

Churchfields, The Village School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	130388
Local Authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	295445
Inspection date	27 March 2008
Reporting inspector	Jon Palethorpe

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	
School	115
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Julia Kirwan
Headteacher	Delyth Wiltshire
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Bradford Road Atworth Melksham SN12 8HY
Telephone number	01225 703026
Fax number	01225 703026

Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Churchfields is a federated school established in April 2006. The federation took place between Atworth Community School and Monkton Farleigh and South Wraxall Church of England School. It is based on two sites five miles apart. The number on roll is rising due to the large number of Foundation Stage pupils now enrolled. New building is currently taking place at the Atworth base. There are no pupils with a first language other than English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average, but there is a higher than average proportion with statements of special educational need. The school holds the Healthy Schools status, Activemark, Artsmark and Effective Early Learning Award.

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. Teachers know the pupils well. They take good care of them and provide all pupils with a good standard of education. There are outstanding features in the Foundation Stage, ensuring that children get off to as good a start as possible. Parents, who gave such typical comments as, 'The school has been fantastic in settling my daughter in and the teaching standards are excellent', and 'The school atmosphere is fantastic and extremely friendly and safe', recognise the school's qualities.

Churchfields successfully promotes pupils' personal as well as academic development. This is helping the pupils to grow up as caring and sensible young people. Older pupils take good care of the younger ones, and behaviour is exemplary. There is an orderly and calm feeling to both bases, which allows pupils to concentrate well and get on with their work with enjoyment and without fuss. It is not surprising that attendance is above average. Close links with the church contribute well to pupils' spiritual development and to the school's strong Christian ethos.

Standards are above average in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2, and in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 6. To reach these levels, pupils have worked hard and made good progress. However, some of the higher ability pupils are not always challenged sufficiently and this results in some underachievement. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are very well supported, often making good, and sometimes even outstanding, progress.

Pupils' achievement is good because of a well planned curriculum and good teaching. Teachers are keen to raise the level of their performance even further, and many strategies are in place to this end, including observing colleagues in their own and other schools. There is a system for senior managers to monitor teaching, but it is underdeveloped and not sufficiently robust. Consequently, teaching is not always consistently good. The school is aware of this, and plans are in hand for improvements. The curriculum successfully motivates and encourages pupils to want to learn. Many describe lessons as interesting and fun, and this is evident in their attitudes and outstanding behaviour in class. The school uses outside agencies well to support pupils in their learning, and good links with other schools help their sporting, academic and social development.

The school is well led and managed. The senior leadership team and the governors are working well as a team and setting clear direction leading to improvement. There are both advantages and disadvantages in operating on two sites. One of the advantages is that teachers know pupils so well in the smaller schools, and are able to cater for their needs. One of the difficulties is that coordinators do not have sufficient knowledge of what is happening in their subject throughout the two bases. This limits their ability to raise standards in their subject. The willingness of everybody to meet regularly and work hard has alleviated this problem to some extent, and nevertheless pupils are making good progress and achieving good standards. This, together with the school's recent positive track record of improvement, confirms that the school has a good capacity to develop further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

The outstanding leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are enabling children to make an exceptionally good start to their schooling. Teaching is always good, and sometimes

outstanding, helping children to make good, and often better, progress to reach at least expected levels for their age. Relationships are excellent. Children are well managed, and the activities provided motivate and excite them, ensuring that they enjoy their time at school. There is a good balance between child-initiated activities and more formal teacher-directed activities. There is a stimulating and exciting environment which enables all areas of learning to be developed imaginatively, both inside and outside. Good attention is given to both academic and pastoral development. Children are developing their speaking and listening skills well. They know how to listen to each other without interrupting, and are happy to take turns. They are emerging as readers and writers because of well planned activities and opportunities. They are learning to count, add up and take away, and are using these skills when measuring each other or measuring the playground. The school caters well for the wide range of children's abilities, particularly through the effective use of teaching assistants.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that more able pupils are sufficiently challenged, enabling them to reach higher standards.
- Ensure that rigorous monitoring and analysis of teaching and standards takes place in all parts of the school, to improve consistency across the school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' achievement is good overall, building on the good progress made in the Reception Year. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics are above average at the end of Year 2, with many pupils making good progress and exceeding their targets. At the end of Year 6, standards are currently above average in English, mathematics and science. These judgements are better than the school's own assessments, where there is some modesty in their predictions. The recent focus on writing through the 'Story Maker Project' is having a positive impact on pupils' enthusiasm towards writing, particularly boys, and is already raising standards. Good use of information and communication technology (ICT) promotes good progress in mathematics. For example, the use of computer 'aliens' is proving to be an effective strategy to help pupils remember calculation methods. In 2007, at the end of Year 6, standards in English, mathematics and science were below national averages. However, considering the high proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, pupils made good, and some outstanding, progress to reach these levels. Inspection findings indicate that pupils in the current Year 6 are making good progress because they are well taught. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are given good support, enabling them to making equally good progress. However, higher attaining pupils sometimes underachieve because they are not consistently challenged to do their best.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' moral and social development is outstanding from Reception to Year 6. It is reflected in pupils' consideration for others, their outstanding behaviour in and out of the classroom, and their attitudes to learning, which are often exemplary. Spiritual development is good. Assemblies and religious education lessons contribute well to this, and so does the whole Christian ethos of the school, where everybody shows mutual respect. Pupils develop a good knowledge of their own culture through art and music, and of other cultures around the world.

