



Silchester Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number 116369
 LEA Hampshire LEA
 Inspection number 279805
 Inspection dates 25 - 26 September 2006
 Reporting inspector Mrs Judith Dawson

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

Type of School	primary	School address	School Lane,Silchester
School category	voluntary aided		Reading RG7 2NJ
Age range of pupils	4-11	Telephone number	01189700256
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Fax number	01189700225
Number on roll	190	Chair of Governors	Mrs Lucy Watson
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Headteacher	Mrs Sue Elliott
Date of previous school inspection	26 June 2000		

Age group	Inspection Date(s)	Inspection No.
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Pupils come from several prosperous villages and towns and attend one of 12 pre-school settings before starting school. A below average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties but three have statements of special physical or educational needs which is above average. The school has strong links with the church and a thriving musical tradition with a brass band and choir. It is working towards the Healthy Lifestyle and Investors in People awards. There have been significant staff changes in the last two years, including the headteacher and deputy headteacher.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Silchester Church of England Primary School has been through a period where standards have fallen. Staff changes over the last two years, including the appointment of a new headteacher and deputy headteacher, have begun to reverse this trend and illustrate the school's good capacity to improve. Inspectors agree with the school's accurate view that its effectiveness is satisfactory. As one parent says, 'The school appears to have turned the corner. The atmosphere has improved greatly and there are lots of positive things happening.'

Achievement is satisfactory. Children start school with broadly average knowledge and skills. Staff in the good Reception class, help children to develop their skills well so that most achieve their learning goals by the time they join Year 1. Although pupils' progress is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2, too few pupils, especially boys, achieve their full potential by attaining the higher levels in writing and mathematics in the tests at the end of Year 2. In this year's national tests, pupils in Year 6 achieved well and standards in English, mathematics and science were above average. This improvement shows the impact of good teaching and the school's successful new approaches to developing writing. Improvements in the provision for information and communication technology (ICT) have enabled pupils to use computers to support learning across the curriculum, equipping them satisfactorily for their futures.

The school believes that every child matters and this positive ethos is at the heart of its work. Consequently, pupils enjoy school and attendance is good. They enter into the many activities provided with enthusiasm. The school's good links with the community and its regular use of the local environment enhance pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Music contributes much to these qualities. Pupils have a good understanding of healthy living and know how to keep safe. One pupil said, 'Everyone is kind and friendly.' Pupils behave well and the school council and other pupils carry out their responsibilities conscientiously. As one pupil said, 'It is very important that we know who is in school at playtime in case there is a fire,' when asked about the tokens they were giving out.

The headteacher has a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and has accurately identified areas for development. Recent appointments and changes in the deployment of teachers are beginning to improve both teaching and learning although there are still inconsistencies in planning and marking. Initiatives to improve the assessment of pupils' work are beginning to identify those who need additional support, but this is at an early stage of development. Subject leaders are only just beginning to develop their roles, and systems for monitoring standards and provision across the curriculum are not well founded.

What the school should do to improve further

- Firm up assessment procedures and ensure that all pupils have sufficient challenge and know what they need to do to improve.
- Develop the role of subject leaders in monitoring and evaluating standards and provision especially with regard to making teaching, marking and planning more consistent.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Although standards at the end of Year 6 are above average pupils' achievement is satisfactory. The school is committed to improving this with some success. Older pupils achieve well and test results at the end of Year 6 have risen over the last two years and are above average. One pupil in Year 6 said, 'We work very hard and are challenged, but it's good.' Pupils in Years 3 and 4 have not been making sufficient progress in English and mathematics. Changes in teaching and the provision of additional support have started to address this issue but more remains to be done to secure consistency in progress.

Standards in Year 2 have also improved this year but fewer pupils than average attained the higher levels for writing and mathematics. More challenge is needed to enable these pupils to reach their full potential. Good teaching in the Foundation Stage enables children to make good progress so that, by Year 1, most have attained the early learning goals. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities achieve as well as their peers because of their well focused support and effective targets for learning.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being are good and pupils enjoy school so much that one pupil commented that school would be 'a happy memory when I grow up.' Pupils' good attendance endorses their enjoyment of school. Behaviour is good in lessons and playtimes are generally harmonious. Pupils are clear about how to stay safe. They adopt a healthy lifestyle and know that, 'smoking can really clog up your lungs'. They have good strategies to enable them to withstand peer pressure. Pupils also enjoy participating in sport clubs. However, pupils in some years do not always feel they work as hard as they could and say that, 'a lot of our work can be done easily'. Pupils' basic skills prepare them satisfactorily for the next stage of their education.

