

SUMMARY OF THE INSPECTION REPORT

Curzon C of E Combined School
Penn Street Village
Nr Amersham
Buckinghamshire

Telephone number 01494 712251

Headteacher : Miss C Kay

The school was inspected in February 1997. This is a summary of the inspector's full report, which can be obtained from the school.

Inspection carried out under Section 10 of the Education (Schools) Act 1996

Introduction

The school is set in leafy, rural surroundings in the Chilterns. The majority of pupils come from supportive families with favourable socio-economic circumstances. None of the 176 pupils are eligible for free school meals.

Only four children come from minority ethnic groups (2.4%).

The number on roll rose significantly in 1995, and dropped only slightly in 1996. The school provides for pupils in the first year of Key Stage 3, but this arrangement will cease at the end of this academic year, with resulting effects on the budget. Some pupils enter the school at Year 4, transferring from the local schools.

The accommodation is very cramped and there are several mobile classrooms, which parents complained were too cold in winter and too hot in summer. There is a lack of space for storage, lunch, and library, and the one hall is also used as a teaching room. This hinders access to the library which is also located in the hall. Parents were also concerned about the lack of security on the site.

Main findings of the inspection

Curzon C of E Combined School is a very good school with some outstanding features. It is very well managed, has clear educational objectives, and provides very effectively for pupils' academic and personal development.

Attainment and progress

Standards of attainment are above the national expectations in nearly all subjects, with some outstanding attainment, and pupils make consistently good progress across the school in nearly all subjects.

By the end of Key Stages 1 and 2, attainment is above national expectations in all aspects of English and science, where pupils make consistently good progress. It is in line with national expectations in mathematics, and is often above this by the end of Key Stage 2, with sound or good progress being made. Attainment is high in art, music, history, geography, physical education and religious education. Attainment in design and technology is above national expectations by the end of Key Stage 1, but is in line with national expectations by the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils are making good progress in design and technology, but older pupils have not always had the benefit of the effective teaching which is now being provided. Attainment in information technology is in line with national expectations by the end of both key stages, and progress is generally effective across most aspects of the subject. Pupils in Year 7 make good progress in all subjects and are attaining levels at or above those expected for age.

Results of standard assessment tests/tasks at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 have shown a marked improvement over the past five years, and are now all above national averages.

Pupils with special educational needs achieve standards appropriate to their abilities and make good progress. However, many of the pupils who receive additional support have needs which are well within the normal range, rather than special needs as described in the Code of Practice for Special Educational Needs.

Quality of Education

The school provides a high quality of education through a broad, balanced, interesting and imaginative curriculum, supported by high quality extra-curricular activities and a range of visits and visitors.

The quality of teaching is consistently high throughout all key stages, and the majority of lessons observed were good or very good, with a few instances of outstanding teaching. No teaching observed was unsatisfactory. Good subject expertise, combined with specialist teaching in Key Stage 2 is used effectively to raise standards of attainment. Teachers work well together as a team, and very good support is provided by non-teaching staff, with some outstanding contributions in art. Parent volunteers also provide effective support in classrooms, and the support of parents and non-teaching staff makes a significant contribution to the high standards achieved by pupils.

There is effective assessment of pupils' progress, particularly in the core subjects, and assessment is used to inform planning to meet individual needs, but there is currently no common approach across the school.

Pupils' personal development and behaviour

The school provides extremely well for the personal development of pupils through the personal, social and health education programme and through other lessons and school activities. Provision for pupils' social and moral development is outstanding. There are many opportunities for them to show initiative and to take responsibility for their own learning, particularly through both independent and collaborative investigation and research. They have many opportunities to discuss and reflect on moral issues, and they make a major contribution to the day-to-day running of the school, in the long term planning, and in developing their own code of behaviour. Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning, and work with effort and enthusiasm. They behave very well, and the school is an orderly, harmonious and happy community. There is good provision for spiritual and cultural development across the curriculum as well as through assemblies, class worship and religious education. Pupils have many opportunities to learn about their own and other religions, cultures and traditions, and to develop spiritual awareness. Their attendance is good.

