



Monks Risborough CofE Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 110434
Local Authority Buckinghamshire
Inspection number 296533
Inspection dates 12–13 December 2006
Reporting inspector Charalambos Loizou

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Peters Lane
School category	Voluntary controlled		Monks Risborough
Age range of pupils	4–11		Princes Risborough HP27 9LZ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01844 345590
Number on roll (school)	211	Fax number	01844 274978
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Andrew Vere
		Headteacher	Mr Stephen Nunn
Date of previous school inspection	17 March 2003		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is of average size and admits most of its pupils from the local area and from surrounding towns and villages. Most pupils come from generally advantaged backgrounds and the vast majority are of White British heritage. A significant proportion of pupils join the school at different times in Years 3 to 6, including pupils who join Year 3 from local infant schools. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is lower than in most schools, although the percentage of pupils with statements of special educational need is average. The school has close links with its local church and community as well as other schools and organisations.

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 many outstanding features. Standards are well above average and the pupils achieve well. The staff are highly committed to the all round development of the pupils and successfully promote their personal and academic development. Overall, there is good leadership and management that has gained the respect of parents and the community. One parent rightly commented, 'The school is a very friendly place with a great atmosphere'. The outstanding leadership of the headteacher and governors has guided improvements to the school at a rapid rate by strengthening the teaching and improving the skills of subject leaders. Governors are highly effective and a real asset. Rising standards and accurate evaluations demonstrate that the school has good capacity to continue improving further.

The teaching is good overall. It prepares the pupils well for the future, as one commented, 'Work is about right, it makes you think'. Outstanding teaching in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2 provides challenging activities, enabling the children to make excellent progress. The teaching is good in the juniors with some outstanding teaching in Years 5 and 6 that accelerates pupils' progress. Consequently, pupils reach high standards in reading and science, and well above average standards in writing and mathematics. Effective leadership, staff training and intervention are improving standards in mathematics. Writing standards in Years 3 to 6 are comparatively lower than those in reading. Some pupils lack the confidence to write at length independently.

When pupils start at the school assessment is used well to pinpoint their skills. The information is used to plan work that is matched well to pupils' abilities and to set challenging targets. There is a good curriculum. However, because of underdeveloped links between subjects there are few opportunities for pupils to research or write extensively across a range of topics. The staff provide excellent opportunities for pupils to participate in sports, music, and the creative and performing arts. These help the pupils to adopt healthy lifestyles as well as developing enthusiasm for school and learning. The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, as well their care and support are outstanding. Highly skilled teaching assistants provide excellent support for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. Pupils feel safe from harm or harassment knowing that there is always someone to help them. They mature into very well behaved and courteous young people and show caring attitudes to others. They help new arrivals to form friendships and to settle into school. The school council represents the views of pupils and has many responsibilities, including the choice of charities and activities to help others in the local and wider communities. Pupils learn about other cultures and faiths through a range of visits and when celebrating festivals and customs, and through these, they develop good qualities of shared responsibility and community.

The headteacher, staff and governors are energetic in seeking to improve and work in excellent partnership with parents and others. This is a popular school that provides extensive opportunities for pupils and parents to work in partnership with the community and other schools and organisations.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve standards in writing in Years 3 to 6 and ensure that pupils have more opportunities to write independently at length.
- Plan better links between subjects to provide more opportunities for pupils to research and to write extensively across a range of topics.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards are well above average. The pupils achieve well and make good progress in relation to their above average starting points. Children in the Foundation Stage exceed the goals expected for their age in language, communication and mathematics by the start of Year 1. Reception children, and pupils in Years 1 and 2, are provided with stimulating teaching that lays very good foundations. Standards are well above average in English and mathematics and are high in reading and science across the school. Although writing standards are good in Key Stage 2, they should be better. There are inconsistencies in the quality of pupils' independent writing as, in some classes, there are too few opportunities provided for pupils to write at length. Assessments show challenging targets and the staff ensure that pupils who join the school settle quickly and achieve well. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities are very well cared for and supported and make good progress as a result.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Personal development and well-being are outstanding. Good teaching of basic skills means that pupils develop very mature attitudes to learning and a good awareness of life beyond school. They behave very well and enjoy school. This is shown by their good attendance and punctuality and as one pupil commented, 'Whatever you do is fun and interesting'. Relationships are very good. Pupils say they feel safe and that, 'No-one is afraid to ask for help'. They make a highly positive contribution in school and within the community when acting as buddies at break-times, and when singing or performing for elderly local residents and fund raising. The school council is effective in achieving positive changes such as the installation of new drinking fountains. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Cultural diversity is celebrated in assemblies and through visits to various places of worship. By joining the numerous sporting activities pupils gain a very good understanding of the benefits of exercise and healthy eating.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good with a significant amount that is outstanding. Teachers are meticulous in their planning and provide tasks in lessons that are well matched to the abilities of the pupils. The best lessons are fast paced and include challenging and engaging activities so that pupils are highly motivated. Reception children learn extremely well about the world and themselves because highly skilled staff provide a rich variety of activities and experiences. Throughout the school, teaching assistants make an excellent contribution to pupils' learning. With teachers, they provide very effective help for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities.

