

Wychwood Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123176
Local Authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	314524
Inspection date	6 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Christopher Parker

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	293
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Kathleen Walker
Headteacher	Mr Duncan Spence
Date of previous school inspection	2 June 2003
School address	Milton Road Shipton-under-Wychwood Chipping Norton OX7 6BD
Telephone number	01993 830059
Fax number	01993 833091

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated how effective the leadership is in seeking continual improvement in provision and performance, whether pupils are consistently challenged in lessons, and pupils' attitudes to learning and each other. Evidence was gathered from the analysis of pupils' test results, scrutiny of samples of their work, observation of lessons, parents' questionnaires, discussions with the headteacher, senior management team, chair of governors and pupils. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

The school is larger than average. A few pupils are entitled to free school meals. The proportion with learning difficulties and disabilities is low. Almost all pupils are of white British heritage. A very small number of pupils speak a language other than English at home.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

A pupil who recently left the school reflected, 'In the same way you can't have bread without butter you can't have Wychwood without the fun and friendly atmosphere.' It is a view supported by many parents who hold the school in high regard not only for its ethos, but also for the good quality of education it provides.

Standards are well above average with many more pupils than usual reaching the higher level in national tests at the end of Year 6. The senior management team is seeking continual improvement to enhance this performance. A recent emphasis on the quality of the pupils' writing, led by the literacy co-ordinator, reversed a slight dip in standards in English, in 2006, resulting in very high standards this year. Pupils have responded positively to more opportunities to write at length in a range of interesting contexts. They are set challenging targets. Their work is thoroughly marked with useful comments that help them to improve. Pupils' progress is carefully tracked and frequently evaluated. The impact of these developments can be seen in their work that illustrates well the good and often rapid progress they make from Year 3 to 6. The impact on standards in writing by the end of Year 2 is not as marked. Although more pupils than average reach the expected level in Year 2, too few reach the higher level. This is also evident in reading and mathematics.

The teaching is good and the main reason why pupils do so well from Years 3 to 6. The information collected about progress is used very well in most classes to set work that engages and challenges the pupils. Most lessons are purposeful and challenging. The tasks pupils are set are carefully planned to help groups and individuals to learn new skills. However, this is not consistently the case. In some lessons not enough is expected of the more able younger pupils. As a result, they do not reach the levels they should by the end of Year 2. Improved transition arrangements from the Foundation Stage and good teaching in Year 1 are accelerating the progress made by these younger pupils.

The school's self-evaluation clearly identifies what it is doing well and what it should improve. The resulting improvement plan is well focused on continuing to raise standards. It contains challenging and quantifiable targets to maintain high standards at the end of Year 6. However, targets to raise standards at the end of Year 2 are not precise enough. Whilst those for Year 6 set out the proportion of pupils to reach the expected and higher level those for Year 2 are merely to improve on the previous year.

There are many strong features to the pupils' personal development and well-being. Most of the pupils have very positive attitudes to learning. Behaviour in most lessons is very good but where expectations are not very high and the younger, more able pupils are not sufficiently challenged they respond with a degree of ambivalence and lose concentration. Conversations with older pupils show they enjoy school very much. The very high levels of attendance are testament to this. The pupils talk animatedly about how the teachers make lessons fun and how they enjoy using information and communication technology. The older pupils express a keen interest in writing because of the interesting topics the teachers set for them. They enjoy trips to places of interest because they bring the broad and interesting curriculum to life. Photographs of their outdoor and adventurous activities show how well they respond to the challenges they are set. The pupils know how to stay safe and value visits from, for example, the fire safety officer.

Pupils' views are sought both about the general and specific provision made for them. The literacy co-ordinator has carried out a detailed survey of pupils' views on reading which proved extremely useful in modifying the school's approach. The school council represents the views of the pupils very well. Its members articulated very clearly the need for better access to toys and equipment at playtimes. Although pupils say there are occasional incidents of bullying, they are rare and dealt with very quickly. They say they would have no hesitation in turning to an adult should they need help.

The school provides a good standard of education. It is well led and managed. The school's success in providing good teaching and an interesting curriculum that result in well above average standards by the end of Year 6 is clear evidence that it is well placed to improve the achievements of more able pupils by the end of Year 2.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Most children enter school with the skills expected for their age. The children get off to a good start. The adults make effective use of the good range of indoor and outdoor facilities and resources. They encourage independence and provide a wide range of activities both led by adults and chosen by the children themselves. One parent commented about her son's experience and how the Foundation Stage Unit, 'nurtured him and gave him lots of confidence. This made his transition into Year 1 a smooth and happy one.' This is an area where the school's efforts to continually improve have had a marked impact, although the school is seeking further improvement, particularly for those children who move into the mixed Year 1 and 2 class.

The children listen carefully to adults when they are learning letter sounds. The adults usefully reinforce these sounds by taking opportunities to bring them to the children's attention during conversations about other activities. All adults are now making more detailed and extensive observations to build up a profile of each child's progress. This is another important improvement to give a more accurate picture of the children's achievements by the end of the Foundation Stage than the apparent marked fluctuations over the last few years.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure all lessons engage, challenge and motivate the more able pupils to reach high standards by the end of Year 2.
- Set challenging and quantifiable targets, in the school improvement plan, for the standards to be achieved by the end of Year 2.

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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?	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	1
The behaviour of learners	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 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

20 November 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Wychwood Church of England Primary School, Chipping Norton, OX7 6BD

This letter is to tell you about the findings of the recent inspection and to thank you for taking the time to talk to me. You go to a good school and are able to learn in a very friendly atmosphere. You are able to turn to any of the adults if you need help. Most of you behave very well and those of you I talked to said how much you enjoy school.

Most of you concentrate on your work and make good progress. By the time you get to Year 6 you have done very well. I have asked the head teacher and teachers to take steps to help some of the younger pupils do even better by the end of Year 2. I have also asked the headteacher and the governors to set very challenging targets for the end Year 2 so that more pupils reach high standards.

The teachers make most lessons interesting and lively. Some of you told me how much you enjoy the interactive white boards and that they make learning fun. The school provides a wide range of opportunities for you both in and after school. Your personal development is good because you take part in many of the activities on offer. The writing club sounds very interesting!

I enjoyed being in your school. I hope that in the future it is even more successful in helping you to do as well as you possibly can.

Yours sincerely

Christopher Parker

Lead inspector