

Oakhill Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123771
Local Authority	Somerset
Inspection number	340423
Inspection dates	26–27 January 2010
Reporting inspector	Mike Burghart

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	107
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Deanne Smith
Headteacher	Bethan Foister
Date of previous school inspection	4 April 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors who spent over 80% of their time looking at pupils' learning. Inspectors observed 14 lessons and saw all teachers teaching. They held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils, and spoke with parents at the start of the school day. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at documentation including policies, development planning, records of assessments and the tracking of pupils' progress. Inspectors analysed forty nine parental questionnaires, eight staff questionnaires and fifty eight pupils' questionnaires.

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

- reasons for the apparently less successful teaching in Years 1 and 2 and of mathematics across the school
- the performance of more able pupils in writing
- the impact of the school's initiatives to introduce new forms of assessment and tracking of pupils' progress
- the contribution of teachers and governors to leadership and management

Information about the school

This is a smaller than average primary school serving a rural community. Virtually all pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. Such needs are mostly related to communication skills. Children begin school in Reception where they follow the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum in a single-age class. The other three classes include pupils from more than one age group.

The school holds the National Healthy Schools' Status. Since April 2009, the school has been federated with Binegar C of E Primary School. They now share the same headteacher and governing body. Both schools form part of the larger federation of schools across Sheppey Valley.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school. Pupils are happy and keen to learn. They make good progress as a result of being taught well. Attainment is well above average by the time pupils leave. In a marked improvement since the last report, pupils of all abilities achieve well, making the most of the good start they get in Reception where provision is good. Good leadership and management ensure that the school knows its strengths and areas for development. Improvements are planned for well and success is effectively evaluated. There is more to do to develop pupils' active participation in evaluating their own progress. However, newly introduced systems to assess and track pupils' progress and establish targets have already had notably positive effects on attainment in writing and mathematics. The school's track record of improving teaching, the curriculum, the learning environment and leadership and management to good from satisfactory since the last inspection is a clear sign of good capacity for even further improvement.

The very large majority of parents and carers have confidence in the school. Comments like, 'My child is stimulated to learn,' and 'This an excellent school offering children good educational grounding,' are typical. A very small minority expressed concerns over behaviour but these are not borne out by inspection evidence or the views of pupils and staff. Pupils are very eager to say they feel safe and that they have confidence in staff. Their enjoyment of school is confirmed by high levels of attendance. 'I like everything about this school except the toilets!' was a common view which has been brought to the school's attention. Relationships are outstanding and pupils are well known to staff. Pupils respond well to the good care and guidance on offer. They appreciate that they are being prepared well for future study and life in general. In their attitudes to learning and clear commitment to the school and local community, pupils demonstrate that they are being successfully helped to grow up as sensible, caring and considerate young people.

Staff and governors make a strong team led well by the headteacher. This particularly benefits Oakhill, but is now being extended effectively to support the federation with Binegar School. Senior leaders make good use of monitoring and data to help evaluate the impact of decisions on pupils' learning and set priorities for the school's development. There is a lot to do for a small group of people. The time is right for other staff, who are now well established in their classroom roles, to take on further responsibility to spread the workload and contribute more to the overall profile of leadership and management.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

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- Improve the use of assessment and the tracking of pupils' progress by:
 - embedding the good practice already established in some classes to draw pupils into the process of evaluating their own performance and working towards targets for improvement.
 - Reduce the workload of senior staff by:
 - providing opportunities for all staff to take on leadership and management responsibilities and become more involved in the school self-evaluation and forward planning processes.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

For most of the previous four years, attainment has been well above average by the time pupils leave. A relative weakness in mathematics and slightly lower performance overall in 2009 have been addressed this year. Improvements are due to developments in the use of assessment to target gaps in pupils' past learning. Over the same period, outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 were broadly average. Improvements to teaching, planning and tracking of progress now mean that attainment is above average at this point, which bodes well for the future when Year 2 pupils will start Years 3 to 6 without any disadvantage.

Pupils including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress and achieve well. They are relishing the school's move to a more creative curriculum with a focus on presenting pupils with challenges and encouraging enquiry. An excellent example was in a Years 5 and 6 lesson designed to develop pupils' research skills on farming in India. Pupils worked really effectively in groups, scouring books and interrogating the internet. There was a buzz of excitement as pupils became aware of the size and variation of the country and avidly soaked up information which they used to draw conclusions.

In all classes, pupils were observed behaving well, sustaining concentration and remaining on task even when not being directly supervised. Such attitudes have very positive effects on learning and are very good preparation for future study.

Pupils have a strong sense of right and wrong and show consideration for those less fortunate than themselves through fundraising and support for children in Africa. The school is good at promoting Christian ideals without seeking to indoctrinate. Pupils are being successfully encouraged to care for the environment and are keen to express their views on conservation and recycling. Their personal development is a strength of the school. Pupils have a good appreciation of what will keep them fit and healthy, although the content of a lot of lunchboxes does not match their understanding! The family atmosphere much treasured by parents and carers is exemplified by the sensitive approach of older pupils acting as reading buddies for younger children.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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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	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	1
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	2

How effective is the provision?

