

Duxford Church of England School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110798
Local Authority	CAMBRIDGESHIRE
Inspection number	288781
Inspection date	4 July 2007
Reporting inspector	Roger Brown

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 on roll	165
School	
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Penny Woodhead
Headteacher	Mrs Ann Gardner
Date of previous school inspection	24 September 2001
School address	St John's Street Duxford Cambridge Cambridgeshire CB2 4RA
Telephone number	01223 712108
Fax number	01223 712109

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The school is smaller than average. It serves the village of Duxford and other small outlying villages. There has been little variation in the numbers attending the school over the past five years. The area is advantaged both socially and economically. Most of the pupils are of White British heritage with a small number from different minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is below average, as is the number of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities. Pupils' attainment on entry is average. The school has achieved National Healthy Schools status, accreditation for Effective Early Learning and a National Association of Professional Teaching Assistants award for the training it gives to its teaching assistants. It is a Reading Connects School.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school with some outstanding features. Achievement is good. Standards are rising at all stages and are now above average. High expectations have been clearly established by all the staff and these support and extend pupils' personal development and well-being very effectively. Consequently, this aspect of the school's work is good. Teachers and teaching assistants have a wide range of skills, knowledge and experience. Their thoughtful and diligent approach to teaching ensures that pupils' learning is effective and the care, guidance and support of pupils is good. The curriculum is good having been improved and broadened, and, in the opinion of one of the older pupils, 'it's now much more interesting and exciting than it used to be.' The leadership of the school is also highly effective at all levels. The work of the governors is excellent and they have a very sharp and accurate understanding of their roles and responsibilities. They set a clear direction for the work of the school when they appointed the current headteacher and she has begun to tackle these challenges well.

The leadership and all staff work as a very effective team supporting each other and the pupils well. They accurately recognise the school's strengths and relative weaknesses in their self-evaluation. Plans are already in place to improve issues such as the use of assessment to support pupils' learning, as they recognise that it is not applied consistently across the school.

Pupils are very happy with the school and enjoy their learning; they believe that they are listened to and appreciate the responsibilities they are given. They value all the opportunities it offers to them, particularly the sports, where the school has achieved some notable successes. They like, and are enthusiastic about the changes that have been made since the appointment of the current headteacher. They identify the improved and now much more effective information and communication technology (ICT) provision and improving opportunities to work with the local community at events such as the artists work shops and the chess club. Pupils were particularly enthusiastic about the new opportunities to work and play in a more structured way with the introduction of the house system and 'buddy' arrangements, where older children have good quality planned opportunities to work with the younger ones. Every pupil that was spoken to, from the youngest to the oldest valued these changes and wanted more of these school and community developments.

The school has addressed the issues identified as weaknesses at the time of the last inspection very effectively. Two of the aspects, the Foundation Stage and ICT, are now major strengths, whilst the third, design and technology, is used in a well thought out manner to broaden and support other subject areas. 'ICT is great, we use it in all our work', explained a Year 4 pupil, who went on to describe in great detail how the program they had initially used to develop their science work was now being used to support their work in literacy, numeracy and history. The Foundation Stage gives an excellent start to children beginning at the school and is recognised locally as providing exemplary practice.

What the school should do to improve further

- Build on the existing good work in using assessment to inform the next steps of pupils' learning and develop consistency of practice throughout the school.
- Consolidate and strengthen the school and community links to reinforce and extend the developments that have been made.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The school takes pupils from a wide range of backgrounds, but overall their attainment when they start is average. The outstanding provision that is now in place in the Foundation Stage gets the children off to an excellent start in their education. They make exceptional progress in this first year and are well prepared for the next stage in their education. Standards are rising throughout the school and are now above average. By the end of Year 2, teachers' assessments in reading, writing and mathematics show that the standards in all of these skills are above average. By the time pupils leave at the end of Year 6, results in the national assessments for English, mathematics and science are above those found nationally and well above in some respects; for example, this year over two thirds of the pupils have achieved the highest level in science. There is good evidence that the school is addressing the weaknesses that previously existed, for example in mathematics, and that progress across Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 is now good in all subjects.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development is good with some outstanding features. The pupils enthuse about the opportunities they have to take part in visits and the many extra-curricular activities that are available. In particular, they appreciate the sporting activities where, of late, the school has been highly successful. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. Their moral development is outstanding and although their social development is good, pupils want even more opportunities to work across year groups. The older pupils are the first to recognise that the recent house system and buddy scheme initiatives introduced into the school have improved their outlook significantly. They acknowledge that they are now collaborating much more effectively and want more opportunities to build and extend the leadership skills they have begun to develop. They understand that the school has an important role in the life of the villages it serves. They conscientiously contribute to their community, raising money for different charities, and taking an active part in events in and out of school. The school council enlists their ideas well and successfully involves them in significant decisions about school. They have a good awareness of keeping fit, safe and healthy and would welcome more opportunities to be involved in developing their school in an environmentally friendly way.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good and developing well. Teachers plan lessons which are imaginative and fun and consequently pupils enjoy learning. The atmosphere throughout all the classes is calm and positive. As a result, pupils' behaviour is excellent and they are actively engaged as learners. Teachers use good quality questioning techniques, which encourage pupils to answer with confidence and to ask their own questions, as there are no negative comments. Teachers use the information they have gained from their assessments in planning their lessons and to help them set targets so that pupils know what they have to do to improve. Pupils understand their targets, welcome the suggestions, use them, and recognise that they are helpful in

