

North Leigh Church of England (Controlled) School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123112
Local Authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	314499
Inspection dates	21–22 May 2008
Reporting inspector	Andrew Matthews

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	118
School	
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Paul Blundell
Headteacher	Ms Maureen Trotman (acting headteacher)
Date of previous school inspection	5 July 2004
School address	Park Road North Leigh Witney OX29 6SS
Telephone number	01993 881525
Fax number	01993 886828

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

North Leigh is a smaller than average primary school. Numbers have fallen slightly in recent years. The pupils are of predominantly White British heritage. There is a below average proportion of pupils with moderate learning or physical disabilities but the proportion of pupils with statements is much higher than average. There is a lower than average number of pupils who are entitled to free school meals. The school has a breakfast and an after-school club on site. It has received the Investors in People award, the International School award and Silver Eco-School status. At the time of the inspection, an acting headteacher had been in place since the beginning of the term and two permanent teachers were in Spain as part of the school's European Comenius project.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

North Leigh is a good school. It has improved well since the last inspection and provides a good education and level of care for its pupils. The pupils develop very positive relationships with their teachers and each other that help to promote their excellent personal development and well-being.

Despite recent changes, the staff are a strong team and have worked hard and successfully to raise standards, most markedly in Years 1, 2 and 3. Target setting and tracking of pupils' progress are now in place. However, target setting is not sufficiently tailored to individual pupils' needs to ensure that all are appropriately challenged. The school has rightly identified that its assessment of pupils' progress needs to be carried out more regularly to address any identified underachievement earlier. The big picture is that, despite these minor shortcomings, pupils make good progress in school and standards by the end of Year 6 remain high. Pupils also make good progress in information and communication technology (ICT).

The leadership and management of the school are good. The acting headteacher is very well supported by her staff and governors. Leadership and management of the curriculum have been strengthened because good use has been made of teachers' expertise. The school has a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses but does not consistently canvass the views of parents. However, its priorities for future development are appropriate and, as such, the school is well placed for continued improvement. Governance is good and the governing body provides useful expertise to both question and support the school.

The quality of teaching is now consistently good. Lessons are well paced and challenging, resulting in well-motivated pupils who learn at a good pace. Teachers make effective use of interactive white boards to enliven learning. The careful grouping of pupils and effective work of the well-trained teaching assistants ensure the needs of different abilities in the mixed-age classrooms are appropriately met. Teachers' marking is supportive but does not consistently inform pupils how to improve their work. The curriculum has been improved significantly and now provides pupils with an exciting range of learning opportunities enhanced by visits, special focus weeks and a wide range of extra-curricular clubs. Pupils have an outstanding understanding of keeping safe and the need for healthy lifestyles.

The great majority of parents are supportive of what the school offers and speak highly of the quality of care and support that their children receive. However, parents are right in their views that the timing and regularity of communication from school needs improving.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children start school with attainment in line with national expectations. The refurbished Reception class provides a secure and challenging environment where children settle quickly and happily. The carefully planned curriculum, with its strong emphasis on developing children's self-confidence and independence, meets the children's needs well. Relationships between adults and children are very good. Teaching is good, with the teaching assistant a valuable member of the team. The adults give good support to their focus groups but sometimes this results in missed learning opportunities for the other children. There is a successful emphasis on teaching children the relationship between letters and the sounds. The children are rapidly gaining the tools to develop their early reading and writing skills. Nearly all children reach the

expected standards by the time they leave the Reception class, with a significant minority exceeding them.

What the school should do to improve further

- Set end of year English and mathematics targets for individual pupils and review their progress towards these every term.
- Ensure teachers' marking consistently informs pupils how to improve their work and move towards their targets.
- Ensure parents are informed and consulted on a more regular basis.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well and standards remain high in the present Year 6 in English and mathematics and above average in Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils make good progress in lessons, working hard in lessons and producing a good amount of work to practise and embed their new skills. However, the presentation of their work is sometimes untidy and lacks evidence of a clear handwriting scheme running through the school. Focused work in science has had a positive impact on older pupils' attainment. The good use of a teaching assistant's expertise is enabling pupils to achieve well in ICT, with particularly good use of the internet and presentation programs to enrich their history and geography work. The progress of pupils with specific learning or physical needs is now good. It has improved because of better quality individual education plans for these pupils and the much improved targeting of resources.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The school underestimates pupils' personal development and well-being, which has improved from very good to outstanding since the last inspection. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent, with pupils showing very mature respect for the views, values and beliefs of others. Pupils greatly enjoy school, are very polite and get on extremely well together. Their attendance is above average. Behaviour is very good enabling pupils to make the most of their learning opportunities in lessons. Pupils flourish in this environment where each individual is helped to play a full part within the school community. An active school council represents the pupils' views really well and gets things done. Pupils show great maturity in the way they carry out their roles of Eco Warriors and Playground Mediators. They make an outstanding contribution to local community activities and the school's links with the Comenius Project and a school in Uganda give the pupils an excellent understanding and appreciation of the wider world.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning are consistently good because of effective training and support. There are high levels of mutual respect between staff and pupils. The quality of questioning by teachers successfully develops pupils' speaking and listening skills and helps them learn from each other. Well-trained teaching assistants make strong contributions to learning, especially for those with learning difficulties and disabilities. Teachers' marking is

