

Shrivenham Church of England Controlled School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123158
Local Authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	340295
Inspection dates	13–14 July 2010
Reporting inspector	David Carrington

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	148
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Margaret Disney
Headteacher	Sue Currie
Date of previous school inspection	12 July 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. They observed eight lessons involving the work of all six teachers. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, all staff, governors and individual parents and carers. The inspectors evaluated the school's work, and looked at school self-evaluation documents, external monitoring reports and development planning. Responses from 55 parents' and carers' questionnaires were analysed as well as those from school staff and a sample of the pupils.

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

- the extent to which the school has successfully raised attainment and progress, especially in writing
- the degree to which school leaders and governors give a clear direction to improvement work
- whether improvements to teaching and learning have been sufficient to raise pupils' achievement
- how far the promotion of community cohesion focuses on links with people elsewhere in the UK and overseas.

Information about the school

Shrivenham C of E is smaller than most primary schools. The pupils come from the village and surrounding area. A significant number of pupils do not complete their whole primary education at the school. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is greater than in most primary schools. Very few speak English as an additional language. A below average proportion have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Within this group, a number have emotional, social and behavioural difficulties. The number of pupils known to be entitled to free school meals is below average.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in the Reception class. Some also attend the before- and after-school clubs held in 'The Barn' along with the pre-school provision. These are all privately run and were not inspected.

During the last year, there have been a number of staff changes, including senior leaders. A new headteacher takes up post in September 2010.

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

Shrivenham C of E Primary School provides a satisfactory education. It has a number of strengths, especially in pupils' personal development and the quality of care, guidance and support. It has made satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection. The lack of a senior leadership team, due to staff changes, is the reason why the school has not advanced more rapidly and why its capacity to improve is satisfactory rather than good.

Despite this, there have been two major improvements. Firstly, the quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good and the children make good progress, reaching above average levels of skills by the time they join Year 1. Secondly, attainment and progress in writing have been improved. In partnership with the local authority, the school has developed effective strategies to give pupils the necessary skills to write expressively and fluently by the end of Year 6. This has contributed to a gradual rise in overall attainment and progress.

The headteacher and governors know what needs improvement. School development planning is based on reliable school self-evaluation. The monitoring of the school's performance is now shared more widely with the teaching staff, so that there is a shared view of strengths and weaknesses. However, the strategic leadership of the school largely remains with the headteacher, especially the evaluation of monitoring outcomes and school performance data of the school. Leadership has not always used the information from progress tracking sufficiently, and expectations and targets are not yet ambitious enough. Key areas for improvement, beyond the lack of a leadership team, are:

- Pupils' progress is not yet brisk or consistent, particularly for higher attainers who are not sufficiently challenged. Not all pupils have reached expected levels, given their starting points in school.
- While the quality of teaching is improving, it is not yet good. There is some effective teaching and learning, notably in Reception and the mixed Year 4/5 class. Here, the pace of learning is brisk and pupils have ample opportunities to work independently and collaboratively because the staff do not talk for too long. These strengths are less obvious in other parts of the school.
- The partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory because they are suitably involved in a range of school activities. Some volunteer to help in school and the work of the Friends of Shrivenham School is of great benefit in assisting the improvement of the accommodation and resources. However, parents and carers hold very mixed views of the school, and work to keep them informed about their children's learning and how to support it at home is incomplete.

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A relatively high proportion of parents responding to the questionnaire indicated concerns about how the school tackles bullying. Many wrote comments in support of their misgivings. Inspectors spent more time than is usual in evaluating these concerns. The school keeps detailed records of any behavioural issues and bullying. These show that the amount of bullying is not unusually high and that staff take the necessary actions to tackle it. The way in which school policy and procedures on bullying and their general impact are shared with parents and carers is less clear. Beyond the issue of bullying, general behaviour in school is good. The safeguarding of pupils is also a strength as the staff are vigilant and are supported well by governors in maintaining up-to-date documentation and training.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the attainment and progress of pupils by:
 - ensuring progress is consistently good throughout the school
 - increasing the challenge for higher attainers
 - making sure pupils' final attainment reflects well on their starting points.
- Create a leadership structure that enables more widespread improvement by:
 - appointing a team of senior leaders who show increased rigour in their evaluation of school performance, greater ambition and stronger direction for the school
 - using pupils' progress as the key indicator of success
 - sharing the information about pupils' progress more effectively with middle managers and governors.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by:
 - raising expectations
 - making the pace of lessons brisker
 - reducing the amount of teacher-talk in lessons
 - increasing pupils' opportunities to work independently and collaboratively.
- Build a fully effective partnership with parents by:
 - developing lines of communication that will inform them of the school's approach to bullying and its impact
 - giving them more information about their children's progress
 - helping them to support their children's learning at home.

