

The William de Yaxley CofE Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110849
Local Authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	310440
Inspection dates	10–11 December 2008
Reporting inspector	Ian Jones

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	213
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Karen Threlfall
Headteacher	Mr Graham Cooper
Date of previous school inspection	10–12 January 2005
School address	Landsdowne Road Yaxley Peterborough PE7 3JL
Telephone number	01733 240323
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Age group	7–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This voluntary aided Church of England junior school serves the village of Yaxley on the outskirts of Peterborough. The school is slightly smaller than most. The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is below average and almost all pupils speak English as their first language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with statements of special educational needs, is broadly average. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. Levels of attainment on entry to the school are increasing and are currently above average, having risen from broadly average in most recent years.

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 where pupils do well in all aspects of their development. They enjoy school, work hard and their standards by the end of Year 6 are well above average in English and above average in science and mathematics, where a slightly smaller proportion of pupils attain the higher levels. Achievement is good overall. Standards have risen significantly over the last few years, particularly in science, a key area of improvement since the previous inspection, and pupils very much enjoy the regular opportunities to take part in investigative work. In mathematics, while pupils' overall skills have improved, the level of challenge for the most able pupils is not as high as it could be. Changes to the curriculum and to teaching methods have led to some improvement, but it is too soon for the school to evaluate the effectiveness of these changes. There has been a good improvement in English, where effective teaching and well planned lessons are consistent features of provision.

The much improved standards are the result of good teaching. Pupils respond well to the clear rules for good behaviour. They listen carefully and respect each other's views. Teachers frequently use effective questioning to stimulate thinking. Lessons often feature the good use of information and communication technology (ICT) and this effectively supports learning by making it more interesting and contributing to pupils' enjoyment of lessons. Teachers generally have high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour, but on a few occasions the tasks set do not provide enough challenge and some pupils lose interest.

The curriculum is good. It effectively develops pupils' basic literacy and numeracy skills and offers many opportunities for enrichment. A thematic approach is being developed to help pupils to make useful links between subjects. Improvements are going well and help to make lessons more meaningful and interesting for pupils. There is a good range of visits and visitors that help bring the curriculum to life. Pupils enjoy a wide array of extra-curricular activities. Overall, pupils' personal development is good. The well planned personal, social and health education curriculum ensures that pupils develop a good awareness of the importance of a healthy lifestyle, and it helps them to become good citizens, and contributes effectively to their economic well being.

Parents value the good care, support and guidance provided for their children and know their children are safe at school. Most parents have nothing but praise for the school. One pupil said, 'My dad likes the school because the teachers are prepared to listen to him and will go out of their way to help'. Safeguarding procedures are appropriate. Pupils who need additional help are supported very well and they grow in confidence as their skills improve. The school tracks pupils' progress rigorously and has good systems to identify any groups or individuals who are not doing as well as they could.

The good leadership and management are important reasons for the school's success. The headteacher combines clarity of vision for school improvement with high expectations that are made clear to both pupils and staff who respond well by always looking to improve their work. The headteacher is supported well by the new

leadership team who have made a positive start by contributing to self-evaluation and the process of setting targets. However, because they are new to the role, they have not had all the necessary training to enable them to take the lead in school improvement. Consequently, it is too early to see the full impact of their work. The effective governing body supports the school well and is not afraid to hold it to account. The school has made good progress since the last inspection and is well set to build on its successes.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that the school evaluates the impact of strategies to raise progress of more able pupils in mathematics.
- Ensure that those new to leadership and management roles receive all the support and training they need to become fully effective

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards are well above average in English and above average in mathematics and science. Progress is consistently good through the school. Pupils enjoy reading and their standards are consistently high. Although standards of writing are not as high as in reading, reflecting the national picture, they are well above average. High levels of teachers' subject knowledge and interesting and stimulating lessons offer a wide range of opportunities for pupils to experience writing in different styles and for specific purposes. In mathematics, pupils are improving their ability to work out complex calculations and apply them in problem solving situations. This area has been a focus for the school and recent actions taken, such as additional training for staff and the use of additional resources, are leading to improvement. However, the school recognises that further work in this area is needed. Standards in science have improved rapidly since 2005 because the teaching of scientific skills is good and pupils enjoy the many opportunities to experiment. Pupils make good progress in ICT skills and reach well above average standards by the time they leave school. Those who need additional help or find learning more difficult receive effective support and make good progress as a result.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy lessons, concentrate and give good attention to the teacher. Most are enthusiastic about school and attendance is good. Spiritual, moral and cultural development is good. Work to improve good manners is achieving a particularly positive impact on pupils' personal development. They know about and adopt healthy lifestyles. The great majority feel safe in school. Pupils support each other effectively through the well established buddy system.

