

Sheepy Magna Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120158
Local Authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	379967
Inspection dates	13–14 September 2011
Reporting inspector	Peter Kerr

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	102
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Brian Greenfield
Headteacher	Charlotte Ward-Lewis
Date of previous school inspection	27 February 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried by two additional inspectors. They observed seven lessons and saw six teachers teaching. Meetings were held with parents and carers, groups of pupils, members of the governing body and staff. The inspectors also looked at selected documentation such as policies, teachers' planning and monitoring records. They took into account the views of parents and carers as expressed in the 78 parental questionnaires that were returned and also questionnaire returns from staff and Key Stage 2 pupils.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Are the more-able pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities challenged at an appropriate level?
- To what extent do pupils appreciate how the United Kingdom has evolved into an ethnically and culturally diverse society?
- How well does the governing body keep itself informed about the work of the school through first-hand observations?

Information about the school

This is a small village school serving a wide geographical area. Nearly all the pupils are of White British heritage. A very small number of pupils have a home language other than English, but none of these is at the early stages of learning English. Very few pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals and the proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities is about half the average figure for primary schools nationally. Most of these pupils have moderate learning difficulties and none has a statement of special educational needs. The school holds Healthy Schools status, The Woodland Trust Gold Award, the Activemark and has recently been awarded International School Status and had its Green Flag eco-school award renewed for the third time.

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?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

This is an outstanding school. Attainment is high in English and mathematics, and all groups of pupils, including those with moderate learning difficulties, make outstanding progress. Outstanding leadership and management have brought the best out of all staff so that teaching is outstanding. Extensive partnerships contribute to an outstanding curriculum and the individual needs of all pupils are fully catered for through excellent care, guidance and support. The views of parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive. They are particularly appreciative of the varied curriculum. As one parent commented, 'The school is well organised and excellent at motivating the children – not just to learn lessons, but to care for animals and the environment and to contribute socially.' Outstanding achievement, high attendance, excellent behaviour and exceptionally healthy lifestyle choices ensure that the pupils are exceptionally well prepared for the next stage of their education. The pupils are highly involved in their school and the local community. They are learning more about different European cultures, partly through their link with a French school. Pupils' knowledge of diverse cultural influences within the United Kingdom is developing, but it is not as strong as their local and international knowledge.

Parents and carers appreciate the excellent induction programme into the Reception class. This provides a good and improving Early Years Foundation Stage setting in which children learn happily through a wide range of indoor and outdoor play activities. The good momentum in learning established here is built on throughout the school by good use of assessments to ensure that each pupil is placed in appropriate teaching groups.

The headteacher has steered the school very effectively since the last inspection, establishing a strong sense of common purpose and outstanding capacity for sustained improvement. Weaknesses in teaching have been swiftly remedied by decisive action and plans for future improvement are based on incisive self-evaluation. Pupils are very actively involved in school improvement planning and parents and carers also feel that they have a voice in the direction the school takes. The governing body fulfils all its statutory duties and some individual governors contribute actively to enhancing learning opportunities. The wider involvement of the governing body in first-hand monitoring of the school has been slow to develop. Plans are now in hand to accelerate this process in collaboration with staff.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

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- Strengthen the contribution that the governing body makes to school improvement by:
 - ensuring that a programme of first-hand monitoring is securely established
 - ensuring that these visits evaluate specific aspects of the school's work against clear success criteria.

- Further improve the pupils' appreciation of diversity within the United Kingdom by:
 - embedding this objective in medium and short-term planning across the curriculum
 - regularly checking the impact of the measures taken and adjusting programmes accordingly.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**1**

Pupils learn exceptionally well because they are highly motivated. They pay attention to teachers, put effort into their work and sustain concentration well. They enjoy cooperating with each other; a purposeful buzz while the pupils are working was a salient feature of the lessons observed. They know what their targets are each term and work hard to achieve them. Pupils are particularly enthusiastic and successful in writing, as was very evident among both boys and girls in lesson observations in Years 5 and 6. The pupils write fluently and at length and enjoy discussing their ideas, for example about how to portray a convincing detective character for a story. They are used to evaluating each other's work, finding things to praise and pointers for improvement. Their writing is of high quality, with many pupils exceeding the expected level in each year group. Similarly high attainment in mathematics and reading represents outstanding progress compared to broadly average attainment on entry to the school. Pupils with moderate learning difficulties make excellent progress because they have challenging but achievable individual targets that help them to quickly make up lost ground. Pupils with specific needs make similar progress to their peers over time.

