

Twyford St Mary's Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116320
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	326362
Inspection dates	26–27 January 2009
Reporting inspector	Graham Stephens

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)	137
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	Mrs Jenny Lomas
Headteacher	Mrs Louise Chapman
Date of previous school inspection	1 December 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	School Road Twyford Winchester SO21 1QQ
Telephone number	01962 713358

Age group	4–11
Inspection dates	26–27 January 2009
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Fax number

01962 714313

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Pupils in this smaller than average primary school come from a variety of backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD) is below average. In this school, the LDD pupils are largely those who find aspects of English and mathematics challenging. There are fewer pupils with English as an additional language than in most schools. The school has provision for Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). More pupils enter and leave the school at times other than the beginning of the school year than in most schools. The headteacher has been in post for three years. There is currently no deputy headteacher and most teachers are relatively new to their responsibilities. There has recently been a high turnover of staff.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Despite the many changes of staff in recent years, Twyford St Mary's is a good school that continues to improve under the good leadership of the headteacher and the support of her staff. Staffing is now stable and clearly focused on accelerating progress and raising standards. The majority of parents are very supportive of the school. 'We as parents could not be more pleased with the progress here - ten out of ten', is a comment that reflects many of these views. Nevertheless, a significant minority, approximately one quarter of parents, have recorded concerns about the high staff turnover, the leadership and management of the school and the way views and opinions are often either ignored or not acted upon. While many procedures do exist to ensure that the parent voice can be heard, communication between the school and parents needs to be reviewed and monitored so that a secure partnership develops.

Children enter the EYFS with levels of knowledge and skills above those expected for most four year olds. They make good progress. In 2008 standards in mathematics, science and reading were above average by the time pupils left in Year 6. However, the targets for writing were not met. Inspection evidence confirms that standards in all subjects, including writing, are currently above average in Year 6 and pupils are making good progress. However, the progress that pupils make in writing needs to accelerate further because of the need to make up ground lost in the past. Pupils who find aspects of reading and writing challenging are very well supported by informed and skilled learning support assistants. Consequently they make consistently good progress. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of education.

The school provides a happy and stable environment where adults are good role models, showing that mutual support and understanding are paramount. One consequence of the high turnover of staff is that it has left a legacy of some underachievement. Now that more permanent staff have been appointed, this has facilitated the introduction of new initiatives such as target setting and ensuring that procedures to support pupils in their learning, such as self-review and marking, are well embedded. Consequently, progress is now accelerating. The curriculum review has also had a significant impact on the way pupils learn. They are now far more involved in planning and developing strategies to solve problems, presenting work to different audiences in different situations. Good steps are being taken to ensure pupils have more opportunities to apply their writing skills in other subjects, but this initiative needs to be consolidated. Teachers know the pupils well and most match work well to their needs. Progress is carefully tracked and frequent reviews ensure that additional support or challenge is organised as required. Marking supports learning well. Induction procedures for pupils who enter the school during the school year are good and they settle quickly into school routines.

The school actively seeks the support of outside agencies to improve its practice and always acts upon the advice it is given. Consequently, pupils are well supported and make good progress. The local authority has been very proactive over the past two years with a clear focus on accelerating achievement and raising standards, with successive reports reflecting good progress. Pupils relish the opportunities that the school offers and clubs and events are well attended. Their behaviour is good and they are very welcoming to visitors.

Since her appointment three years ago the headteacher has overseen many staff changes. Throughout this period she has remained steadfastly focused on improving the learning opportunities for pupils and encouraging them to develop the skills to become independent learners. In this she is succeeding. Staff share her vision and apply themselves with enthusiasm.

With the support of the local authority, rigorous procedures are in place that identify the school's strengths and weaknesses. Staff share a common understanding of priorities for improvement. Governors are committed to accelerate progress and raise standards further. The school has a good capacity to improve.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

When children start in the Reception class, their skills are generally a little above those expected for their age. Teachers build well on these and effective systems of assessment and overall good teaching ensure that good progress is made. When children enter Year 1, the majority are working securely within the expected levels in all areas of learning and several exceed them. Careful planning ensures that younger pupils benefit from working alongside pupils in Year 1. Children enjoy the activities prepared for them moving between them with confidence. They listen attentively and cooperate well as they share equipment to complete tasks. They speak confidently to adults, explaining that 'the Chinese restaurant has run out of rice but would you like some pizza and two fried eggs instead!' Resources are organised to encourage a balance between adult-led activities and those that the children can explore for themselves. Occasionally children are over-directed or opportunities to challenge their thinking are lost, for example, when simple repeating patterns, easily mastered, were printed. The programme to teach letters and the sounds that they make has consolidated the good preparation for reading that has resulted in children developing very positive attitudes to books. The partnership with parents is good. Parents visit with their children prior to entry, attend a meeting with staff and are invited to request a home visit. There are many opportunities for children to play and learn together outside despite the narrow confines of the paved area.

