

Urchfont Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	126366
Local Authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	328486
Inspection date	3 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Peter Clifton

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 controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	100
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	Mark Leckie
Headteacher	Jackie Holton
Date of previous school inspection	13 October 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Cuckoo Corner Urchfont Devizes SN10 4RA
Telephone number	01380 840793

Age group	4–11
Inspection date	3 March 2009
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Fax number

01380 840 793

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a small rural school on the edge of the village. Most pupils attend from the local and other surrounding villages with a few travelling from further afield. Nearly all pupils are of White British origin. Separate pre-school provision is situated within the school grounds. While the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is a little below average, there is a considerably higher than usual proportion of pupils with learning disabilities. A proposal in 2008 to amalgamate with another school did not go ahead.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Urchfont Church of England Primary is a good school. Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding because of the excellent care, guidance and support provided and the positive way in which adults interact with pupils. Standards are high. Pupils' achievement is good, mainly because of pupils' very positive attitudes and good teaching. Leaders rightly identify that mathematics remains the weaker area because problem solving is not fully developed. Provision in Reception is good and children are well prepared for work in Year 1. Pupils greatly enjoy their time here, their behaviour is exemplary and they attend well. The pupils are very proud of their school and make a strong contribution to its success. They express their opinions with great confidence and clarity and say their views 'make a difference'. Their ideas are being used, for example, to develop the newly acquired field. They comment that, 'We have to work hard but teachers make learning fun.' Most parents' comments about the school echo the views of the children especially about the learning environment provided. Many are highly complimentary about what it offers for their children. For example, they comment that, 'Older children help the younger ones in many different ways.' One parent rightly commented, 'Our children love school and readily tell us about their lessons with enthusiasm.'

Relationships between adults and classmates are superb. Pupils enjoy each other's company when working or playing together. They say their teachers are always there for them. Pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is good. The pupils socialise together exceptionally well and say they feel very safe. They show concern about the welfare of each other and have a strong sense of right and wrong. However, pupils' satisfactory cultural development is the weaker area. Their understanding of Britain as a culturally diverse community is not fully developed. Pupils have a good understanding of why they should eat healthily and take regular exercise.

Teaching has many strengths. Pupils respond enthusiastically to questions and frequently offer lengthy explanations. Good opportunities for pupils to talk about their writing enable them to develop their ideas and extend vocabulary. However, occasionally learning slows because the challenge of the work does not build sufficiently quickly. Great care is taken to ensure all pupils are included. Additional support ensures that those with learning disabilities achieve well alongside other pupils. The good curriculum offers enjoyable learning experiences for pupils, with a good balance between the development of basic skills, creative subjects, and personal and social skills. Pupils' preparation for their next stage of education is excellent because they are mature, confident learners who readily take the initiative and work very constructively together.

The school is well led and managed. The headteacher provides a very strong lead in setting learning at the heart of the school's work. She is rightly well supported by governors. Self-evaluation is exceptionally accurate and thorough. Sustained improvement and the maintenance of high standards since the previous report show that the school is well placed to get even better.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children come into school with skills and knowledge that are typically above expectations. The current Reception children are on track to reach above average standards from a starting point

in line with expectations. They achieve well because teaching and the curriculum are closely adapted to their needs. Exceptionally thorough planning and skilful adult support ensure that the children's learning needs are met well. Relationships are warm and supportive, contributing well to the children's excellent personal development. Resources are well organised and this helps the children to choose for themselves. As a result, the children quickly gain in confidence and independence. The safe, supportive provision promotes excellent welfare and enables the children to thrive. Although the outside space is used regularly, it is not large enough for some physical activities and lacks a covered area. This occasionally restricts learning during inclement weather. Learning and development are exceptionally well led and managed. Children's progress is very carefully monitored and evaluated. Until very recently, lack of space has restricted the development of the outside classroom; plans are now in hand to remedy this. Links with parents and the onsite pre-school are strong.

