

# Curridge Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	109811
<b>Local Authority</b>	West Berkshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	325033
<b>Inspection date</b>	6 October 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Mike Thompson

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.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	96
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	10
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Lesley Dick
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Marilyn Dollard
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	5 October 2005
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Curridge Thatcham RG18 9DZ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01635 200486
<b>Fax number</b>	01635 202295

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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
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## Introduction

Two Additional Inspectors carried out this inspection. The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- What does the most recent performance data show attainment and progress to be?
- How effective is the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provision?
- How effective is the academic guidance provided for pupils?

The inspectors gathered evidence from performance data, observations of teaching and learning, the work produced by pupils, and observations of the pupils at play and at lunch. Parents' questionnaires and discussions with pupils, the chair of governors, and some members of staff also contributed to the judgements. The inspectors did not investigate other aspects of the school's work in detail. Where the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, these have been included where appropriate in this report.

## Description of the school

Curridge Primary School is a small, rural school, four miles north of Newbury. The large majority of its pupils are of White British heritage. There are currently no pupils eligible for free school meals. The proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD) is below average. Most of the pupils with LDD have moderate learning difficulties. The annual turnover of pupils is slightly greater than average because about a quarter of the roll are the children of HM Forces personnel. The school's provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) comprises the Reception age group. All other pupils are taught in three mixed-age classes. There were significant changes in staffing during the latter part of 2007.

The school achieved the Basic Skills Quality Mark in 2007 and has the Eco School silver award.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Curridge Primary is a good school. 'It provides a supportive and structured environment that encourages the children to feel safe, confident and to develop,' typifies the many positive comments received from parents. They are right. Securely underpinning all of the school's work is good quality care guidance and support within a close family atmosphere.

It is a good school because it is effective in ensuring that pupils achieve well. It moves children from broadly average starting points when they join the Reception year group to attain standards that are, overall, above the national average by the end of Year 6. It does this through good teaching that enables the pupils to make good progress. The school is particularly good at quickly identifying the specific needs of LDD pupils. Skilled teaching assistants then play a full part in ensuring that these pupils receive effective help in lessons. As a result, they typically reach nationally expected levels in literacy and numeracy by the time they leave at the end of Year 6.

The results of the 2008 national tests for Year 2, which have yet to be ratified, are much higher than those achieved in 2007 and indicate a probable return to the well above average level that typified the performance of this year group in previous years. In contrast, the results of the Year 6 tests, which also have to be validated, are lower than in previous years. Although the school was effective in ensuring that almost all pupils attained the nationally expected level 4 in English, mathematics and science, too few pupils exceeded this level. The inspectors feel that the only reasonable explanation for this dip is that the more able pupils were not challenged enough during the period immediately after the changes in staffing. Nonetheless, the school ensured that, overall, pupils continued to make good progress during this period of change.

A particularly noteworthy feature of the school is the pupils' outstanding personal development and well-being. The school places a strong emphasis on ensuring that pupils have a clear understanding of the importance of keeping safe and living healthy lives. Its 'Healthy School' status recognises the excellent impact of the school's work in promoting sensible eating habits and good quality physical activity.

Pupils' outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development underpins all aspects of school life. Their impeccable behaviour contributes strongly to the culture for learning that is a feature of all classes. They work and play together very well. Pupils told inspectors that they feel safe at school and that instances of bullying are extremely rare. The school's high attendance rate reflects pupils' real enthusiasm for all aspects of school life. When asked to identify what they like best about school, pupils listed a wide range of choices. When asked what they would like to see improved, there were few suggestions. The school councillors are proud of their contribution to the community. 'Together, we help to make the school better,' was the response of one councillor when asked to summarise the council's work. The councillor then went on to explain that their latest project is to help the local community by campaigning for potholes close to the school to be filled in. The strong family feel that permeates all aspects of the school's work stems from the effective promotion of pupils' social awareness. For instance, the 'house' system rewards pupils' achievements through house points; older pupils are expected to take on responsible jobs and thoroughly enjoy doing so.

Pupils benefit greatly from the many interesting and exciting activities planned for them, enriched through a wide range of extra curricular clubs, and visits to places of interest. The headteacher is building on the well-established systems for managing the school and is working

on an initiative to further improve the quality of information on which monitoring depends. This is the development of better systems for recording the teachers' on-going assessments of their pupils' achievements. At present, the various ways in which teachers note pupils' progress have not yet been drawn together into an easily accessible format. This means that managers are not easily able to measure the progress made by each individual on a termly basis. Consequently, some instances of underachievement, such as the performance of the more able pupils in Key Stage 2, are not picked up at an early enough stage.

