

Little Gaddesden Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	117443
Local Authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	326612
Inspection date	20 January 2009
Reporting inspector	Anna Coyle

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	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	91
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	Mr Nick Crispin
Headteacher	Mrs Charis Geoghegan
Date of previous school inspection	23 January 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Church Road Little Gaddesden Berkhamsted Hertfordshire HP4 1NX
Telephone number	01442 842464

Age group	4–11
Inspection date	20 January 2009
Inspection number	326612

Fax number

01442 842825

Age group 4-11

Inspection date 20 January 2009

Inspection number 326612

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- Provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).
- The effectiveness of teaching in writing at Key Stage 1 and in mathematics at Key Stage 2.
- The effectiveness of the school's use of assessment information.

Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but inspectors 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

This small school serves the local village community and surrounding area. Most children are White British and none learn English as an additional language. Attainment on entry to the Reception class is typical for children's age when they first start school. The proportion of children who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is similar to that of other schools, although it is much higher in some year groups and a very small number have statements of special educational need. Significant numbers join or leave the school in Years 1 to 6. The school has achieved the Healthy Schools award, as well as the Activemark. It provides a breakfast club that is managed by the governing body.

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 that enables its children to achieve well and leave as confident learners. It is well led and managed and evaluates its provision well. The school is very much a part of the village it serves and it contributes effectively to community cohesion through its carefully thought out strategy. It is held in high regard by parents and governors, who are rightly proud of its good reputation. In the words of several parents, 'The school is at the heart of the community' and, 'is a friendly, stimulating environment' with 'caring, approachable teachers.'

Provision for the EYFS is satisfactory. The school has improved its accommodation significantly for the Reception children since the last inspection when this was a key issue. There is now a clean, light and spacious classroom and a securely fenced area in which children can work and play safely indoors and out. However, staffing changes have led to a necessary re-organisation of teachers and classrooms. The new Reception teacher has familiarised herself with the new statutory EYFS curriculum. She is currently updating her skills and knowledge of this phase of learning. The school has rightly arranged for her to attend appropriate training courses to help her to increase her skills so that she can further develop the planning and make sure that children have the right amount of challenge, especially the most able who sometimes find tasks too easy. Overall, standards match the nationally expected goals by the time children move into Year 1 and achievement is satisfactory.

The effectiveness of teaching in writing at Key Stage 1 and in mathematics at Key Stage 2 is good. From starting points that are similar to most other schools, children make good progress in Years 1 to 6. Consequently, standards are above average in English, mathematics and science by the time children leave at the end of Year 6, with many attaining the higher Level 5 in the national tests. However, standards have fluctuated at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 over the last three years, although they were above average overall in 2008, partly affected by the significant proportion of children who join or leave the school in Years 2 and 3, and the very small size of the cohorts. The school has accurately identified that writing and mathematics are areas upon which to focus so that it can meet its challenging targets. It acknowledges that the quality of teaching, although good overall, is variable at times and has some inconsistencies. Senior leaders are rightly beginning to provide support for colleagues in the form of 'peer mentoring' to help eradicate weaknesses and strengthen teaching.

The school's use of assessment is good overall. It has a suitable range of strategies to check children's progress and record information. These are used effectively to make sure that children achieve well and maintain progress as they move from year to year. A new system for managing assessment data has been introduced recently and this is being embedded appropriately across the school. The marking of children's work is good in Years 1 to 6. Teachers use praise well to celebrate children's successes and they give clear targets to help them improve their work. Children assess their own work or that of others to help develop their skills as independent learners. Teaching assistants make good use of the targets in individual education plans to help sustain progress amongst children who find learning difficult.

Personal development and well-being are good, and children enjoy learning. They know how to stay fit and healthy, and they contribute well to the school community by acting responsibly as school councillors and class monitors. Most behave sensibly and levels of attendance are average, although they are adversely affected by some families taking holidays during term-time. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Children show an awareness of right

and wrong, and respect the views of others. Good achievement in reading, numeracy and computer skills helps to prepare them well for the next stage of their education. The good curriculum is enhanced by a wide range of clubs and visits, as well as music tuition in drums, violin, flute, recorder, guitar and piano, and the daily breakfast club which is well attended. The recent annual pantomime was greatly enjoyed by all involved. The school meets the statutory requirements for safeguarding and protecting children. They are cared for well and staff maintain good partnerships with parents and external agencies.

Effective leadership and management have ensured that the weaknesses identified at the time of the last inspection have been tackled successfully. The headteacher provides clear direction and is well supported by the staff. Self-evaluation is accurate but the procedures for checking the quality of teaching are not sufficiently developed to include formal monitoring using a set of criteria by which to measure quality. The curriculum leaders are not fully involved in monitoring their subjects. Governors share a commitment to the school and keep a careful check on how well it is doing. They are regular visitors and help to make sure that the school has good capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children make sound progress and achieve satisfactorily by the time they leave the Reception class and move into Year 1. They reach the expected goals for their age in all areas of learning, and some exceed them. Teaching is satisfactory and focuses suitably on increasing children's communication, language, literacy and numeracy skills through plenty of things to do that include organised and free-play activities, both indoors and outside. Children's personal, social and emotional development is satisfactory. Parents are supportive of their children's learning and their close links with the school help children settle happily. Links with the local pre-school are beginning to be developed. Staff take good care of the children and watch over their welfare, health and safety, while teaching assistants provide close support to individuals who have learning difficulties.

Learning and development are soundly based on practical tasks to promote children's knowledge and understanding of the world and their creative and physical development. Staff promote children's personal skills well and encourage them to share and take turns when playing. They check children's progress to see how well they are doing and identify where additional support is needed for those who find learning hard. Planning is satisfactory but it does not always take sufficient account of children's prior attainment to provide enough challenge for the most able. The curricular provision has been improved well since the last inspection but is still being developed further to incorporate the new EYFS requirements, such as for problem solving, reasoning and numeracy. It is led and managed satisfactorily by the new Reception class teacher, who is keen to develop her skills.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the provision for children in the Reception class by providing more training for the new EYFS leader.
- Formalise the current arrangements for checking on the quality of teaching by using clear criteria and enabling individual curriculum leaders to monitor their subjects.

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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?	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?	3
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?	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/or disabilities make progress	2

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	3
The behaviour of learners	3
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 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

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 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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

21 January 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Little Gaddesden Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, Berkhamsted, HP4 1NX

You may remember that the inspectors visited your school recently to see how well you were doing. Thank you for being so helpful and making us feel welcome. This letter is to let you know what we found out.

We think that you go to a good school and achieve well. Standards are above average by the time you leave at the end of Year 6. Many of you said that you like coming to school and enjoy learning, and those of you in the school council know a lot about keeping healthy and safe. Most of you behave sensibly and attend school regularly. The teaching is good and adults take good care of you and give you lots of interesting things to do in lessons and in the after-school clubs.

We know that Mrs Geoghegan and the teachers and governors want the school to be even better and so we have asked them to go on improving the provision for the children in the Reception class. We have also asked the headteacher to make sure that the subject leaders regularly check on the quality of teaching in the school to help the teachers to share all the good things they do. You can help by coming to school every day and continuing to work hard.

Best wishes

Dr Anna Coyle

Lead inspector