

Charlton Mackrell CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123746
Local Authority	Somerset
Inspection number	314704
Inspection date	15 October 2007
Reporting inspector	Michael Burghart

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	87
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Celia Mycock
Headteacher	Gilly Kempton
Date of previous school inspection	8 July 2002
School address	Bonfire Lane Charlton Mackrell Somerton TA11 7BN
Telephone number	01458 223329
Fax number	01458 224024

Age group	4-11
Inspection date	15 October 2007
Inspection number	314704

© Crown copyright 2007

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and, in doing so, investigated the following issues: the quality of provision for Reception (the Foundation Stage), the use of assessment, and the accuracy of the school's self-evaluation. Evidence was gathered about current standards. Discussions took place with the headteacher, staff, governors and pupils. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspection found no evidence to suggest that the school's own views, as given in its self-evaluation form, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This rural school is smaller than most others. All of its pupils are of white British heritage. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. Children's attainment and experience when they first join Reception are broadly what is expected of this age group, but in small year groups this varies year on year. Pupils are taught in four classes, three of which are of mixed ages. Year 2 pupils form a class on their own. Following a period of disruption amongst teaching staff, there is now stability. Three of the four teachers (including the headteacher) were appointed in the last year, two of them at the start of this term.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The school successfully weathered the storm caused by staffing disruption in recent years to get back to the point where it is once again a good school. This has been brought about by good leadership and management with staff, governors and parents working well together as a strong team. New initiatives such as appointing an additional teacher, improving accommodation and introducing hot meals twice a week are improving pupils' performance and are good examples of the school's successful track record. The headteacher has a clear insight into what makes this happy school effective. Well informed, supportive and, in the truest sense of the word, critical governors make a positive contribution. The success of these initiatives and good forward planning indicate a good capacity for further improvement. Expectations are high. Some of the school's self-evaluation judgements have been too cautious but, in reality, managers have a realistic view of strengths and areas requiring improvement. An example of the impact of this is in the way that provision for Reception and Year 1 has been developed to a good standard, to the benefit of both year groups, by rethinking school organisation.

The school is popular and close to being oversubscribed. 'I could write pages on just how good this school is!' a mother told the inspector and this was echoed in parents' overwhelmingly positive views. Parents value that pupils of all abilities make good progress and reach above average standards (especially in English and science). They appreciate that the school is successful at encouraging pupils' personal as well as academic development. Pupils' positive attitudes and good behaviour are the result of lively teaching which draws on a well planned and relevant curriculum. This is enriched by a good range and number of extra-curricular opportunities, including music and sport and many other activities. Much successful effort has gone into trying to make what pupils have to do interesting. 'It's fun here. I can't think of anything which could be better,' was how one boy put it and this sums up what appears to be every child's view. 'There's lots to do. You should see our orchestra. Half the school are in it!' he went on to add. It is obvious that pupils thoroughly enjoy school and feel safe here. Unsurprisingly, attendance is above average.

Staff take good care of pupils. Good attention is given to encouraging healthy lifestyles and ensuring pupils use equipment safely.

Personal development is good with outstanding features in moral and social aspects. Pupils of all ages work and play together enthusiastically. They benefit from the school's very real commitment to Christian ideals. Links with the church are strong. Pupils are encouraged to contribute to village and community life through taking part in events and fundraising. As yet, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils, particularly those who are more capable, to show independence in how they approach learning. For example, pupils do not readily decide what methods to use to solve problems or make enough use of information and communication technology for research. However, the combination of good basic skills and the ability to work collaboratively shows that pupils are being well prepared for life in general.

Teaching is good. There are strengths in how learning objectives are made clear, the way teachers question and listen to pupils, and in how teaching assistants give close support to individuals and groups. Effective marking shows pupils how to make improvements. Aspects that could still be improved include increasing the pace of some lessons and ensuring that activities do not go on too long. The school has already identified how creative writing, as part

of English, and problem solving in mathematics can be improved. It is too soon to report how effective new measures are, but there are positive signs with good progress being made in lessons. Record keeping is thorough. Staff make increasing and effective use of assessment data to set challenging, but realistic, targets for individuals and for the whole school. This development is one of the fundamental reasons for the school's renewed success and is especially helpful in supporting pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The very recent move to a bigger class base with direct access to an outdoor dedicated area means provision for Reception children is now good. Parents are very happy with the change. 'I have nothing but praise for the way my child is being introduced to school,' is a typical comment. Because provision for the Foundation Stage is well managed, children are well cared for and assessment is used effectively to measure their progress and development. Detailed records show that children of all abilities make good progress and that the majority achieve the goals expected of this age group by the end of the Reception Year.

Teachers' clear understanding of the needs of how young children learn results in planning which strikes a good balance between activities chosen by children and those they are directed to by adults. Active learning through structured play opportunities is the order of the day. Learning is obviously great fun! Relationships are outstanding. Taking turns, making choices, and learning to share underpin children's outstanding behaviour and good personal development. Children are well prepared for the future. By the end of Reception, speaking, listening and basic mathematics skills are good. Children are emerging as readers and writers whilst finding out about their world and learning to be creative. Music is used very effectively to set the scene, stimulate different moods, and help children to express themselves. A scary run in the woods to the theme from Harry Potter (with the teacher carrying the CD player!) certainly got the children thinking about how it made them feel.

The school provides a wide range of physical activities for the children every week, especially games and swimming. Despite the outdoor space, which is still being improved, children's physical development is satisfactory rather than good because of the lack of suitable equipment.'

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve outdoor provision for children in Reception.
- Develop the quality of learning, providing more opportunities to encourage pupils, especially the more able, to show independence in the way they work.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

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

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	1
The attendance of learners	2
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	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

16 October 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Charlton Mackrell CofE Primary School, Somerset TA 11 7BN

I really enjoyed coming to your school and I can see that you do, too! Charlton Mackrell is a good school. I was very impressed by the way you behave and are considerate to each other. It is clear that you are growing up as sensible young people.

Here are some of the school's highlights:

- You make good progress and reach above average standards, especially in speaking, listening, reading and science.
- Your teachers are good at helping you to learn and making work interesting.
- There are lots of clubs and activities. (It was a shame I did not get to hear your famous orchestra.)
- Staff take good care of you and work hard to show you how to improve your work.
- There are strong links with the church and the school makes a good contribution to village life.
- The school is well run by your headteacher, staff, governors and parents. They make a strong team.

In order to be even better, the school should:

- Provide outdoor toys for Reception children to ride and climb on.
- Help all of you, but especially those who are more able, to learn more independently.

I wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mike Burghart Lead inspector

Annex B



16 October 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Charlton Mackrell CofE Primary School, Somerset TA 11 7BN

I really enjoyed coming to your school and I can see that you do, too! Charlton Mackrell is a good school. I was very impressed by the way you behave and are considerate to each other. It is clear that you are growing up as sensible young people.

Here are some of the school's highlights:

- You make good progress and reach above average standards, especially in speaking, listening, reading and science.
- Your teachers are good at helping you to learn and making work interesting.
- There are lots of clubs and activities. (It was a shame I did not get to hear your famous orchestra.)
- Staff take good care of you and work hard to show you how to improve your work.
- There are strong links with the church and the school makes a good contribution to village life.
- The school is well run by your headteacher, staff, governors and parents. They make a strong team.

In order to be even better, the school should:

- Provide outdoor toys for Reception children to ride and climb on.
- Help all of you, but especially those who are more able, to learn more independently.

I wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mike Burghart
Lead inspector