

Knights Templar Church of England/Methodist Community School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123860
Local Authority	Somerset
Inspection number	314743
Inspection dates	20–21 November 2008
Reporting inspector	David Shears

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	First
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	182
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sheila Clavey
Headteacher	Keith Atkins
Date of previous school inspection	6 December 2004
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Liddymore Road Watchet TA23 0EX
Telephone number	01984 634385
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Age group	4–9
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Knights Templar is a smaller than average first school. The number of pupils from minority ethnic groups is lower than the national average and the majority speak English as their first language. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is higher than the national average. Most of these pupils have moderate learning difficulties or behavioural, emotional and social needs. There is Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provision in the Reception class. There is also a breakfast and after school club on site that is managed by the governing body. The headteacher took up his post in the summer term 2008.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement.

The overall effectiveness of Knights Templar is inadequate. Children start with skills and abilities that are below expectations for their age. They make satisfactory progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) but this does not help them to catch up. When they enter Year 1, their skills, knowledge and understanding are still below what is expected. In Years 1 to 2, provision improves so that they make good progress overall, enabling them to enter Year 3 with standards that are close to the national average. However, in Years 3 to 4, teaching and learning are inadequate so that by the time they leave the school at the end of Year 4, progress has fallen behind and standards are once again below average. This represents inadequate achievement. Nevertheless, pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities do make better progress than their peers, because of the extra support they receive, and this enables them to make satisfactory progress.

Children in the EYFS are well looked after and relationships with parents are good. However, although activities are planned, there are too many missed opportunities to develop children's independent learning skills.

Pupils in Years 1 and 2 make good progress because the teaching is good. Lessons are well prepared with clear objectives, and work is matched to the range of abilities in each class. Teaching assistants are used well to support groups of pupils, particularly in literacy and numeracy, and high expectations ensure that pupils give of their best. However, this good practice does not extend into Years 3 and 4, where the progress pupils make is inadequate in reading, writing and numeracy. Progress in numeracy is particularly poor. Pupils do not consistently understand lesson objectives and the work is not tailored to their needs. This is because assessment information is not used sufficiently to plan lessons that will address areas of underperformance. Pupils of average and below average ability make the least progress, because there is not enough challenge. This means that teaching and learning overall are inadequate.

The curriculum is satisfactory overall. There are good opportunities for enrichment across the school through visits and visitors. In particular, the curriculum is adapted well to meet the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The provision for personal and social education is a particular strength. The focus on developing basic skills in literacy and numeracy is inconsistent across the school. Nevertheless, an appropriate focus on writing last year has ensured better progress for pupils in Years 1 and 2.

The personal development and well-being of pupils are good. They feel safe and secure because they know that adults care for them well and look after their individual needs. A welcoming, inclusive, Christian atmosphere pervades the school. Pupils enjoy school; attendance has improved over the last year and is now good. The spiritual, moral and social development of pupils is good. Their cultural awareness is satisfactory, which the school has already identified and is working towards improving. Pupils make a good contribution to the school community and beyond, although the development of their workplace and other skills is satisfactory rather than good. The care of pupils is good, with procedures in place to ensure their safety both in

and out of school. However, the academic guidance all pupils receive to support their progress is less secure, particularly in Years 3 and 4. Nevertheless, the academic guidance for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is better because there are individual plans that support their development. The overall provision for care, guidance and support is satisfactory.

The headteacher, since his recent appointment, has begun to make some improvements, notably in the personal development of pupils, including their behaviour. However, although the school has recently identified the poor progress of pupils in Years 3 and 4 through improved recording of assessment, an action plan to address this has not yet been established and implemented. Governors, although supportive, do not challenge the school enough strategically so that there is a lack of rigour in addressing the underachievement of pupils. The quality of leadership and management is therefore inadequate, and there is insufficient capacity for improvement.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children begin school with skills and knowledge that are below typically expected levels. Relationships with parents are good and this helps the children to settle quickly. There is a safe and secure environment and positive relationships between children and staff. There are good opportunities for personal development. As a result, the children behave well and are keen to participate in lessons, although there are not enough opportunities for them to develop their independent learning skills. The use of assessment to inform planning is still developing in all six areas of learning. The curriculum is satisfactory overall and this enables children to make satisfactory progress. Leadership of the EYFS is satisfactory. There are strengths in the development of strong partnerships, especially with parents. However, there is insufficient focus on assessing children's progress. The identification of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is completed at an early stage and satisfactory provision is put in place to meet their needs.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve pupils' standards, particularly in numeracy in Years 3 and 4.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning, particularly in Years 3 and 4.
- Improve the quality of strategic planning to focus rigorously on rapidly improving pupils' progress