The pupils' enjoyment of the curriculum is evident in the photographic records of activities such as gardening, cooking and outdoor pursuits. During the inspection, pupils in Years 5 and 6 participated eagerly in a tag rugby training session, improving passing skills as well as thoroughly enjoying themselves. In the first meetings of the school and eco councils observed during the inspection, pupils confidently put forward ideas and listened carefully to contributions by others. They chose sensible priorities to focus on, such as library organisation and school meals, showing that they play a real part in school improvement. This is a very significant improvement since the last inspection. In discussions, pupils say they feel safe and they have a very informed and positive approach to keeping fit and healthy. Older pupils talk knowledgeably and enthusiastically about the villages and towns they live in, and issues facing their local community such as traffic speed and litter. They have a good knowledge of different religions and an ability to draw comparisons between them.

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For example, they enjoyed their visit to a mosque and could say that the stories that Muslims listen to have some of the same characters that are in the Bible. Their knowledge of the range of different ethnic communities that have settled in places beyond their immediate locality is less secure.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	1
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
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	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is outstanding. The planning and preparation of lessons are based on very accurate assessments of the pupils' attainment so that pupils and staff know exactly what is expected. On occasions, all pupils spend time on the set tasks when one or two very high-attaining pupils could do more, but the work offers appropriate challenge for the vast majority of pupils. Teachers and teaching assistants work very effectively together to ensure that as many pupils as possible have an adult's help when needed. Teaching of a consistently high quality is evident in samples of pupils' work from previous years. Marking is regular and helpful and expectations are high. The work in religious education show that pupils have been taught effectively about the main world religions and about similarities and differences between them. Planning documents show that teachers critically evaluate their lessons and adjust their approaches when existing methods prove less effective than expected.

The curriculum is a real strength of the school. The emphasis placed on active outdoor and ecological activities, including rearing hens, vegetable gardening and a wide range of sports gives the school a lively sense of purpose. The involvement of the pupils in projects such as the farmers' market hosted by the school builds their

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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confidence, gives them useful insights into work and hobby possibilities, and consolidates the school’s place in the local community. The residential visits at the beginning of term make a very strong contribution to the pupils’ social development as well as giving them experience of demanding adventure activities. A good range of activities is also provided by the breakfast and after-school clubs managed by the governing body. Pupils are confident and relaxed in this setting and enjoy good relationships with the staff employed to supervise them.

Comments from the parents’ and carers’ questionnaires, such as: ‘The teachers at the school genuinely care about the children,’ and ‘No child gets lost in the crowd, not many primary schools can say this,’ illustrate the impact which outstanding care, guidance and support have on the ethos and reputation of the school. Outside agencies are used well to supplement provision within school, for example, in providing expertise in the teaching of English as an additional language or supporting pupils with specific learning needs. Staff are trained in specific techniques to support individual pupils when this is necessary, for example in supporting pupils with a hearing impairment or speech, language and communication difficulties. Arrangements to support pupils in transition to the various secondary schools of their choice are excellent.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher provides very strong leadership. She has established a broadly based senior management team, including the Chair and Vice Chair of the Governing Body, reflecting a determination to involve as many people as possible in strategic planning. Morale among staff is very high and all take responsibility for some aspects of school improvement. Good training is provided for teaching assistants who take on substantial responsibilities, providing greater flexibility in teaching arrangements.