Behaviour is usually good, reflecting the positive relationships pupils enjoy with all adults in the school. In a small minority of lessons, some pupils lose interest and need guidance from staff about their conduct. Staff are good role models, providing an engaging and supportive learning environment that clearly influences individual pupils' learning. Pupils are provided with a good range of opportunities and responsibilities in school. They work well individually or as a member of a team and

the school council effectively influences improvements. Of particular note are the significant funds raised for charitable causes. Older pupils develop good levels of maturity, have a positive approach to helping each other and pursuing skills that will serve them well in the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Lessons are often lively and fun. A wide range of teaching methods maintains pupils' interest and helps to stimulate learning. Teaching provides many opportunities for pupils to discuss ideas and careful questioning helps to ensure good progress. Teachers use interactive whiteboards well to capture pupils' interest in lessons. There is much strength in the teaching of scientific investigation as well as reading and writing skills, which accounts for pupils' good progress in these subjects. Teaching is also good in mathematics but improvements to the curriculum are recent and their full impact has yet to be seen. Teachers' expectations are generally high, although in some lessons there is a lack of challenge. This explains why some pupils lose interest during lessons and make less progress. Teaching assistants work closely with teachers to support pupils who need extra help and ensure that they take a full part in lessons. Teachers make careful assessments of progress and use these effectively to improve the quality of pupils' work. Marking is mainly encouraging and affirming but does not always tell pupils what they should do to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum provides a broad range of activities that are relevant to the pupils' needs. The school recognises the need to further develop problem solving and the application of mathematical skills across the curriculum. Leaders are reviewing curriculum planning to improve links between subjects and to develop pupils' skills. There is very good support for pupils who find reading and writing more difficult. Plans are in place to provide an equally high level of support for learning in mathematics. Physical education provision has been enhanced through the sporting link with Stanground College. A strength of the curriculum is the extent to which links with ICT have been developed across the school, particularly in the core subjects and history and geography. There are well advanced plans for every classroom and pupil to have on-line internet access, to offer pupils further learning opportunities. The extra-curricular provision is excellent and the many and varied lunchtime and after-school activities are well attended and make a significant contribution to pupil's personal development. Many visitors talk with the pupils to enrich and extend their learning. The well-planned personal, social and health education programme plays an important part in helping pupils understand their own, and other people's, feelings and how to keep safe.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pastoral guidance is good and staff and pupils work well together, resulting in trusting relationships. As a consequence, pupils feel safe and have confidence in raising any concerns with adults in the school. Appropriate arrangements for child protection and the safeguarding of pupils are in place. The strong working relationship between the school and external local agencies, benefits pupils greatly and ensures their needs are fully met through well planned and effective support programmes. Of note are the early successes achieved by the nurture group in raising the self esteem and confidence of a number of vulnerable pupils, enabling them to engage in learning within the classroom.

Governors are actively involved in ensuring statutory health and safety requirements are fully met and risk assessment is well embedded in school practice. The school's good working partnership with parents has helped to maintain and improve individual pupil's attendance. Although most pupils reach challenging targets, the school recognises the need to review the setting of more challenging targets for higher ability pupils, especially in mathematics.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher leads well, with high expectations of what the school could achieve and a clear vision for its future. He is supported well by the other senior staff, although they are new to their posts and have not had the time to have a full impact on school improvement. Nevertheless, self-evaluation is good and the school's track record shows its success in identifying weaknesses and introducing measures to rectify them. For example, when standards in science fell in 2005, the school improved teaching and the curriculum to include lessons that focused on investigative work. These moves proved very effective, and standards in science are now one of the strengths of the school. The school has nurtured productive links with other schools and establishments that do much to enhance pupils' skills in areas such as physical education. School leaders promote community cohesion well by involving the community in many school events and providing opportunities for pupils to learn from others from a range of faiths and ethnic backgrounds. A team of staff and governors, the Multicultural Global Links Group, has good plans in place to develop links with pupils in other parts of the world. Pupils regularly raise funds to support a school in Vellor, India, which has well established links with the diocese. The enthusiastic governors support the school well and hold it to account effectively.

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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

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
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
How well 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

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.

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



12 December 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The William de Yaxley CE Aided School, Yaxley, PE7 3JL

Thank you for making me feel so welcome when I visited your school recently. I would like to tell you what I think about how well you are getting on and how well your school is helping you to learn. There are many good things about your school. Some of them are:

- you get on well with each other and all the adults at school
- you achieve high standards
- you learn a lot in lessons and make good progress because the teaching you receive is good
- all of the adults in your school make sure that you are well looked after
- all the people who help run your school make sure that you get a good education.

I agree with your parents that you go to a good school. All of the adults in your school want it to be even better. I think that the most important thing to do is for teachers to make learning for those of you who are already good at mathematics more challenging so that you reach even higher standards. You can help by working hard and always doing your best. I have also asked your headteacher and governors to keep on supporting the new senior teachers to help them to continue to be really good at their jobs.

I hope that you will all continue to work hard and do well.

Yours sincerely

Ian Jones
Lead inspector