Pupils respect the cultural differences of others because they learn about them through interesting visits to places of worship and through exciting visitors such as African dancers. Consequently, they get on well with each other and relationships are good. Pupils' views are valued notably through the school council who proudly describe the way they have improved playground equipment.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers make learning objectives clear, ask effective questions which deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding, and set tasks which pupils find meaningful and enjoyable. In the best lessons,

pupils are challenged, teachers have high expectations of the quality of work and set time limits to generate good pace. Teaching in the reception class is good. Children develop their independence and confidence through a good range of activities and communication, language and literacy and mathematical skills are taught thoroughly.

In some classes marking and target setting are not detailed or precise enough. Consequently, not all pupils get the guidance they need to ensure they improve rapidly. While most pupils' learning is satisfactory, the more able are not always given challenging enough work. Good quality provision and support for those pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities enables them to make satisfactory progress in relation to their capabilities.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. The school has recognised the need for a review in order to meet the needs of pupils in a more imaginative and stimulating way, while developing key skills in language and mathematics. The prize-winning brass band and talented choir are testimony that music is a strength. The new computer suite has significantly raised the profile ICT within the school. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties is good. Staff are skilled in their support of pupils with physical disabilities. A good range of visits to places of interest such as the science museum in Winchester or the open air theatre to see 'The Life of Christ' supplement the curriculum and add enjoyment. Pupils are enthusiastic about the school's extra curricular activities and these are well-attended. Pupils' benefit from a good programme of personal, social and health education and this contributes to their good acquisition of life skills.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Support and guidance are satisfactory. The level of care and concern for the welfare of all pupils is good. There are effective links with support agencies. As a result, the school is a happy and secure place where pupils thrive. Pupils have good regard for their own and others' safety in lessons and on the playground. The school's drive to create a safe and harmonious environment is evident in acts of worship where the pupils consider the impact of their actions on others. As a result, the pupils know how to treat and understand each other. Procedures for child protection, risk assessment and health and safety are robust and staff training is fully up to date. Effective means of dealing with bullying and racism are in place and the number of incidents is low.

The academic guidance provided for the pupils is inconsistent and often lacks sufficient clarity to help them to make rapid progress. As a result pupils' knowledge of what they need to do to improve their work is too variable.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have accurately identified the

most important areas for development by analysing test results and monitoring teaching. The result has been rigorous implementation of initiatives to reverse the trend of falling standards. At the same time, senior staff have been successful in maintaining the good school ethos. While the school makes every effort to inform parents of changes, it recognises that still more needs to be done to improve communication. The school's comprehensive long term plan sets the scene for further developments and reflects the school's needs accurately. It includes plans to develop the roles of subject leaders and other managers who currently have a limited grasp of the school's standards and provision.

Governance is good. Governors are involved in monitoring the school's success in tackling its priorities and have established effective systems of performance management. Resources and finances are managed efficiently. The headteacher has made a good start to her leadership, generating an eagerness to improve amongst the staff and standards are beginning to rise.

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Annex A to the inspection report

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?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

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.

All white boxes must be completed. The grey boxes are used wherever the inspection team has sufficient evidence to come to a secure judgement.

Annex A to the inspection report

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 behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	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?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interest of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

Annex A to the inspection report

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
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 to the inspection report

Letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection.

3 October 2006



Dear Pupils

Silchester Church of England Primary School
School Lane
Silchester
Reading
RG7 2NJ

Thank you all very much for your help during our visit to your school. We were very pleased to hear how much you enjoy your school and to see how well you behave and care for each other. A special thanks to the school council and pupils in Year 6 who talked to us.

The school provides you with a satisfactory education. We know that the school takes good care of you. You are good at deciding which foods are healthy and know how to keep yourselves safe. We were impressed with the way you carry out your responsibilities. Children in the Reception class make good progress because they have plenty of good opportunities to learn. The oldest pupils also achieve well and standards in English and mathematics are improving. This is because your teachers make sure that you have challenging work to do.

We have asked the school to do some things to make sure that you all learn as well as possible. We want all teachers to make sure that they give you work that makes you think hard. You are good at taking responsibility and teachers need to make sure that you all know what you need to do to make your work even better. You will then be able to make sure that you keep this in mind as you do your work. We want teachers who have special responsibilities for subjects to check that you are taught well and are learning what you should be. They can then make plans to ensure that you have the best possible education.

Thank you again for your friendliness and help during the inspection. I hope those of you in Year 6 enjoy your residential trip next week.

Best wishes

Mrs. J. Dawson
Lead Inspector