Efficiency

The leadership of the headteacher and governors is outstanding, with clear vision for school improvement. The enthusiasm, support and commitment of governors is a strength of the school. The vision of the school is shared by the headteacher, governors, staff and pupils, and is reflected in its aims, which are taken very seriously and are used in monitoring its performance. The school is very well managed, and

monitors and evaluates all aspects of its work, using this information to plan effectively for further development, with a clear focus on raising standards.

The staff work hard to minimise the ill effects of the cramped and sometimes unsatisfactory accommodation, and the good behaviour of pupils is also a key factor in enabling the accommodation to be used effectively. The governors have taken steps to improve the security of the building, but there is no formal school entrance, and the hall is used as a thoroughfare, teaching space and library.

There are adequate resources to teach the National Curriculum in most subjects, but teaching is impeded by insufficient resources in design technology, music and information technology, and the quantity, quality and range of books needs to be extended.

The school makes very effective use of time, resources, and accommodation to promote good attainment; it provides very good value for money.

Key issues for action

The headteacher, governors and appropriate authority need to:

- * raise the sound standards in mathematics, information technology, and design technology in Key Stages 2 and 3, to the consistently high attainment in other subjects;
- * introduce a common approach to assessment across the school, building on existing good practice;
- * purchase the required resources to facilitate the teaching of music, design technology and information technology, and provide an appropriate stock of fiction and non-fiction books;
- * seek ways of improving the accommodation to support and better reflect the high quality of education which takes place within it.

Summary of the responses to the parents' questionnaire

Percentage of responses in each category:

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel the school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school	41.9	44.6	6.8	5.4	1.4
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	40	36.0	6.7	14.7	2.7
The school handles complaints from parents well	22.2	27.8	16.7	27.8	5.6
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	20.3	54.1	13.5	12.2	0
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	24	48.0	13.3	13.3	1.3
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	29.3	52.0	14.7	4.0	0
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	35.1	48.6	10.8	5.4	0
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	29.7	45.9	4.1	17.6	2.7
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	41.9	35.1	14.9	6.8	1.4
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	45.9	44.6	6.8	2.7	0
My child(ren) like(s) school	47.3	44.6	2.7	4.1	1.4

The governing body is responsible for drawing up an ACTION PLAN within forty working days of receiving the report, showing what the school is going to do about the issues. This action plan will be circulated to all parents at the school.

THE INSPECTION

Curzon C of E Combined School was inspected as part of a national programme of school inspection. The purpose is to identify strengths and weaknesses in schools that may improve the quality of education offered and raise standards achieved by their pupils. The inspection of all schools within a four-year cycle is also designed to give parents more information about their children's schools. A copy of this summary is sent to every family with a child at the school.

The inspection of Curzon C of E Combined School took place between 10th February and 13th February 1997. It was undertaken by an independent team of five inspectors, led by Dr J M McMullan RgI. The inspection was commissioned by the Office for Standards in Education, a department of central government.

The team was required to report on the **standards** achieved by pupils, the **quality of education** provided by the school, the **efficiency** with which financial resources were used and the contribution made by the school to its pupils' **spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**.



Buckinghamshire County Council

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Mr Danny Sullivan
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Oxford Diocesan Board of Education
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North Hinksey
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Contact Mr Raj Popat
Direct line 01296 383710
Your ref
My ref E 1/180 RP
Fax 01296 382988
E-mail rpopat@buckscc.gov.uk
Date 28 August 2002

Dear Danny

**RE: CURZON COMBINED SCHOOL, PENN STREET, AMERSHAM, BUCKS
PROPOSED CHANGE OF CATEGORY FROM CONTROLLED TO AIDED STATUS**

I refer to my letter of 9 August 2002 to Ms Susan Everson, Chair of Governors, Curzon Combined School, which was also copied to you (see copy attached).

I have not as yet received a response to my letter, but appreciate that this may well be due to the school being closed at present. That said, you will appreciate that if this proposal is to be considered at the 11 September 2002 meeting of the Buckinghamshire School Organisation Committee then I require the missing documentation/information as a matter of urgency.