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Children begin school with the skills and knowledge that are below expectations, particularly in communication, language and literacy and problem solving, reasoning and numeracy. They make satisfactory progress in the EYFS but this does not help them to catch up. At the start of Year 1, their skills, knowledge and understanding are still below national expectations, particularly in the areas of writing and calculation. In Years 1 and 2, pupils make good progress overall, with writing having improved most as a result of some good focused development of the curriculum. However, during Years 3 and 4, pupils' progress is inadequate in all areas and it is especially poor in numeracy. Pupils of average and below average ability make particularly slow progress. However, because pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive extra support, their progress is satisfactory. The standards reached by the time pupils leave are below average.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are friendly and very welcoming. They feel safe and secure and enjoy being a part of the caring Christian community. This has a positive impact on their attendance, which has improved this year so that it is now good. Pupils and parents say that behaviour is good, with pupils stating that, 'There are less problems now' in the playground. They have a good knowledge of how to keep safe and healthy. Pupils make a good contribution to the school community, such as by having peer mediators in the playground, and also to the wider area, supporting local events and national charities. The development of their workplace and other skills is satisfactory.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 4

The relationships between staff and pupils are very positive and as a result, pupils behave well in lessons and are keen to learn. Lessons have clear objectives and aims, although pupils do not always understand them. The work set for pupils does not consistently match their abilities and consequently there is much underachievement, particularly for those pupils of average and below average ability. These weaknesses are especially apparent in Years 3 and 4. The progress pupils make is particularly poor in numeracy. Formal assessments record the levels that pupils reach, although these are not sufficiently used to plan future lessons. Target setting in writing has recently been introduced throughout the school, although it is too early to assess the impact on pupils' progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory and meets national requirements. An information and communication technology (ICT) suite is used well to support this subject. However, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to use and apply ICT skills in other subjects. Pupils appreciate the many opportunities for the enrichment of the curriculum through visits out and visitors to the school. The good provision for personal and social education is a strength of the curriculum and has a positive impact on their behaviour and attitudes. The curriculum is adapted successfully to meet the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. However, the focus on developing basic skills in literacy and numeracy is not consistent across the school, although there are two new initiatives to support writing. These are: the introduction of phonics sessions for all pupils and the use of individual targets to support their writing. It is too early to assess their impact.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The pastoral care of pupils is good. There are effective systems in place to ensure the safety of pupils in and out of school, through the recording of risk assessments. New provision has been made to care for pupils before and after school, although it is too early to assess its impact. Care is taken to ensure that there are suitably qualified staff to administer first aid. Good strategies are in place for child protection. The significant number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are carefully monitored and a wide number of outside agencies

are involved effectively with the school in giving these pupils the support and guidance they need. As a result they make at least satisfactory progress. However, the quality of academic support and guidance for the rest of the pupils is too variable. Although they have recently been given writing targets, there are none for reading or numeracy. Marking is inconsistent across the school, and does not always help pupils to know what they need to do to improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 4

The management of pupils' pastoral care is good and parents speak highly of the way the school looks after its pupils. They feel that communication is good and that they are warmly welcomed, one commenting that, 'Teachers are always available and willing to discuss my child's progress or any concerns I may have'. The positive sense of community within the school and with its local community promotes the good behaviour and attitudes of pupils. However, there is insufficient focus on promoting pupils' cultural awareness. Leaders and managers know the main strengths and weaknesses of the school, using assessment data that are efficiently organised. However, this information is not yet sufficiently analysed to give the school information about priorities for improvement. There is a lack of rigour in tackling the areas of underachievement because there is no strategic plan in place to bring about change. Challenging targets are set, although many of the older pupils do not reach them because the expectations of the teachers are too low. Governors give good general support to the school, although they do not provide sufficient strategic challenge to enable it to address identified weaknesses in pupils' academic performance, especially in Years 3 and 4.

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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?	4
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	4

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	3

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
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	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	4
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	4
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	4
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	4
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	4
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	4
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	4
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	Yes
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

24 November 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Knights Templar CE/Methodist First School, Watchet TA23 0EX

Thank you for the very warm welcome that you gave us when we visited your school recently. We thoroughly enjoyed talking with you and finding out about your school.

You told us that you enjoy school because your teachers care for you well, and we agree. We also think that you behave very well and look after each other carefully. You have good ideas about how to keep safe and healthy and like to find ways to continue improving the school community. You also care for others outside the school by taking part in local events and raising money for charities.

Although there are some really good things about your school, we found that Knights Templar needs to improve as a matter of urgency and we have recommended that it is made subject to special measures. This means it will receive extra help and inspectors will return to check that everything is going to plan. We have asked your school to:

- help the older pupils to make better progress and reach higher standards especially in English and mathematics
- improve how well you are taught, especially in Years 3 and 4
- make sure that all those who lead and manage your school write a new plan to help you make much better progress.

You can help by letting the teachers know if you think that the work is too easy or too difficult for you.

Thank you for a very enjoyable two days. We wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Mr D Shears Lead Inspector