However, their understanding of the cultural diversity of Britain is somewhat limited. Pupils are happy and enjoy school. They particularly enjoy interesting lessons and the varied activities outside the school day. One pupil commented, 'Everybody here is my friend,' and on questioning, it was obvious that he meant adults and well as children. Above average attendance tends to confirm pupils' enjoyment. Pupils willingly take on responsibility in the school community, such as the school council. This provides a structured opportunity for pupils to express their views, and even to allocate funds raised. Pupils feel safe and say there is no bullying, and any misbehaviour is always well dealt with. Most adopt healthy lifestyles through their sport and healthy eating. Pupils make good progress in developing personal qualities and academic skills to prepare them for the next stage of education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Good relationships between staff and pupils and good behaviour management produce a calm and purposeful working atmosphere in all classrooms. Staff in different bases work well together to plan and organise work. This means that all pupils are given the same opportunities and are fully included. Teachers share their expertise effectively, valuing the advice and support of more experienced or knowledgeable colleagues, and develop teaching through peer observations. Assessment is used to help teachers target the learning needs of individual pupils. Teachers give pupils good oral feedback on how well they have done and marking in books is helpful. Teaching assistants provide good support for individuals and groups, especially pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, but not often enough to higher ability pupils, who are not always challenged sufficiently. On a few occasions, the pace of lessons is too slow, particularly at the start, therefore not succeeding in gaining pupils' full attention straight away.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school's good curriculum more than meets statutory requirements and makes a good contribution not only to pupils' academic development but personal, social and health education. Teachers have reviewed the curriculum carefully to ensure that it is adjusted to cater for the needs of pupils in mixed age classes and to ensure that skills are learnt in an ordered progression. Teachers, planning together, ensure that pupils in different locations receive the same curriculum. Intervention strategies are used well to cater for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, but provision for higher attaining pupils is not always so well thought out. Pupils enjoy the good curriculum, which attracts their interest and imagination, and as a result, they work hard. Links between subjects are developing, but the school has already identified this as an area for improvement. There are many activities which enrich the curriculum. Pupils enjoy the wide range of after school clubs, and there is a good number of visits and visitors. Members of the community come in to support reading and share their expertise. A biannual residential visit provides for outdoor activities and teambuilding activities. Close collaboration with local schools helps with provision in physical education, art, music, and design and technology.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Safeguarding arrangements are robust and pupils' health and safety are well considered. Pupils of all ages and abilities are well cared for. Teachers and teaching assistants give good academic guidance and support to pupils, particularly those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, enabling them to achieve as well as others. Pupils have appropriate and often challenging literacy targets, but this is under-developed in numeracy. Pupils are well informed about their progress in lessons through their own self-evaluation and through teachers' marking. Regular assessments are made and used well to guide planning. However, they are not always as accurate as they need to be, sometimes underestimating pupils' ability. Guidance and support for pupils' personal development is good. Teachers know pupils very well, and pupils know that they can discuss problems with adults. The school has good relationships with parents, resulting in an effective partnership to the benefit of all pupils.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school's leadership and management are good. The headteacher effectively leads a strong team, including governors, who all work well together. They are all equally committed to raising standards through high quality care and education. The team's work over the last two years has been exceptional, first, with the federation of the two schools, and then with the building project at Atworth base. Everyone has worked conscientiously under difficult circumstances to overcome all barriers. Disruption to learning has been minimal, as is shown by pupils' good progress, and the school has benefited greatly from the changes. There is outstanding leadership of the Foundation Stage, where children settle extremely quickly and well into the school's routines, enabling them to make a very good start to their learning. There is good leadership for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities that ensures they receive appropriate support, indicating a clear commitment to inclusion.

The system for the monitoring of teaching is underdeveloped, and is not always sufficiently robust. Systems for setting targets are in place, and are working well for literacy, but are not fully applied for numeracy. Well informed governors are clearly organised in their committee structure, and give strong support yet challenge appropriately when necessary. The school works very well with outside agencies to enhance its provision.

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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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
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	2
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

28 March 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Churchfields, The Village School, Atworth, Melksham, SN12 8HY

Thank you so much for the welcome you gave us to your school, and for your friendly manner towards us. You were very helpful, and we were impressed by the way that you worked in class, and by your excellent behaviour in school and in the playground. You look smart, and are a credit to your parents and your school.

Yours is a good school that prepares you well for the future. Here are some of the reasons we think that:

- You get an excellent start to school in the Reception Year.
- You are taught well and you make good progress, reaching above average standards in English, mathematics and science.
- Those of you who find learning difficult are being given very good support so that you, too, can make good progress.
- You are being helped to grow up as sensible and healthy young people.
- Staff in both bases are taking good care of you and keeping you safe, especially during the new building works.
- The school is well run by your headteacher, who leads a good team consisting of governors, teachers and teaching assistants.

We have asked the teachers to make sure that you all always have really challenging work to do, especially those who find the work easier. We would also like everyone to keep a closer check on teaching and the standards you reach.

Well done to all of you! Keep trying your hardest in all your work.

Best wishes

Yours sincerely

Jon Palethorpe Lead inspector

Annex B

28 March 2008

Dear Pupils

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SN12 8HY**

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Jon Palethorpe
Lead inspector