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

The work in pupils' books shows that attainment is rising gradually and that it is marginally above average by the time pupils leave Year 6. Attainment in writing is not quite as high as in mathematics and science. However, the 'talking for writing' approach

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adopted this year is assisting the raising of standards in writing. In a Year 5 lesson, for example, the pupils asked some very reflective questions to compare life in World Cup era South Africa with that of 40 years ago. Pupils in the lower attaining group contributed well, asking the teacher and each other 'What if...' type questions. This thought-provoking response led into the planning of a fictional account of slavery, with discussion of different characters' emotions, feelings and attitudes.

The mobility of pupils affects the overall picture of progress quite significantly. School progress tracking data show that many pupils who spend their full primary years at the school make the necessary progress. The proportion of pupils doing this is rising. For pupils joining the school later than is usual, the picture is less clear, although the monitoring of their progress is now more secure due to improved assessment frequency and reliability. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds achieve as well as the other pupils. Higher attaining pupils do not yet show sufficient progress and not enough reach the higher levels, especially in mathematics. Nevertheless, pupils are prepared suitably for the next stage in their education and the 'Transition Afternoon' when pupils visited next year's class was a conspicuous success.

Pupils enjoy school and are polite, friendly and welcoming. Above-average attendance rates indicate pupils' enthusiasm for school, which is endorsed by most parents and carers. Pupils' awareness of safety and health issues and guidelines is good. A group of Year 6 pupils talked quite animatedly, for example, about the safety precautions they must follow when they go swimming.

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	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2

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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Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms	
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	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

The school's target for good teaching is currently set too low. It has already been achieved and, along with staff, the headteacher is considering raising it. Overall expectations of the pupils are good in a few classes, which ensures they make good progress in lessons, including the higher attainers. In these sessions, planning identifies exactly what skills and knowledge are expected of each ability group; pupils are given greater opportunities to show independence, collaboration and, ultimately, flair in their learning. During the 'Transition Afternoon', the new Year 4/5 class thoroughly enjoyed playing 'People Bingo'. Pupils were challenged to find out about each other by questioning about the clues given on the playing sheet, using reasoning and deduction in equal measure. By the end of the activity, the pupils knew their new friends by name, family relationships and interests. They were all keen to make a start together in September.

The curriculum makes good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education. It is also enhanced by a good programme of out-of-school activities which give pupils opportunities to develop sporting and artistic skills. The curriculum for developing basic skills in English, mathematics and information and communication technology is satisfactory. It has been improved this year for writing but is not yet honed enough to ensure pupils in all ability groups are provided consistently with demanding work. Year 6 pupils say they find some of the work 'easy'.

The school works hard to ensure pupils are looked after well. Effective partnerships with other agencies, parents and carers ensure that vulnerable pupils benefit from their education. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported well. The teaching assistants provide the necessary encouragement and help to ensure they progress as successfully as the other pupils. This extends to those pupils with emotional, behavioural and social needs. They are counselled well and guided to respond positively to others. Any outbursts of poor behaviour or lack of interest in learning are dealt with appropriately.

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	2

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How effective are leadership and management?

The drive for improvement and establishment of ambitious targets are satisfactory. They are yet to become good because the structure of leadership in school is in flux.

Decision-making currently involves a limited number of staff, and the headteacher carries nearly all the responsibilities for strategic leadership. She leads the school capably but, because she also has a teaching role, is sometimes put under pressure. Plans are in place for establishing a leadership team, under the new headteacher, that will ensure monitoring, evaluation and review are shared fairly.

The school has made a number of successful improvements even during the period of staff change, which demonstrate the adaptability and potential of the staff. In the main, they have taken on change with enthusiasm. The promotion of community cohesion, for example, is being improved substantially. At present it is satisfactory but plans are well advanced to broaden its scope by creating more opportunities for pupils to learn about societies in other parts of the United Kingdom and overseas.