The governing body supports the school well. It ensures that safeguarding measures, including those for internet safety, exceed requirements, with training for members of the governing body in child protection and other aspects of safeguarding a particular strength. It is proactive in ensuring that all pupils have equal opportunities to succeed, ensuring, for example, that pupils from families who do not have a Church of England background are made to feel valued and fully included in the life of the school. Provision for community cohesion is very good at the local level and good in terms of the international perspective through the international school

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project. The school has been successful in improving pupils' appreciation of religious diversity within the United Kingdom and global cultural diversity in response the last Ofsted inspection. Measures taken to increase their knowledge of ethnic and cultural diversity within the United Kingdom, including a link with an ethnically diverse inner city school, have not been as successful. The governing body recognises that it was not as diligent as it should have been in evaluating the success of this project and has begun devising new strategies to strengthen this aspect of provision. Recent appointments to the governing body have injected enthusiastic and informed contributions to this process. A debate is already underway about setting realistic objectives and working with staff to realise them.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
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	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
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	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

The inspection took place during the second week in school for Reception children, but they were already well settled and learning confidently at a good pace. This is because of very good induction procedures. As one parent commented: 'My child has only been at school for one week, but is thoroughly enjoying his time here. The excellent induction programme helped him prepare for school.' Children join the Reception class with skills, knowledge and abilities which are broadly in line with those expected for their age across the areas of learning. They make good progress so that, by the end of the year, nearly all of them have achieved the Early Learning Goals. Very good transition arrangements into Key Stage 1 ensure that those younger children who need to can follow aspects of the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum until they have achieved all the goals. Behaviour is excellent in the setting, with high levels of confidence and independence among the children. They choose sensibly, share resources and develop good social skills.

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Classroom routines are clear, with a good balance between group activities led by staff and free choice for the children. When not teaching groups, staff interact skilfully with the children as they play, encouraging them to talk about what they are doing and keeping detailed records of their developing knowledge and skills. Resources are of good quality and are used well to prepare inviting play areas indoors and out that stimulate the children’s imagination. The children use both areas freely. Due attention is given to all the areas of learning, with plenty of provision for physical exercise. Health and safety rules are emphasised and the children encouraged and supported to be responsible for their own personal hygiene. Expectations are high and the children meet them. They are included in some whole-school activities such as assemblies when deemed appropriate, and cope with these occasions very well. The setting is led and managed well by close teamwork between the recently qualified teacher and teaching assistant with good support from the headteacher. Provision is already good and steadily improving. Planning and record-keeping are very thorough and provide a clear picture of each child’s progress.

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 response rate was very high and the returns show overwhelming approval of the school by parents and carers. Many positive comments were made in appreciation of what the school does. There were very few negative comments, each one about a different aspect of the school and these were brought to the attention of the headteacher.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Sheepy Magna 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 78 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 102 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	60	77	14	18	4	5	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	65	83	12	15	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	56	72	17	22	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	56	72	17	22	1	1	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	59	76	17	22	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	50	64	25	32	1	1	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	62	79	16	21	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)	53	68	20	26	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	55	71	19	24	1	1	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	45	58	21	27	1	1	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	47	60	23	29	1	1	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	58	74	18	23	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	62	79	15	19	1	1	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 all 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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 are for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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 pupils' 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 September 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Sheepy Magna Church of England Primary School, Sheepy Magna, CV9 3QR

Thank you so much for welcoming my colleague and me into your school, and for being so helpful when we talked to you. Yours is an outstanding school. We enjoyed our brief time there and were impressed with many things about the school, including your outstanding behaviour and high attendance.

You are fortunate to have such a wonderful variety of things to do. We particularly liked your vegetable garden and your hens. You really enjoy learning and achieve extremely well in English and mathematics. You are particularly good at making up characters and writing stories. You know how to keep safe and make very sensible choices about eating well and doing plenty of exercise. By the time you leave Sheepy Magna you are exceptionally well prepared for your choice of secondary school.

Your teachers keep you safe and look after you exceptionally well. They are highly skilled at teaching and make sure you all get suitable work to do. Your headteacher is an outstanding leader and has a very good management team. You put forward your own excellent ideas to improve your school through the school and eco councils. You know a lot about the area in which you live and are very involved in your local community, as I saw from the many photos of your projects such as the farmers' market. You have learned about people's lives in other countries, especially through your link with the school in France. You also told me some interesting things you had learned from your visit to the mosque, such as how some characters in the Q'ran are also in the Bible. You know a little bit about different ethnic communities that have settled in our country, but you could learn a lot more about this important topic. I have asked your teachers to help you do this in order to make your school even better. I have also asked the governing body to come into the school to see how well you are doing with this task and in other aspects of your work.

I wish you all well in the future.

Yours sincerely

Peter Kerr
Lead inspector

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