

St Mary's Church of England (Aided) Primary School, Chipping Norton

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123227
Local Authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	340310
Inspection dates	14–15 July 2010
Reporting inspector	Ken Bryan

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	255
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jenny Williams
Headteacher	Yvonne Barnes
Date of previous school inspection	3 July 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They visited 20 lessons or parts of lessons and observed 10 teachers. They held meetings with governors, staff and pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at samples of pupils' work, curricular planning, assessment and tracking information for each year group and the school's procedures for ensuring pupils' safety. Inspectors also considered 100 questionnaires that were received from parents and carers as well as those returned by staff and pupils.

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

- the current rates of progress and levels of attainment across key stages and from entry to the school, but especially between Year 2 and Year 6
- the impact of initiatives and strategies for improving pupils' attainment and accelerating progress in Key Stage 2 and for higher attaining pupils, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and girls across the school, and how this is demonstrated in pupil progress data
- the effectiveness of senior and middle leaders in monitoring and evaluating the quality of provision and its impact on pupils' achievement, especially in Key Stage 2
- the impact of the school's strategies to promote community cohesion through the use of links beyond the school.

Information about the school

This is a larger than average sized primary school. The large majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds with other pupils coming from a range of minority ethnic groups. A few, but an increasing number, of pupils speak English as an additional language and some of these are at the early stages of learning English. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average but increasing. The percentage of pupils that have special educational needs and/or disabilities and those with a statement of special educational need is above that found nationally. Pupils start school in the Reception classes as part of the Early Years Foundation Stage. The school has been awarded the Sports Activemark, Eco-Schools Bronze Award and Healthy Schools Status.

The school provides a breakfast club. It also hosts an after-school club which is not managed by the governing body. This was not inspected by the team.

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

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

St Mary's Church of England (Aided) Primary is a satisfactory and improving school where good pastoral support and guidance ensure that pupils learn in a caring and happy environment. As the result of the school's commitment to promoting community cohesion, pupils from different backgrounds get on noticeably well with each other. The leadership and management of the school have been strengthened as a result of staff stability and through the careful distribution of responsibilities. Staff feel they receive strong leadership within a highly professional working environment. Under the good leadership of the headteacher, teachers now have a better understanding of what they need to do to help raise standards in the school. As a result, there is a greater focus on teaching pupils basic skills, especially in reading and writing, and reviewing pupil progress data which has led to improved academic outcomes, especially in Key Stage 2. The staff are now more reflective and collaborative and with the support of their senior team, they demonstrate good capacity to improve.

Pupils make a very positive start to their school life and they make good progress within the Early Years Foundation Stage. Published data show that by the end of Key Stage 2 pupils attain in line with national expectations. Pupils make expected rather than good progress overall from their low starting points because progress in Key Stage 1 is not always as good as it could be. However, there has been an increase in the numbers of pupils attaining higher levels at the end of Year 6. There has also been an increase in pupils achieving the higher levels in Year 2, especially in their reading.

Parents, carers and pupils are overwhelmingly positive about the school. One enthusiastic parent states a typical view that, 'We are extremely happy with St. Mary's School. It has a clear vision and pride in the service they are able to offer and the teachers are very hard working and dedicated to meeting the needs of our child.' Among the school's particular strengths are the good work with parents and links with the local community. In addition, the school has developed an excellent relationship with community partners. These are making a significant contribution to the personal development and well-being of pupils, especially for the most vulnerable and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Consequently, pupils' social development is good even though a small minority find it difficult at times to behave as well as they should. The school helps parents to support their children through the effective work of a family liaison worker. Pupils are encouraged to take on increasing levels of responsibility as they move up through the school. For example, the school council, 'eco warriors' and monitors take their responsibilities seriously and make a good contribution to helping their school to be a happy place to work and play. Teaching in the school is satisfactory and improving. Teachers work hard to make learning as enjoyable and

meaningful for pupils as possible. There are some good cross-curricular links in teachers' planning. However, although all lessons observed during the inspection were judged as satisfactory or better, there was some inconsistency with regard to challenge, pace, feedback to pupils, opportunities for self-assessment and the modification of resources and tasks to meet the needs of all learners. As a result, a few pupils do not always make the progress of which they are capable; especially those in receipt of extra support as their individualised learning plans are not always used to best advantage to help meet their needs.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment, especially in Key Stage 1, by improving the consistency of the teachers' use of assessment to aid learning through:
 - the setting of individualised targets for pupils in each class
 - increasing the opportunities for pupils to assess their own work and that of their peers
 - improving the quality of marking and feedback to pupils by sharing best practice across the school.
- Improve the learning and progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities by:
 - ensuring that learning objectives are precise and that progress is measured frequently and recorded
 - improving the monitoring of the effectiveness of individualised learning plans used in lessons.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