Even though there is some disquiet among parents and carers about bullying, the school makes sure pupils are safeguarded well. This extends to good procedures for internet safety that involve pupils signing the code of conduct for computer use. There is no tolerance of discrimination. Safeguarding policies and procedures are modelled on those of the local authority and have been suitably tailored for pupils at the school.

The headteacher, staff and governors know that the equality of opportunity will increase when all pupils make good rates of progress. Governors have appropriate insights into the strengths and weaknesses of the school and are increasingly using progress data to check the school is doing as well as possible in relation to other schools and its own pupils' needs. Governors and staff are resolved to open clearer and more effective lines of communication with parents to strengthen the partnership with them.

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	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3

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The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money

3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Improved provision in Reception has been one of the school's biggest successes in recent years. This has been achieved particularly through the earlier assessment of children's starting level of skills. This gives a much more accurate picture of their needs and is the basis for the now more rigorous tracking of progress through the school. Work to develop skills across the six areas of learning now starts in September, rather than at the end of the first term as in earlier years. Currently, the Reception children started school with the expected level of skills and knowledge, although they were lower in writing and shape, space and measures. Over the year, the children have made good progress and their attainment is at least average, and for some it is above average.

The good progress in Reception was clearly evident in a lesson where the children were learning about positional language. This covered the development of both literacy and mathematical skills and illustrated the way in which the relative weakness in shape, space and measures has been overcome. Groups of children thoroughly enjoyed arranging small dolls in order and talking about their positions. Later the children all gave high and low hand signals in response to an extract from classical radio. The classroom is a vibrant representation of all the activities explored, although the outside zone is not yet as stimulating.

Leadership of the stage is good. The leader is an enthusiast with high expectations and a quick and successful response to improvement challenges. The parents' corner is a particularly effective way of informing parents and carers about their children's progress and in helping them support their children's learning. As such, it is a model for wider adoption across the school.

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

About a third of parents gave their opinions, which is a little higher than in many primary schools. They air mixed feelings in their responses to the questionnaire. As identified earlier, the management of bullying is a particular concern. Inspectors find that while the occurrence of bullying is not unduly high, the school has not yet found an

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effective way to share its approach to bullying with parents and carers. Many parents also express concern about leadership of the school and the way that leaders respond to their views. While leadership is fundamentally satisfactory, the establishment of clearer lines of leadership and management will assist the school in its work to improve in future. Many parents and carers express positive views. The chief strengths identified relate to health and safety, individual teachers' work to support their children's education and their children's enjoyment of school. Inspectors agree these are accurate impressions.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Shrivenham C of E 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 55 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 148 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	27	49	23	42	4	7	1	2
The school keeps my child safe	29	53	21	38	4	7	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	22	40	24	44	6	11	1	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	21	38	21	38	11	20	1	2
The teaching is good at this school	21	38	21	38	11	20	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	16	29	23	42	8	15	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	27	49	27	49	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)	20	36	27	49	4	7	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	19	35	19	35	12	22	2	4
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	14	25	16	29	12	22	9	16
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	19	35	15	27	13	24	3	5
The school is led and managed effectively	12	22	18	33	11	20	7	13
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	22	40	20	36	10	18	2	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.



15 July 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Shrivenham C of E Primary School, Shrivenham SN6 8AA

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school recently. We think you have a satisfactory education and that your teachers are keen to make improvements. Among our main judgements, we think these are the most important:

- You enjoy school and want to do your best.
- You develop the expected skills and knowledge in English and mathematics.
- Children in Reception make a good start to their education.
- You behave well, work well together and help each other.
- Your lessons are usually interesting and sometimes well taught.
- Your teachers and other staff look after you well.

We think that there are four particular things that can be improved:

- You could be helped to make even more progress.
- Your school needs a new team of leaders.
- Your lessons could be more interesting and challenging.
- Your parents and carers could be given much more information about your education, especially the ways the school tackles bullying.

To help your teachers make these improvements, you could tell them which lessons you find most interesting and challenging and why you think this is so.

We wish you good luck in your education.

Yours sincerely

David Carrington

Lead inspector

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