

Idmiston Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	126404
Local Authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	315534
Inspection date	14 May 2008
Reporting inspector	Michael Barron

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	73
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Burden
Headteacher	David Rolfe
Date of previous school inspection	11 October 2004
School address	Idmiston Road Porton Salisbury SP4 0LB
Telephone number	01980 610401
Fax number	01980 590309

Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a small school set in rural surroundings where pupils are taught in four mixed-age classes. Pupils come from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds. Nearly all are of White British heritage and all have English as their first language. Most pupils attending the school are from the village of Porton and the surrounding areas although a few travel from further afield. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below the national average. The school was awarded 'Healthy School Status' for the second time in June 2007.

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 a welcoming and inclusive ethos. It provides a good education for pupils and prepares them well for the next stage of their education. The school is led by an enthusiastic and dedicated headteacher who has ensured that staff and governors share his vision of raising standards and improving achievement by providing pupils with a stimulating and creative curriculum. As a result, the school has made strong progress since the last inspection, for example, in raising standards in reading and writing in Years 1 and 2. Parents value the good quality of education provided for their children and are overwhelmingly positive in their views of the school. This is reflected in comments such as, 'When we move we will be lucky to find another school that is as good as Idmiston.'

Children enter the Foundation Stage with skills that are usually average for their age. Consistently good teaching enables pupils to achieve well in all year groups so that, by the end of Year 6, standards are above the national average. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because of the high quality of support they receive. However, the standard of pupils' handwriting varies throughout the school. Some is of a good quality but the handwriting of the majority of pupils requires improvement. It does not reflect the high standards pupils attain in other areas of English and also affects the general quality of the presentation of their work. The school is aware of the need to monitor the teaching of this aspect of English with more rigour if the quality of handwriting is to improve.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils really enjoy school and are keen and eager to learn and this is reflected in their above average attendance rates. They are courteous and polite and have a very good understanding of the need to make sensible and healthy choices. They are well aware of the importance of keeping fit. Pupils describe their school as a happy and friendly place where adults make them feel wanted. As one pupil put it, 'It's fun here and the teachers are nice.' Pupils of all ages have a good understanding of the need to keep safe. They play happily together at break times. Older pupils state with pride how they look after the younger ones and talk enthusiastically about the good links the school has with the local community. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and aspects such as moral, social and spiritual development are particular strengths. This is reflected in pupils' excellent behaviour and their outstanding regard for the welfare of others. However, pupils' appreciation of the multicultural nature of modern British society is limited and not as well developed as other aspects of their cultural understanding.

The curriculum is good. It is broad and balanced and has been designed to make learning fun. It is enriched by a wide range of visits and visitors to the school that further develop pupils' skills and their enjoyment of learning. The quality of care, guidance and support for pupils is good and contributes much to their sense of well-being. However, the quality of teachers' marking varies and does not consistently provide pupils with effective guidance on how to improve their work.

Leadership and management are good. The school regularly and thoroughly analyses its performance. It demonstrates a strong capacity to make further improvements. The governing body fulfils its duties well. Governors have a realistic idea of the school's strengths and areas in need of development and provide much support and challenge to the school.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children achieve well in the Foundation Stage because of good teaching and a well planned curriculum. Nearly all are on target to exceed expectations for their age in all areas of learning by the time they enter Year 1. The classroom younger children share with Year 1 pupils is a colourful learning environment where children feel happy and safe and enjoy learning. The teacher works well with other adults to ensure lessons effectively blend opportunities for independent learning with teacher-directed tasks and to make sure children requiring extra help are provided with the support they need to make good progress. However, there are occasions when children are provided with only limited opportunities to take part in play activities that they initiate for themselves.

Progress in personal, social and emotional development is particularly good. Children understand the need to share and take turns and are developing the ability to listen and join in conversations. Provision for mathematical development makes the most of children's improving counting and sorting skills. The practical approach to learning nurtures children's knowledge of the world around them as well as encouraging creative skills. Physical development is built up effectively, especially in the secure outdoor play area.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop, implement and monitor strategies to improve the quality of pupils' handwriting and the way in which pupils present their work.
- Increase pupils' awareness and understanding of the multicultural nature of modern British society.
- Ensure that marking consistently provides pupils with effective guidance about how to improve their work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils across the range of abilities achieve well in all year groups because good teaching helps them to build effectively on previous learning. The school's systems for analysing pupils' progress are used well to identify those who need extra help or who are performing less well than they should be. This has, for example, ensured that pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and, more recently, higher ability pupils, have received the level of support they have needed to make the same good progress as other pupils. As a result, standards have improved since the previous inspection, especially in reading and writing. Standards in Year 6 are above average with pupils on course to meet the appropriately challenging targets set for them in the 2008 national tests.