developing their learning. However, the practice is not entirely consistent across the school. Pupils report that their teachers and the teaching assistants make helpful suggestions as to how they can improve their work, but this is not always apparent in the way work is marked.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The quality of the curriculum is good, and once again, this is an area which is developing well. The school has consciously chosen to broaden and enrich its curriculum. All statutory elements of the curriculum are met, and the work that is now presented to the pupils is exciting and interesting. The older pupils recognise this improvement and would welcome even more flexibility in the way that the school works. The school's enhanced ICT provision is now being used effectively to promote cross-curricular working. Part of the curriculum enrichment includes a programme of visits, such as residential events and activities which make good use of the local area. For instance there are strong links with the nearby branch of the Imperial War Museum and the local churches. The school has extensive grounds and plans are ready to be implemented which will allow the school to make better use of the potential still to be tapped in this area.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. The parents agree that effective procedures are in place to ensure pupils' safety and well-being. Pupils know who to go to if they have worries and say that staff respond quickly to sort out problems. The school has worked well with its local secondary school to build and strengthen links between the two schools. Pupils get good academic guidance; their targets are specific, understood and used well to improve work. However, the school recognises that there is still work to do to improve the overall consistency of this approach. The teachers' accurate understanding of pupils' performance allows them to make good provision for those who have particular gifts and talents. Consequently these pupils are being challenged at an appropriate level and their progress is correspondingly good, especially in mathematics.

This year the school has reorganised the deployment of its teaching assistants, targeting their time more effectively. As a consequence, pupils who have special learning needs are making good progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good with some outstanding features. The excellent governing body keeps itself very well informed; it monitors the work of the school very effectively and plays an active part in determining the future direction of the school. Governors set clear parameters at the appointment of the new headteacher and as a result she has been able to go beyond raising standards to widen and develop many other aspects of the school's work. She has properly involved all staff in supporting these developments and there is a good spirit of teamwork within the school. One specific area of excellence is the strongly inclusive and caring nature of the school. The welfare of each child, whatever their background or circumstances is always paramount. The various agencies that work with the school to support

the pupils all comment on the willingness of the school to go far beyond a normal level of commitment to make sure that the pupils thrive.

Good systems and procedures ensure that the day-to-day running of the school is smooth and efficient. Financial management is good and appropriate choices have been made to direct spending where it will have a beneficial impact. The school has begun to implement major changes to the fabric of the building to further improve the learning environment for the pupils.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

5 July 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Duxford Church of England Primary School, Duxford, Cambridge, CB2 4RA

Thank you for being so friendly when I visited your school. I really enjoyed my visit and would like to share with you what I found out about your school.

You go to a good school. Your headteacher, staff and governors are working hard to improve it even further and have some good plans to make it an even more exciting and interesting place to be.

I was impressed when I visited you in your classrooms to see you all working so hard. I liked the way you confidently answered your teachers' questions and I thought that some of the suggestions and ideas you talked about really showed that you were involved and enjoying your work. I liked the way the teachers explained things to you about how you could improve your work, and I have asked them to think about how they can plan to do this even more regularly, especially when they mark your work.

Of the many exciting developments in your school, the one I liked best was the fact that you are now working together even more effectively than you did before. I was delighted when you told me how effective you think the 'buddy' system and the sports leadership programme are. I have therefore asked your teachers to think how they can take up your ideas to develop and expand these and other community ventures even more successfully.

Thank you once again and good luck in the future.

Roger Brown

Lead Inspector