The vast majority pupils enjoy coming to school and a large majority say they feel safe. Pupils demonstrate a good understanding of how to be healthy and are increasingly making healthy choices. Staff are consistent in the way they implement behaviour management strategies. This ensures that most pupils behave well most of the time and the few incidences of undesirable behaviour are very well managed.

The knowledge, skills and understanding of pupils on entry to the school in Reception are well below expected levels for their age. By the end of Year 6, pupils have made expected progress from their low starting points in English, mathematics and science. The picture for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is mixed. Most make expected or better progress because of the additional support they receive and because teaching and support staff plan appropriate tasks to meet their needs and interests. However, a few of these pupils make slower progress because some teachers are not modifying their lessons in accordance with pupils' individualised education plans. During the inspection, all pupils were seen making at least satisfactory progress during their lessons. Progress is sometimes good, as observed in a Year 5 class, where pupils

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

skilfully analysed poetry to support their project on 'The Railway Children'. Poetic techniques were quickly identified using a range of sources and the pupils demonstrated positive attitudes to learning. Pupils in Year 6 enthusiastically performed their version of 'The Wizard of Oz' to the highest standard.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 over the last three years has been broadly average for English, mathematics and science, and the school's data show a steady rise in both English and mathematics. The numbers of pupils attaining higher levels in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6 have increased overall. Strategies aimed at raising the attainment of girls have successfully reduced the gap in performance between girls and boys by the end of Key Stage 2.

Pupils make good progress in their personal development and demonstrate a good understanding and appreciation for their age of other cultures and faiths. The school has been effective in ensuring that pupils get on well with each other, irrespective of their differing backgrounds.

There has been a good increase in levels of attendance over the last three years to achieve broadly average levels. Current data show that attendance is now slightly above average as a result of effective procedures to challenge absence and to reduce the number of persistent absentees.

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
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

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

The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**2****How effective is the provision?**

The good level of care, guidance and support provided by the staff throughout the school enables pupils to develop their confidence and self-esteem. Teachers have effectively reviewed the curriculum to make it more creative, purposeful and exciting. Consequently, pupils are overwhelmingly positive about the quality of teaching. They praise all staff for being caring and providing them with interesting and imaginative learning opportunities. The curriculum is adequately matched to pupils' needs; it is now contributing to improved achievement and good personal development. Particular strengths are in the provision for music, drama and sport, and the use of many visits and visitors.

All lessons observed during the inspection were at least satisfactory and many were good. Most teachers ensure pupils understand what is expected of them and ensure that learning is taught in context, for example linking writing activities to a school trip or learning in other subjects. Where teaching in the school was judged to be particularly good, especially in Key Stage 2, teachers ensured that pupils of different abilities were progressing at a swift pace. They checked pupils' progress and understanding at regular intervals to gauge when pupils were ready to move on to the next stage of learning. Where teaching was less effective, the assessment of pupils' work and progress, including marking, was not thorough enough. At times the pace of learning was slower than necessary and there was limited challenge for more able pupils and a few with individualised learning plans did not always have them used sufficiently well or reviewed appropriately. Generally the use of assessment to support learning is developing well, but has yet to become firmly embedded throughout the school.

Staff work well with parents to help support the needs of pupils. This partnership enables staff to cater well for pupils' individual needs, especially the most vulnerable. In addition, the close working partnerships between St Mary's and neighbouring schools promote a smooth transition for pupils between schools and enrich the curriculum. The school's 'Go For It' programme and the hosting of a thriving breakfast and after-school activity club significantly impact upon some vulnerable pupils in terms of attendance, self-esteem and achievement.

