the school to improve:

- Help you to carry on making the best progress you can so that attainment continues to improve.
- Make sure that you learn about the different communities in this country so that you can learn to get on with other people as well as you do in school and in the village.

You can help by continuing to work as well as we saw you doing during the inspection.

Yours sincerely

Diane Wilkinson

Lead Inspector

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