However, whilst the school has concentrated well on improving the content of pupils' written work, there has not been a similar focus on improving pupils' handwriting and presentation of work.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are friendly and polite and behave impeccably. They have good attitudes to learning and act safely and responsibly at all times. Pupils show a high level of consideration for others

and have a thorough understanding of right and wrong. They feel safe and secure and know that any rare instances of unkind behaviour will be dealt with quickly and effectively. The school council gives pupils an active role in school decision-making and pupils are involved in both the local community and in charitable fund raising for a number of good causes. Their understanding of the importance of developing a healthy lifestyle is outstanding. This is apparent when pupils explain in detail the benefits of a healthy diet and the dire consequences of unhealthy eating and unfitness. Good progress in developing literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills ensures pupils are well prepared for future life. However, pupils' understanding and awareness of the multicultural nature of modern British society is limited.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good throughout the school and ensures pupils make good progress. Relationships between staff and pupils are very positive and pupils are keen to learn. Lessons are well organised and teachers use a variety of methods to make learning interesting. Pupils say they enjoy lessons, especially when they involve practical activities. Teachers work well with teaching assistants to ensure that pupils are provided with the level of support they need in order to make good progress, particularly those pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. However, there are rare occasions when pupils find the work they are asked to complete either too hard or too easy and this can affect the progress they make in lessons.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school has developed a curriculum which links different subjects together well. Pupils say they like this approach and the fact that they are able to apply their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills in other subjects. Provision for personal, social and health education is good and ensures that pupils become very aware of the importance of keeping fit and healthy. A range of visitors to the school and visits to places of interest, including residential visits, further enhance pupils' experiences of the world around them. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good and helps these pupils to make good progress. The school provides a number of popular out of school activities for pupils including a well supported 'Eco' club. However, there are few opportunities across the curriculum for pupils to develop their awareness and understanding of the wide range of cultures in modern British society.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

There is a pleasant family atmosphere about the school which contributes well to pupils' sense of well-being. The school works effectively with parents to ensure pupils make good progress and parents value the care provided for their children commenting that the school 'caters for the whole child'. Pupils say they feel safe and well looked after and know there is someone to turn to if they have a problem.

Induction and transfer arrangements are good and help pupils settle quickly into new routines. Health and safety arrangements are very secure and risk assessments meet current government

guidelines. Robust child protection procedures are followed by all staff and the school works well to ensure that pupils who have particular needs are well supported.

Procedures to track pupils' progress are thorough and used well by teachers when planning further work. However, the quality of teachers' marking varies and does not consistently provide pupils with effective guidance about how to improve their work and this can affect their progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher and teachers work effectively together, with a clear sense of direction, and share leadership and management responsibilities well. They have been thorough in analysing the school's performance and in implementing changes where needed. This has ensured the school's targets have been challenging and that improvement planning has focused on the key areas in need of development in order to raise standards.

Governors play an active role in school life. They support the school well and are involved in all major decisions. Staff and governors have built up good relationships with parents, who are very proud of the school and appreciate that their views are regularly sought and acted upon. Resources are good and used effectively. Links with external agencies are very productive and support pupils' learning well, particularly helping to meet the needs of those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

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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	1
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	1
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

14 May 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Idmiston Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, Salisbury, SP4 0LB

Thank you for making us feel very welcome during our visit to your school. We quickly realised why you like coming to school so much. We especially enjoyed talking with some of you about what you like the most about your school and seeing your lessons.

Here are some of the positive things we found.

- Yours is a good school which gives you a strong start to your education.
- Good teaching helps to make sure that you make effective progress throughout the school.
- Your personal development is good and you have an excellent idea of why it is important to eat healthily and exercise as often as you can.
- You have an interesting and stimulating curriculum.
- The quality of care and support you receive from the school is good.
- You all behave really, really well and you are a credit to your school.
- Your headteacher, staff and school governors are working well to make sure that your school continues to improve in the future.

We found that your headteacher and teachers can do some things to make your school better. We have asked them to:

- help you to improve your handwriting skills and make sure your work is neat and tidy
- help you to find out more about the customs and traditions of people living in this country who are from different cultural backgrounds
- make sure that when your teachers mark your work, they always give you ideas about how you can improve it.

You can help your school to get even better by continuing to work hard.

We wish you the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Michael Barron Lead inspector