positive and regularly carried out but does not inform pupils sufficiently about how to improve their work and move towards their personal targets. Interactive white boards and the internet are used effectively to maintain a good pace to lessons and enrich learning. This was clearly evident in a Year 4/ 5 lesson where pupils wrote a report using interviews from those caught up in the recent earthquake in China.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is most effective in giving pupils key skills to develop their learning, with English, mathematics and ICT being noticeable strengths. Teachers use increasing links between subjects to enhance and enliven learning. Good opportunities are in place for the development of pupils' global understanding and economic awareness. Themed weeks, out of school clubs, visits and visitors all contribute significantly to the quality and enjoyment of pupils' learning. The personal, social and health education programme is strong and very successfully develops pupils' understanding of safe and healthy living. The curriculum for pupils with learning or physical difficulties has been significantly improved this year, further boosting the progress of these pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides a secure learning environment. Pupils are safe and well supported and know how to look after themselves 'It's like a second family', reported one older pupil. They say that there is no bullying, only minor disagreements and these are quickly sorted out by the Playtime Mediators. There is a good personal, social, health education and citizenship programme, which includes lessons on drugs' awareness, sex education and relationships. Child protection procedures meet requirements. Governors and staff carry out regular risk assessments and there is good attention to health and safety requirements. Pupils are confident that adults will help them if they have a problem. Target setting is in place but assumes that all pupils will make the same progress in a year and is not sufficiently tailored to individual pupils' needs to ensure all are appropriately challenged. Knowledgeable teaching assistants provide good support for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Recent improvements to standards and provision confirm the school's good leadership and management. The school knows itself well and its self-evaluation procedures accurately highlight pertinent priorities. The weakness of the evaluation is that the views of parents, although sought for the three-year development plan, are not sought to inform the annual plan. Performance management is rigorous and ensures staff development is accurately matched to individual needs and the school priorities. The coordination of the work for pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities has been much improved this year and good use is made of links with outside agencies and other schools to support this provision. The tracking of pupils' progress is in place but its frequency does not give the school enough time to ensure any extra support enables the individual pupil to catch up. The higher than average financial carry-forward into this year is earmarked for the further development of the Reception area and ongoing refurbishment of classrooms. Governance is good with the school making effective use of

governors' time and expertise. Fruits of their hard work are evident in the greatly-enhanced Reception class environment.

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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	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	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	1

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	3
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

09 June 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of North Leigh Church of England (Controlled) School, Witney, OX29 6SS

Thank you for being so welcoming and helpful when I came to inspect your school. I really enjoyed talking with you and watching you working with your teachers. It was good to speak with your teachers and parents about how well you do at school. I also enjoyed your assembly and talking to you at lunchtimes and in lessons. I think that you and your teachers have worked very hard together to make a good school.

What I liked most about your school.

- Your teachers and teaching assistants look after you very well and help you make good progress and reach high standards.
- You have many opportunities to say how the school can get better.
- Your behaviour is very good and you get on really well with each other and your teachers.
- Your acting headteacher knows what to do to make the school better for you.
- Those of you who find work difficult are getting the right sort of help and you use it well.

I believe there are three things it needs to do to make it even better for you all.

What I have asked your school to do now.

- Check your progress in English and mathematics more often to make sure each one of you is doing as well as you can do and will reach your end of year targets.
- Ask your teachers to give you more ideas about how you can improve your work when they mark your books.
- Ask your parents more frequently how well they think your school is doing and ensure any letters going home give them plenty of time to plan for future events.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Matthews

Lead Inspector