

The Vine Inter-Church Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	134894
Local Authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	341562
Inspection dates	30 June – 1 July 2010
Reporting inspector	Roderick Passant

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	374
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Ann Booth
Headteacher	Mrs Debbie Higham
Date of previous school inspection	17 January 2007
School address	The Vines Upper Cambourne Cambourne CB23 6DY
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They saw 13 lessons or part lessons and 11 teachers, carried out a random sample of work from Years 3, 4, 5, and 6, met with members of the senior leadership team, groups of pupils from 'The Vine Forum', Year 5 and Year 6 and the Chair and Vice Chair of the Governing Body. They observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation associated with child protection and safeguarding and the school improvement plan. During the inspection, 155 parental questionnaires and 109 pupil and 16 staff responses were scrutinised.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the specific steps taken to raise standards in mathematics and English
- the balance achieved between facing the challenges associated with rapid growth and evaluating the impact of its work to ensure that school planning is rooted in self-evaluation.

Information about the school

The school has been opened five years, serving the growing community of Cambourne. Although, apart from social housing, building in the immediate vicinity has recently slowed, the school has continued to expand rapidly since it opened in 2005 and is larger than average. New pupils from all ages join the school regularly throughout the school year. The rate of pupil mobility is vastly higher than that usually seen. In addition, there have been significant staff changes, many staff joining the school because of its rapid growth and others moving on for personal and professional reasons. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly average. There is an above average proportion of pupils from a wide range of ethnic heritages and who speak English as an additional language. Nineteen first languages are spoken in the school and a small number of pupils are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average; the majority of these have moderate learning and emotional, behavioural and social difficulties. The proportion of pupils with statements detailing their need is high. The school has a family learning centre on site which provides a variety of support services, including family learning opportunities and the school also hosts various community activities. The school provides an after-school club managed by the governors.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school. There are a number of outstanding features and others which are good but still developing or in the process of further refinement. Teaching is good and has improved since the last inspection. Consequently, pupils make good progress in lessons and achieve well. Standards at the end of Year 6 are broadly average. Standards in mathematics and writing have improved because of initiatives taken and unconfirmed data indicates that the proportion of pupils gaining the higher level in mathematics has increased in the recent Year 6 national tests. A large number of pupils join or leave the school at various points in their school career, particularly in Years 3 to 6 and often without prior assessment data. As a result, external data provides limited insight into the school's performance. Over time, pupils make good progress from their varying starting points. The school monitors the progress of all pupils carefully, identifying early those pupils who require additional help or who are in danger of slipping behind. The school makes excellent use of a wide range of agencies and partnerships to support individuals and extend the learning opportunities of pupils. A key to the school's success is the outstanding care and guidance that it provides for pupils. New pupils are assimilated quickly into the school's ethos. Pupils have very positive attitudes and enjoy learning and, because their independent learning skills are developed consistently, there is a strong sense of pupils working with their teachers in partnership. Whilst there are examples of this partnership being further developed through high quality marking which gives a clear indication of what the pupil can do to further improve their work, this is not consistent across the school and subjects.

Behaviour is good and at times outstanding so that teachers are able to focus on ensuring that lessons are fun and interesting, reinforcing pupils' enjoyment. This is reflected in their above average attendance. Pupils feel exceptionally safe because safeguarding procedures are rigorous, the school is friendly and they have confidence in the adults. Pupils put into practice their excellent understanding of the importance of nutrition, well-being and exercise and are keen to apply what they have learnt by taking up the many opportunities that the school provides. They make an outstanding contribution to the school, taking their responsibilities extremely seriously. The school is a very cohesive community, bridging faiths and ethnicity, and it is a natural focus for the neighbourhood, playing a major role in helping to bring together the developing community of Cambourne. Pupils develop respect for others, and show compassion and care as a result of the curriculum and the school's international links. Pupils also learn to accept responsibility for the choices that they make, and show curiosity and creativity – reflected in their work in art - so that

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overall their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding.