What the school should do to improve further

- Review, improve and monitor communication links between the school and parents.
- Accelerate progress and raise standards in writing throughout the school by ensuring that it is taught consistently and that skills learned are applied in subjects across the curriculum.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils make good progress from entry into the Reception class to the end of Year 2. By the time they enter Year 3, standards in mathematics, writing and reading are above average. The majority of pupils continue to make good progress. Since 2005 standards at the end of Year 6 in English and mathematics have been above average and broadly average in science. Results in 2008 confirmed good progress in reading, mathematics and science, despite the many changes of staffing that had taken place. Targets for writing were not met. The school has identified that skills taught were not consistently applied and consolidated in subjects across the curriculum. Opportunities to do this are increasing and evidence confirms that progress in writing is accelerating. Reading is a strength of the school and the secure start in Reception is built on well, resulting in the majority of the pupils attaining the higher levels in 2008.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The friendly and welcoming ethos of the school reflects the good personal development of the pupils. They feel safe and secure. They enjoy school and this is reflected in good attendance.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They listened attentively to the headteacher when she spoke of the meaning of Holocaust Day. Pupils know what they have to do to lead a healthy lifestyle. Although concerns about bullying were expressed by one parent, pupils said that while bullying occasionally takes place, it is 'always sorted out quickly by the teachers'. Pupils cooperate well when working in groups and are increasingly able to work independently. Fund-raising for a Ugandan school and communicating regularly with two schools in London help pupils gain a greater understanding of the wider community and how they might contribute to it. Pupils' above-average skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) combine to provide a good basis for their future learning.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

'We can always talk to the teacher if we either don't understand or agree with our targets', said a pupil in Year 5. This openness of discussion and the very good relationships between all adults and pupils underpin the good progress that pupils make. In most classes work is well matched to both the ability and age of the pupils. Procedures that have been agreed to improve the quality of writing and accelerate progress are not consistently applied in all classes. A strength of all teaching observed was the opportunities given to pupils to discuss outcomes with each other and the requirement to explain and justify their thinking. This consolidates understanding well and gives teachers many opportunities to assess the progress made. Teaching assistants are well prepared for the tasks they perform and have established very good working relationships with the pupils they support. These include a small minority who find it difficult to concentrate for long periods and who need the extra support that teaching assistants provide.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school has successfully revised the curriculum to involve pupils far more in planning their work and determining how they might best source information to answer the questions they have posed. As a result they talk confidently about the value of the internet as a learning resource. Topic work, such as the work on Ancient Egyptian tombs and the work on wind resistance, is giving pupils many more opportunities to apply the writing skills they have been taught and to be actively involved in decision-making, working together and testing their thinking. These are all areas that are being targeted and successfully developed. The local area is used well to engage pupils and support learning. Visits further afield, including overnight stays at Fairthorne Manor and Minstead in the New Forest, broaden pupils' knowledge and understanding and gives them opportunities to apply the skills they are taught. Special events such as Caribbean and Rain Forest Weeks and visits from theatre groups bring learning to life and successfully reinforce pupils' knowledge and understanding. The curriculum effectively promotes pupils' personal and social development. Pupils appreciate and benefit from the good range of extra-curricular activities on offer.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The pastoral care pupils receive is outstanding. Pupils feel safe and secure and know what they need to do if they experience difficulties. Pupils with particular emotional needs are very well

supported by specially trained learning support assistants. All adults are trained in safeguarding and child protection procedures. The behaviour policy is consistently applied, lessons are not interrupted and there is harmony in the playground. Rigorous systems for tracking individual pupils' progress help ensure that under-achievers receive the support they need to meet the targets expected of them. Individual targets in writing and reading were recently introduced. It is early days, but they do support learning well where they are well known and understood by the pupils, and referred to when work is marked. Learning targets in mathematics are not yet set. Teachers mark consistently well and pupils enjoy the opportunity to evaluate both their own work and sometimes that of others before handing books in. 'It's good because we can check what we need to improve next time', said one pupil.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher has overseen many staff changes in a short space of time, but has successfully maintained a focus on pupils' learning and progress. She has ensured that progress is rigorously monitored so that all pupils receive the appropriate support and enjoy equal opportunities to succeed. Despite the headteacher's and local authority's best efforts to keep parents informed, within the constraints of the law, as staff changes occurred, a significant minority have recorded their concerns at the large number of changes that have taken place over a comparatively short period of time. Others feel that their views are not taken into account by either the headteacher or the governing body. Although no evidence was observed to support these concerns, channels of communication between the headteacher, the governing body and parents, although established, need to be further reviewed and monitored to help ensure that mutual understanding and support improves. The recent improvement in the stability of staffing has created more opportunities for the application of initiatives such as target setting. All staff, although new to their responsibilities, have made a good start in establishing priorities for future development. The governing body is well organised and supports the school well. It holds the school rigorously to account for the standards attained and the progress that pupils make. Pupils' understanding of both the local and wider community is well promoted in many ways, including developing links with pupils in other schools both in this country and abroad. Pupils learn to appreciate other cultures by, for example, celebrating the Chinese New Year and all are involved in studying the local community.

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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 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	2
The behaviour of learners	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	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

Annex B

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

06 February 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Twyford St Mary's Church of England Primary School, Winchester, SO21 1QQ

Thank you for being so welcoming, polite and friendly when I came to visit your school recently. I enjoyed meeting and talking with you and looking at all your work and the exciting things that you do.

You go to a good school. Here is a list of some of the things I liked best.

- You are very polite and caring and your behaviour is good.
- You listen very carefully to all that your teachers and learning support assistants say.
- You work together very well and make good progress in your work.
- You are becoming increasingly independent and evaluate your work well.
- Your teachers are good at planning very interesting things for you to do.
- All the adults make sure you are really well looked after and you are very appreciative of all that they do.
- Your headteacher and the other people who help run your school are doing a good job.

Every school, even one as good as yours, has something that could be improved.

- We have asked your headteacher to do her best to make sure that all your parents and carers understand what is happening at school and what teachers are doing to support you in your learning.
- Your writing needs to improve even more and you need to make sure that you remember to apply your writing skills all the time and not just in literacy lessons.

Yours faithfully

Graham Stephens

Lead Inspector