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

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and her senior and middle leaders set high expectations. Recent improvements include the sharing of key responsibilities and the introduction of pupil progress meetings which have significantly strengthened the school's capacity to improve. Teachers are rightly proud of recent improvements in pupils' outcomes, and staff training is well targeted to ensure that improving learning is central to the school's actions. This has resulted in more lessons being judged good or better.

Governors are well informed and know the school's strengths and weaknesses. The promotion of equal opportunities lies at the heart of the school's actions and underpins the school's commitment to inclusion and the involvement of parents in this increasingly diverse community. Staff are fully aware of the groups of pupils who may be subject to discrimination and generally effective support ensures that pupils do well. Links with community partners are excellent. The school's provision, particularly in the fields of music, drama and sport is significantly enhanced through the work of many community-based organisations which include the highly supportive Chipping Norton Partnership. In addition, procedures to protect and safeguard pupils are comprehensive, and there is a high level of awareness among all staff and governors.

All stakeholders are regularly consulted. The school has undertaken a careful analysis of the needs of its community and has accurately tuned its provision to promote community cohesion effectively. Consequently, pupils have a good understanding of other world cultures and the diversity of their own learning community. There are well-developed plans to look at contrasting areas in the United Kingdom and internationally in France and Ghana.

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	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
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	3
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Early Years Foundation Stage

Children achieve well in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They make good progress, from starting points that are usually low, because the school swiftly assesses their needs and initiates specific support to accelerate their learning. Children are eager to settle, thoroughly enjoy their learning and persevering with tasks. They get on well together, learn to share resources and thrive during role-play activities. Children observed were absorbed in 'The Writing Galleon' as they practised their emergent skills in writing. Other children were enthusiastically and painstakingly preparing suitable conditions for the release of their newly-hatched Painted Lady butterflies. Planning and assessment procedures are consistently good across the Reception classes so that there is a good balance of adult-led and child-initiated learning. The range of indoor and outdoor learning in the Reception classes is good overall, but the school recognises the need to increase opportunities for children to be numerate within each learning area.

The teacher responsible for the Early Years Foundation Stage maintains a high profile and monitors provision effectively. She tracks children's progress carefully and successfully establishes effective links with parents and carers and other agencies. Adults are deployed very well to support the children's welfare. Safeguarding procedures are robust and all parents, staff and children have developed very positive working relationships.

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

The overwhelming majority of those who returned questionnaires were extremely positive about their children's overall experience at school. Inspectors found that parents and carers are welcomed into the school and considerable efforts are made to involve them in their children's education. A small number of parents and carers expressed concerns about the behaviour of some pupils. Inspection evidence confirms that incidents of inappropriate or challenging behaviour happen occasionally but they are infrequent and the school's management of behaviour is both robust and effective. Almost all pupils are courteous, well behaved and caring towards one another.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Mary's Church of England (Aided) 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 100 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 255 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	64	64	34	34	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	61	61	34	34	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	56	56	43	43	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	51	51	47	47	1	1	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	51	51	48	48	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	43	43	53	53	4	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	52	52	45	45	2	2	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)	54	54	42	42	2	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	51	51	44	44	3	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	37	37	49	49	10	10	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	39	39	51	51	3	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	34	34	55	55	3	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	57	57	57	57	2	2	2	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

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 St Mary's Church of England (Aided) Primary School, Chipping Norton
OX7 5DH

Thank you for giving us such a warm and caring welcome to your school and for helping us during the inspection. We found that you are getting a satisfactory education. You are clearly very happy and you are well supported by your teachers and other adults in the school. Here are some of the strong features we found.

The teachers plan and provide interesting lessons that enable most of you to enjoy learning and make expected progress in your work.

- Your behaviour and attitudes are mostly good and you support one another very well
- You clearly enjoy the wide range of clubs, school visits and other activities provided by the school and other providers in the town.
- All adults in the school take good care of you.
- It is very clear that you know how to be safe, eat healthily and lead healthy lives.

The school runs smoothly. We were impressed by the way Year 6 represented the school with its performance of Wizard of Oz and you must have felt very proud of them. The headteacher, her staff and the governors clearly know how well the school is doing and what is needed to make things even better. We have asked them to:

- ensure that pupils in need of extra support are given clear guidance on how to make faster progress
- make sure that the teachers' marking and advice always tells you what you have to do to improve your work.

You can help to make this happen by continuing to care and work hard.

Yours sincerely

Ken Bryan

Lead inspector

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