The outstanding leadership of both the headteacher and deputy headteacher, along with the good leadership of the governing body, has been the driving force in establishing the school's unique and powerful ethos. This has provided the 'glue' which holds the school together, enabling it to accommodate the continuous increase in numbers, and to build rapidly from small beginnings in temporary accommodation to its current size. There is a sustained focus on learning and progress and high expectations shared by pupils and staff alike. The school's self-evaluation is accurate and based on rigorous monitoring systems which senior leaders use to identify the right priorities in the school improvement plan. The school has developed well since the last inspection, indicating good capacity for further improvement. Staff in leadership positions support the headteacher well but do not all have the broader overall leadership experience needed to help raise standards by improving teaching and learning.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that marking identifies what pupils can do to improve their work, linked to their targets where appropriate, and is consistent across the school and subjects.
- Enhance leadership skills of staff across the school by developing their experience in lesson observation and work scrutiny, and provide them with access to appropriate courses and training.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Pupils make good progress in lessons and achieve well because they develop confidence and skills as independent learners. They are articulate and express their ideas clearly, and work effectively in pairs and groups. They listen well to their teacher and each other. They concentrate and are absorbed by their various tasks, responding well to the active approaches and the different activities which often have a real purpose or audience. In a literacy lesson with Year 6, as part of their transition project with the secondary school, pupils made good progress because the unit of work had been planned very well and pupils demonstrated good prior learning using with confidence terms such as *metaphor*, *simile* and *personification*. They articulate and share their ideas confidently and they respond to their tasks with enthusiasm, producing very good work, using a full range of techniques.

Standards at the end of Year 2 show a rising trend and are close to or above average because there is a greater proportion of pupils who have experienced the Reception class where the foundations for good learning are laid. School data indicates that pupils who have been in the school for a significant period of time are more likely to attain higher standards, than those who join later. Pupils with English as an additional language make good progress, as do those with special educational needs

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and/or disabilities because of the quality of support they receive. Pupils who present challenging behaviour make good progress because staff manage their behaviour extremely well in a consistent and positive manner. Pupils from different ethnic heritages and those who are known to be eligible for free school meals also make good progress.

The foundations for their future economic well-being are laid well because pupils have very positive attitudes to learning; they are confident and articulate and have the expected level of skills by the time they transfer to secondary school.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Teachers are good listeners, valuing pupils' comments, fostering well their self-esteem and confidence. Mixed-age classrooms are managed well. Planning is detailed, informed by assessment so that extension and support meet the wide range of needs. Flexible approaches to groupings allow staff with particular enthusiasms or expertise to teach the groups. The aims and the context of lessons are shared and staff and pupils often establish together the success criteria for the particular learning, so that pupils assess how well they have learnt in a session. Pupils are confident to admit if they are still muddled because of the high quality of relationships that exist and the supportive ethos. Teaching assistants make a significant contribution to lessons because they are involved in the planning and have a clear understanding of their role and work in strong partnership with the teachers. Questioning to probe and extend pupils' thinking is skilled, in outstanding lessons

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

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exceptionally so.

Practical and often memorable experiences underpin the learning, the links between subjects developed well and exceptionally strong links established with outside agencies and local schools extend pupils’ learning and there are good enrichment opportunities. The school uses a wide range of support activities, including one-to-one support and a small nurture group, effectively developing their behavioural and social skills. The personal, social, health and emotional education programme makes a very important contribution to pupils’ personal development.

The school has very effective strategies to settle new pupils and excellent transition arrangements with the local secondary school. There is an extremely wide range of support from external agencies to support the needs of individual pupils. Teaching assistants are particularly well trained and have specialist areas so that they provide skilled input to support pupils. Individual needs are matched to specific support and this is monitored carefully. The school goes to great lengths to support families as well as pupils and the family centre provides a variety of facilities, including children’s centre activities and parenting groups run by the parent schools adviser and school-led activities. The after-school club provides a very pleasant atmosphere, with pupils of all age groups playing well together and providing good opportunities for developing social interaction and their social skills. It is well supervised by very supportive adults with a very good range of equipment and resources and promotes pupils’ healthy eating habits exceptionally well.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils’ needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and deputy headteacher hold an exceptionally clear vision for the school. Its unique ethos is underpinned by deliberate planning to foster spirituality, valuing and consideration of others, creativity, curiosity and the commonality which unites, rather than divides faiths. This is reflected in the work in classrooms, as even very young children consider and reflect on ‘the quiet place inside you’.