In the circumstances I would be grateful if you could perhaps contact Ms Everson and request that the documentation/information requested is forwarded to me as soon as possible.

I have copied this letter to Ms Everson, David Ayres and Clare Gray for their information.

Yours sincerely

Raj Popat
Secretary and Solicitor to Buckinghamshire School Organisation Committee

Copy to: Ms Susan Everson, Chair of Governors, c/o Curzon Combined School,
Penn Street, Amersham. Bucks HP7 0QL

Strategic Manager (Schools) – FAO David Ayres, Head of School Organisation,
Tower Block, Aylesbury

Clare Gray, Admin Services, Old County Offices

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54



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My ref RP/E1/180
Fax 01296 382988
E-mail rpopat@buckscc.gov.uk
Date 09 August 2002

Dear Ms Everson

RE: PROPOSED CHANGE OF CATEGORY FROM CONTROLLED TO AIDED-STATUS

I refer to my letter of 19 July 2002 in this matter. I have now had an opportunity to consider the documentation submitted against the requirements of the Education (Change of Category of Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2000.

As far as I can see the missing documentation/information includes the following:

- 1 Details of what consultation took place before the proposals were published. Copies of – all consultation documents, and the views and responses of the persons consulted need to be submitted.
- 2 Please provide the following information relating to the school:
 - (a) the lower and upper age limits of pupils attending the school;
 - (b) the physical capacity of the school; and
 - (c) the number of pupils at the school.

A forecast of the matters specified in (b) and (c) for each of the subsequent five school years. In addition please provide the same information for all maintained schools within a two-mile radius of the school (for this purpose you may use the attached grid).

- 3 Please provide details of the tenure (freehold or leasehold) on which the site of the school is held and, if the premises are held on a lease, details of the lease.
- 4 Please provide details of any trusts on which the school premises are held or it is proposed will be held or any proposed trusts on which the school premises will be held.
- 5 Details of the body or authority to whom, on the date on which it is proposed that the school change category, it is proposed that the land should be transferred.
- 6 I note that the school was inspected under Section 23 of the Schools Inspection Act 1996 in February 1997. I would be grateful if you could forward the details of the outcome of this inspection.

Ms Susan Everson
Chair of Governors
C/o Curzon Combined School

- 2 -

9 August 2002

RE: PROPOSED CHANGE OF CATEGORY

7 Please confirm where the statutory notice dated 8 July 2002 was published.

I look forward to receiving the information/documentation listed above as soon as possible. I would confirm that subject to receiving the same, the proposals will be considered at the next meeting of the Buckinghamshire School Organisation Committee on 11 September 2002. I have copied this letter to Danny Sullivan at the Oxford Diocesan Board of Education for his information.

Yours sincerely

Raj Popat
Secretary and Solicitor to Buckinghamshire School Organisation Committee

CC: Mr Danny Sullivan, Director of Education, Oxford Diocesan Board of Education, Diocesan Church House, North Hinksey, Oxford OX2 0NB.

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School	Age Range	MOE * cap'ty	NOR						
			last year	current year	forecast years **				
School in public notice									
Other schools									



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Direct line 01296 383710
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Fax 01296 382988
E-mail rpopat@buckscc.gov.uk
Date 19 July 2002

Dear Ms Everson

PROPOSED CHANGE OF CATEGORY FROM CONTROLLED TO AIDED STATUS

I refer to the documentation in this matter received by me on 15 July 2002.

I will now consider the documentation against the requirements of the Education (Change of Category of Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2000. I will revert back to you in the event that any further documentation is required to comply with the information prescribed in the 2000 Regulations.

Subject to this, and my receiving any further documentation required, the proposal can be considered at the 11 September 2002 meeting of the Buckinghamshire School Organisation Committee.

Yours sincerely

Raj Popat
Solicitor and Secretary to Buckinghamshire School Organisation Committee

Copy to: Strategic Manager, Schools – FAO: David Ayres, Head of School Organisation,
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Clare Gray, Admin Services, Old County Offices

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58