A further factor contributing to the good progress of pupils is the good quality of academic guidance provided by teachers on a day-to-day basis. Teachers know their pupils well and relate well to them. In lessons, the good dialogue between teachers and their pupils makes a significant difference to the quality of learning. Teachers mark pupils' work thoroughly and provide useful pointers as to what needs to be improved. However, marking does not always point out the next steps in learning that need to be taken. Although teaching is good, there is some variability in the quality of lessons in Key stage 2. In all classes, teachers plan their lessons carefully and, because their assessments of pupils' attainment are accurate, they are most often good at pitching work to reflect different ages and levels of ability. Pupils' eagerness to learn and their love of being at school are key factors in the good progress they make. They enjoy challenge, and the good teaching that they receive generally ensures that they are not disappointed. However, when teachers do not differentiate tasks well enough to challenge all ages and ability groups within the mixed-age classes, the older and more able pupils sometimes make less progress.

Procedures to ensure the care and well-being of pupils are good overall. The pastoral care of pupils is very good. The school is well practised in inducting new pupils and ensures that they quickly feel a part of the family. Pupils are well supervised at play. The school takes all reasonable steps to ensure that children are safe.

The reason for the school's success is the good quality of leadership at all levels. In particular, the headteacher gives clear direction for the work of the school and receives good support from the committed and highly professional staff and governors. Together they ensure that the school constantly look for ways to improve even more. The school shows a commitment to promoting cohesion within and outside the school community. The accuracy of the school's self-evaluation, together with the ambition shown to improve academic standards while providing pupils with a broad, well-rounded education is a clear indication of its good capacity to improve.

## **Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

The children get a good start to their education in the Reception class and, by the time they move into Year 1, most achieve the goals expected at this age. The recent improvements made to the provision for the Reception-age children, through the relocation of the Reception class, are resulting in good progress. In addition, the quality of assessment of children on entry is better than it was. The new outdoor learning area is attractive and used well. Indoor and outdoor learning is well integrated. Teaching reflects a secure understanding of how very young children learn. Activities are well planned, and children have many opportunities to make choices and develop their social skills and confidence. Welfare requirements are fully met. Learning is good because regular, planned observations of children's achievements are generally used well to plan the next steps in learning. However, learning sometimes slows when opportunities to meet specific needs, such as identified weaknesses in boys' writing, are not fully exploited.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Place greater emphasis on challenge for the more able pupils, particularly in Key Stage 2.
- Improve the systems for recording the assessments made by teachers, so that progress can be more clearly demonstrated and underachievement more quickly identified.

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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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

**Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
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?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

**Achievement and standards**

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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/or disabilities make progress	2

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<sup>1</sup>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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which 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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

16 October 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Curridge Primary School, Thatcham, RG18 9DZ

On behalf of the inspectors, I would like to thank you for helping us so much when we came to find out how well you are getting on. We particularly enjoyed visiting your lessons and talking to some of you.

I agree with your parents that you go to a good school.

There is so much I like about your school that I cannot mention everything, so here is a list of what I think are the most important things.

- You make good progress. By the time you leave at the end of Year 6, you are better at English, maths and science than pupils in many other schools. You should be very proud of all of this.
- Everyone in your school is part of a big family, and your behaviour is usually excellent.
- You know a lot about how to be healthy and safe.
- You learn well in lessons because they are usually good.
- Your teachers are good at planning lots of interesting things for you to do.
- All of the adults in your school make sure that you are well looked after.
- The people who help run your school, such as your headteacher, do a good job in making sure that you get a good education.

Even in a good school like yours there is always something that could be better. Your headteacher agrees, and wants your school to be really excellent. To do this she has made lots of changes since she took charge. Some of these, which are to do with checking on how well you are getting on, need to be improved a bit more to make them really good. Some of you told me that you sometimes find your work easy, so I would like your teachers to make sure that they always give you work that makes you think really hard. This will help you to make even more progress. I'm sure that you are ready for the challenge!

I am sure that you will continue to have great success in the future.

Yours sincerely,

Mike Thompson

Lead Inspector