Governance is good, shifting its focus effectively from the operations and logistics associated with opening a new school to questioning and providing the school with good challenge and support. The school is a major focus within the local community and is making an outstanding contribution in helping to shape it. Pupils’ outstanding cultural development and their contribution to the community reflect the fact that the

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school is a very cohesive community that takes full advantage of its very diverse nature and its international links. The governors take their role with regard to safeguarding very seriously and stemming from this, safeguarding is highly embedded into the school’s ethos. The school is extremely inclusive in its philosophy and monitors the progress of all pupils carefully, intervening effectively to ensure that specific groups do not slip behind. There is strong teamwork, mutual support and high morale amongst staff.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school’s engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Although relatively new, staff have bonded together and there is a strong sense of teamwork. They have introduced many changes and procedures are in the process of being refined and consolidated. Staff are well trained and teaching assistants make a very strong contribution to the very positive working ethos. Staff have good relationships with the children and their parents and carers and this provides the foundation for the consistently good teaching. Children make good progress and are supported effectively to become increasingly independent in their learning. They concentrate well, get on well with each and behaviour is good. The curriculum is informed by good use of observation and assessment to identify the next steps in learning for a particular child and to inform and personalise future planning. There is a good balance of focused and play-based activities to reinforce learning, and the outdoor area, with its stimulating zoning that extends children’s literacy, physical and creative skills, is used well. Often, there are creative links to prior learning, so that ‘Will the Hippo fit into the cage?’ links back to a trip to the zoo, for example, with a strong sustained focus on developing language and numeracy skills. Skilled questioning is used to develop children’s thinking to a deeper level. The team, and particularly the Early Years Foundation Stage leader, is very reflective and good at

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identifying areas to develop so that, for example, there is a more sustained focus on writing as a result of their analysis.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Almost all parents and carers agree that their children enjoy school and that it keeps them safe. Most are happy with their children’s experience at the school and other aspects of the school’s provision. Inspectors agree with the majority of parents’ and carers’ views in that they judge the overall effectiveness as good. A few parents had concerns about their children’s progress and the way the school keeps them informed of this, its dealing with unacceptable behaviour and response to their suggestions. There are some children who can present challenging behaviour but these are managed well because of the staff’s consistent approaches. School leaders and governors consult the parents regularly and use this information in guiding their decisions, providing feedback about the results of surveys and action taken.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at The Vine Inter-Church Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 155 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 374 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	97	63	53	34	3	2	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	102	66	50	32	2	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	54	35	86	55	10	6	2	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	53	34	83	54	12	8	2	1
The teaching is good at this school	74	48	73	47	5	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	58	37	83	54	8	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	102	66	44	28	8	5	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	72	46	63	41	5	3	2	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	61	39	77	50	10	6	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	55	35	75	48	13	8	3	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	47	30	85	55	13	8	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	98	63	43	28	6	4	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	89	57	57	37	6	4	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



2 July 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Vine Inter-Church Primary School, Cambourne, CB23 6DY

Thank you for making us so welcome in your school. My special thanks go to those pupils who gave up part of their lunchtime to talk to us. What you had to say was very helpful. I'd like to share our findings with you.

You have helped create a good school. It is welcoming and friendly and you ensure that new children are quickly absorbed into The Vine way. You have faith and trust in the adults who look after you, which they do exceptionally well, and this means that you are confident that they will listen to you if you are troubled about something. The result is that you feel exceptionally safe in school. You have skilled teachers and because you behave so well, they can concentrate on ensuring that lessons are fun and interesting. This means that you enjoy learning, work hard, make good progress and develop as young people well. You make an outstanding contribution to the school and local community and have an exceptionally good understanding of what goes to make up a healthy lifestyle. You think about big issues, develop respect for others, the way they live and what they believe in and show compassion and care. You also learn to accept responsibility for the choices that you make, hopefully 'green,' and you also show that you can work independently, taking increasing responsibility for your learning so that you work with the staff. To help this even more, I have asked the headteacher to ensure that when staff mark your work they always give you clear targets so that you know how you can set about improving it.

The headteacher and the deputy headteacher lead the school extremely well. They are supported by other staff who take on leadership roles within the school. I have asked the headteacher to help them develop their leadership skills so that they are even more confident to take the school forward. I am sure that the school will continue to go from strength-to-strength with your 'fantastic' help by ensuring that you continue work hard and take full advantage of all the opportunities that the school provides.

Yours sincerely

Roderick Passant
Lead inspector

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