What the school should do to improve further

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- Give pupils more real-life and problem-solving activities in mathematics to help raise their attainment further.
- Improve pupils' understanding of other cultures and lifestyles through the development of wider community links.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The school's tracking rightly shows that most pupils make good progress. In Reception, children reach above average standards across all areas of learning by the time they enter Year 1. Since the time of the previous inspection, results in Year 2 have remained at least above average. The 2008 results were well above average, with standards in reading and writing being stronger than those in mathematics. Pupils in Year 2 now are on track to reach similar standards. Year 6 standards in 2007 were exceptionally high. Performance information for 2008 shows standards to be stronger in English than in mathematics. In the current Year 6, the majority of pupils are working at, or very close to, the higher Level 5. Pupils with learning difficulties make good progress and those with disabilities achieve well. Pupils' speaking and listening, and information and communication technology (ICT) skills are very well developed across the school.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils thoroughly enjoy coming to school. They like learning new things and contributing in lessons. Pupils readily take on responsibility, such as being 'buddies' and playground and lunchtime helpers. Their understanding of Britain as a culturally diverse community and of different lifestyles is less well developed. Pupils have a very clear voice in saying what they would like to be changed. They think that their opinions are valued. Many participate in local fund raising activities and festivals. Pupils move around the school and play together very sensibly, aware about possible dangers. Playtimes are energetic yet safe. Excellent participation in 'wake and shake' activities is led by the pupils. Pupils use ICT confidently. They work exceptionally well together in teams taking on different roles. This, together with very strong basic literacy and numeracy skills, ensures they are exceptionally well placed to face future challenges.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Pupils throughout the school are active and enthusiastic learners. They are keen to answer questions which often probe their understanding. Strong relationships help the pupils to contribute with great confidence in lessons and assemblies. Good independence in learning is built on effectively throughout the school. Teachers only rarely need to intervene to gain the attention of the pupils, indicating how much pupils enjoy lessons. Teaching assistants make a skilful contribution to help pupils learn, for example through signing to interpret and share the responses of pupils with learning disabilities. There is much enthusiasm evident in group work, for example when pupils plan writing or use their mental mathematical skills to convert units of length. On a few occasions, the challenge in lessons dips and learning slows because pupils sit for too long on the carpet. Teachers do not always make their expectations sufficiently clear about what they expect different groups of pupils to achieve. However, they provide very good guidance to help pupils assess their own writing.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is highly successful in promoting pupils' personal, social and health needs. There is a wide range of art on display and Christian values are strongly promoted. Pupils sing enthusiastically during assembly. Adaptations to improve writing have been very successful through a story-making project. There are many opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding through speaking and listening. Topics link together different subjects well and ICT is used extensively to help the pupils to learn and present their work in different ways. In mathematics, there are too few opportunities for pupils to apply their problem-solving skills. Pupils' enjoyment and learning are greatly enhanced by after-school clubs and visits. Older pupils are keenly looking forward to the residential visit because it had such favourable reports from those who went previously.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school provides a very safe learning environment for all pupils. Safeguarding and child protection procedures meet current government requirements. Arrangements to ensure that all pupils are included are outstanding. There are strong links with external agencies and specialist advice is used well. This, together with very regular tracking of pupils' progress, ensures that provision is finely adjusted to meet the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Pupils have well-written targets for literacy and numeracy which they know. They use these, for example, to help with their writing by setting themselves personal goals for their next piece of work. Marking is usually good, with useful comments to help pupils improve their work. These are used successfully to guide learning and improve progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher's very strong lead is well supported by a team of teachers and governors. Changes made to improve writing have successfully raised standards. The current focus on developing mental mathematics is improving progress. Planning to improve pupils' problem-solving skills is at an early stage of development. Evaluation of the school's work by leaders is exceptional. This is because they monitor carefully how well the pupils are doing, acknowledge weaknesses and strive for continuous improvement.

The proposal to amalgamate the school caused a rift amongst parents, with a minority feeling they were not listened to. The headteacher and governors have been active in drawing parents into the school, for example to share the work they are doing to improve mathematics. They communicate regularly through newsletters and encourage parents to make their views known. The school's contribution to community cohesion is satisfactory. While local links are good, leaders have rightly identified the need to strengthen wider links to develop pupils' understanding of other cultures and lifestyles.

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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?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
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?	1
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	1
The extent to which 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	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

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?	1

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	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
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**

4 March 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Urchfont Church of England Primary School, Devizes SN10 4RA

Thank you for the very warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking with you and were very impressed with your friendliness and how confidently you expressed your opinions. The valuable information you gave us was a great help. Your school cares for you exceptionally well and gives you a good education. Teaching and the curriculum are good and help you to make good progress and achieve well. Leadership of your school is good. We were impressed by your very positive attitudes to learning. Your behaviour is outstanding and you attend well.

What your school does particularly well:

- You make a good start Reception.
- Your headteacher and other adults ensure that the school is a happy and welcoming place.
- You develop skills which provide you with an excellent start to your next school and future life.
- Teaching provides you with challenging yet enjoyable activities to help you to learn.
- You have an excellent understanding about keeping yourselves safe.
- The curriculum provides a good balance between different subjects which is helping you to enjoy school a great deal.
- Your headteacher and other leaders have made changes that are helping you to improve your work, for example in writing.
- Most of your parents and carers are pleased with what the school does to help you learn and feel well cared for.

We have asked your headteacher and the other adults to do these things:

- Ensure you have more regular opportunities to use your mathematics skills through real-life and problem-solving activities to extend your understanding.
- Help you improve your understanding of other cultures and lifestyles.

You can help your school to improve even further by continuing to always do your best.

Yours faithfully

Peter Clifton

Lead Inspector