Improvements to the quality of teaching and most obviously the introduction of assessment systems are having very positive effects on learning and pupils' attainment. Embedding these across all classes and the curriculum as a whole is a school priority. Staff appreciate how successful initiatives have been in improving consistency and bringing about improvements. Strengths in teaching are in the way teachers use questioning to prompt pupils to reason. An area of relative weakness is in the few lessons where learning objectives are not made clear to pupils and opportunities to measure progress against them are missed.

A good example of the school's good care, guidance and support is in provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Pastoral and academic support combine to ensure that pupils make the same good progress as others in their age groups. Better-focused provision for more able pupils with good liaison with other schools, for example in mathematical and scientific challenges, has raised the overall profile of attainment.

Curriculum provision effectively supports all required subjects and is enhanced by the introduction of French for older pupils. There is a suitable range and number of extra-curricular activities including visits and visitors to the school. Residential trips are very popular, as is the 'Survival Week' where all pupils are involved in working together to create shelters, light fires and learn about living outdoors. It was hard to stop pupils

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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talking about their experiences!

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	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher's strong leadership and management ensure that her vision and ambition for the school are shared and that theory is turned into practice. Improvements to teaching and learning are the result of effective monitoring and constructive feedback to staff. This has a very positive impact on staff morale which is high and on teamwork when evaluating and planning.

Governance is good. Governors are well informed and not afraid to challenge the school as well as give support. Self-evaluation is accurate. Senior managers and governors are committed to making continual improvements. Drawing all staff into this process and delegating more responsibility already forms part of the school development plan, but has not had an impact on the way the school is run.

Procedures to ensure pupils are safe are robust and effective. There is no evidence of any discrimination. The school very successfully promotes equality of opportunity. That this aspect is not judged as outstanding is because, until recent improvements, more able pupils sometimes underachieved as a result of gaps in provision for them.

The school's contribution to community cohesion is managed well and is particularly effective in terms of the local community. Links with the church, other schools, parents, carers and other agencies are good and underpin pupils' awareness of local society. There are well-managed links with schools in Swindon and in Ghana which successfully enhance pupils' understanding of different lifestyles and customs.

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	2
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	2

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms	
The effectiveness 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

Induction procedures are good. Consequently, children make a smooth start in Reception. They settle in quickly and clearly understand the routines and expectations. Parents and carers are very pleased with the level of care for their children. Children are happy and obviously feel safe. Relationships are outstanding and underpin good progress, especially in personal, social and emotional development and in learning to read and begin writing. Taking turns, sharing and being considerate are the order of the day and children learn happily in a mix of activities they choose and those they are directed to. A highlight is that children readily choose the writing table and mathematics activities just as often as construction, role play or physical games. Teaching is good, built on good planning and record keeping. Learning through play is encouraged, with staff being able to intervene and interact with children frequently in this small class. Time, resources and the learning environment are managed well and staff are well-led. Temporary restrictions in limited outdoor space during building work have been managed effectively so that children still have satisfactory access and opportunity.

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 vast majority of parents' and carers' views are positive. There was no consensus of negative comments and all were couched in constructive terms. A very small minority of parents and carers would like to see improvements to communication between school and home and have their views considered more. Inspectors found that links are good with a variety of systems, including the recent addition of email. There are appropriate

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opportunities for information and consultation. Individual parental comments made reference to bullying. No evidence was found to substantiate these. Almost all parents and carers think their children enjoy school, teaching is good, and that staff take good care of pupils. Inspectors' findings confirm that they are right.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Oakhill 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 49 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 107 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	27	55	19	39	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	23	47	26	53	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	18	37	28	57	2	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	17	35	25	51	4	8	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	22	45	29	47	2	4	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	18	37	28	51	3	6	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	24	49	23	47	2	4	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	19	27	29	59	1	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	16	33	25	51	3	6	1	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	18	37	22	45	8	16	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	11	22	30	61	5	10	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	16	33	29	59	1	2	3	6
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	24	49	22	45	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 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.



28 January 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Oakhill Church of England Primary School, Radstock BA3 5AQ

It was a pleasure to meet such happy and polite pupils during the inspection. A special thank you to the school council who very sensibly told me about life at Oakhill. I can see why you are proud of your school. It is a good one!

Here are some of the highlights inspectors found.

- You enjoy school because you are well taught.
- Teachers and their assistants make learning interesting.
- The school takes good care of you and makes sure you are growing up as caring, sensible young people.
- Your behaviour is good nearly all the time.
- Your attendance is much better than in most schools.
- You make good progress and reach standards that are better than in most schools before you leave.

It is obvious that your school has improved a lot in the last few years. This is because it is run well by your headteacher, senior teachers and governors. Here are two things that will make it even better.

- Making more use of what staff know about how you are getting on to set targets for you and to show you how to measure your own progress.
- Giving all staff the opportunity to help senior managers run the school.

It was good to see that you have made good progress in improving your writing and mathematics. Keep up the good work!

Best wishes

Yours sincerely

Mike Burghart

Lead Inspector

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