Teachers assess pupils' progress diligently and accurately determine suitable targets that guide pupils' learning. Highly effective teaching in Years 1 and 2, and in lessons for older pupils in Years 5 and 6, accelerates learning through sharp and well-focused questioning and tasks. Teachers are good at checking on how well pupils have grasped key skills or concepts. However, there are too few opportunities provided for some pupils in Years 3 to 6 to extend or develop their writing skills. Lessons are enhanced by effective use of interactive white boards and computers that help to focus pupils' learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. It meets the range of pupils' needs, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities and those who are particularly talented, enabling them all to achieve well. Regular opportunities to use computers and lessons in information and communication technology (ICT) are an integral part of pupils' learning. Basic skills in English, mathematics and science are taught very well and these skills, along with participation in a junior enterprise competition, prepare the pupils well for future life. The school is now looking to plan better links between subjects so that this becomes a securely established practice creating more opportunities for pupils to undertake research and to write extensively across a range of topics. Pupils talk confidently about their enjoyment of the curriculum and especially the wide and exciting range of enrichment activities that include sport, residential visits, music and the arts.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support are outstanding. The school's consideration for pupils' safety and well-being is a fundamental part of its ethos. Personal and academic development are monitored thoroughly, and targets are set to help pupils improve further. Those with learning difficulties and disabilities and those who are very able are given very good care and support and this allows them to achieve their best. The

high level of care afforded to all pupils and the secure knowledge that, as one pupil said, 'People are really concerned about you', has a positive impact on pupils' personal development as well as their academic achievements. Arrangements for child protection are strong and health and safety procedures are reviewed regularly. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school's support for pupils and families. Comments such as, 'Concerns and views are discussed and taken into account', and, 'A well-rounded school', are a good reflection of the views of parents.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The school knows itself well and this is reflected in accurate self-evaluation. The headteacher demonstrates very effective leadership and has earned the respect of the pupils, parents and staff. A strong leadership team and governors have guided improvements to the school very well since the last inspection. There has been effective development in the teaching which has ensured that standards have improved. The management of the curriculum has improved, as has the analysis and use of assessment, which have helped to improve mathematics standards significantly. However, the leadership team recognise that there is still more to do to ensure that writing standards consistently reach the same high standards seen in reading. Planning for improvement takes very good account of the views of pupils, staff and parents. Governors hold the school to account very well. Excellent systems are in place to ensure they monitor the school's performance. They have successfully promoted the school and work hard to ensure that parents are involved and kept informed about the school's achievements. The school's track record of improvement shows that it has good capacity to build on its strengths.

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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?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
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	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
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?	1

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.

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	1
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

The inspectors were delighted to visit your school recently and I write to thank you for your help and for making us feel very welcome.

Your school provides a good education.

There are many good things about your school and it is hard for me to pick out the very best. However, these are what impressed us the most:

- you are very well behaved, try hard in lessons and help other pupils
- your teachers are helping you to do well in lessons
- you enjoy learning and reach good standards
- the staff take very good care of you
- the school council are very good ambassadors and come up with some very good ideas to improve your school
- the staff and governors do a great deal to provide extra activities like sport, music, dance and drama.

I have asked your teachers:

- to provide the pupils in Years 3 to 6 with more opportunities to write independently
- to link subjects together better so you can study and write about a wider range of interesting topics.

Well done, and I wish you all the very best. I am sure you will all work very hard with your teachers and parents to help make the school even better than it already is.

Yours faithfully

Charalambos Loizou

Lead Inspector