

Brimscombe Church of England (VA) Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115690
Local Authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	357799
Inspection dates	31 January 2011–1 February 2011
Reporting inspector	David Carrington

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	84
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sarah Dalby
Headteacher	Karen Riordan
Date of previous school inspection	20 November 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. They observed ten lessons led by four teachers. Meetings were held with the headteacher, the whole staff team and members of the governing body. The inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at school planning, assessment data, records of children's work, the school's checks on the quality of teaching and a number of policy documents. The team received 46 questionnaires from parents and carers and also evaluated those from school staff and the pupils.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Whether school self-evaluation is focused rigorously on improving pupils' progress.
- The extent of improvements in pupils' achievement by the end of Year 6, especially in writing and for boys.
- The success in overcoming past staffing difficulties and eliminating a possible legacy of weaker achievement.
- The degree to which the governing body adopts a probing approach to its work.

Information about the school

Brimscombe CofE is smaller than the average primary school and takes its pupils from the village and surrounding area. Nearly all the pupils are from White British backgrounds and very few speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is average. More pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities than is usually found in a school of this size. Most of these have some form of learning difficulty.

The school is arranged into four mixed-age classes. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught alongside a small number of Year 1 pupils. The governing body manage the part-time Jellybeans pre-school provision, which was also inspected by the team.

There have been ten teaching staff changes since the previous inspection, which is a high proportion for this four-class school.

The school has been awarded Healthy School, Eco School, Activemark and Artsmark status.

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

Brimscombe CofE Primary is a good school. It has very successfully managed a period of considerable disruption to staffing and, therefore, to the pupils' education. Through this period it has maintained a brisk rate of improvement. Attainment and progress are rising due to the outstanding management of teaching and learning. Pupils reach above-average levels in their work, including writing. They make good progress because lessons are of consistently good quality and there are some significant strengths of provision. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make first-rate progress because the quality of care, guidance and support is outstanding. This is due to the watchfulness of all members of staff. Thus, the pupils feel remarkably safe in school and have an excellent understanding of how to keep healthy. They also behave very responsibly, sensibly and calmly. The very rare example of poor behaviour is managed expertly and very positively. Pupils make an excellent contribution to the school community because they continually help each other to do well in school.

The school's successes stem from the high expectations and ambitions of staff and the governing body. The headteacher provides an extremely strong drive for improvement and has led the school most capably throughout the period since the previous inspection. The good leadership of the school is shared amongst the team of teaching and non-teaching staff who are all determined to do their best for the pupils. School self-evaluation is rooted in robust systems to track and improve pupils' progress and to check the quality of provision, particularly teaching. Any shortcomings are identified quickly and the resulting work to bring improvement is effective. Priorities for improvement are identified very clearly and are the right ones for the school. The governing body adopts a challenging, but supportive, approach to its work of checking the school's performance. Staff and members of the governing body enjoy their work; this enjoyment is infectious and, therefore, the pupils respond well to the school's warm and welcoming ethos.

School staff and the governing body recognise that there remains a number of areas for continuing improvement. Chief among these is the promotion of ever higher achievement. Whilst the more-able pupils and those with learning difficulties are set challenging work that helps them achieve well, provision for middle-ability pupils is not quite as effective, although they too make good progress. The successes in raising boys' achievement and that of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are evidence of the school's good improvement and capacity to maintain its rising trend. The tightening of links between the already effective Jellybeans provision and the good education provided in Reception is another area for development which staff are keen to tackle.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen the provision for middle-ability pupils by:

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- ensuring their work is always sufficiently different from that of other pupils and tailored to their needs
- linking their targets as displayed in class more clearly to the work in books.
- Bring greater integration in provision between the Jellybeans and Reception classes by:
 - planning shared learning experiences
 - encouraging the two groups of children to work together more often.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**1**

Pupils' progress in lessons is invariably good. This was observed throughout the school. Work in pupils' books shows that such progress is maintained across longer periods. Some older pupils' writing is of very high quality. In the lesson for Years 5 and 6, devoted to the creation of a Victorian estate agent's house details, the pupils were enthused to work hard and the use of computers contributed strongly to their development of good skills in persuasive writing. The pupils have ample opportunities to write in many different ways and styles. The same Years 5 and 6 pupils' books show some evocative writing about new homes and their neighbours, for example 'My name is Rebeckah Wire'. She paused, a far-off look on her face. 'You would be a good friend for Chili,' she said distantly...'

Boys work as successfully as girls and are well motivated to make good progress in both English and mathematics. Higher-attaining pupils do well in school and the proportion reaching the higher levels is rising. The school's effective tracking of progress ensures challenging targets are set for the higher attainers. The same applies to other ability groups, although the work for middle attainers is occasionally too similar to that set for other groups.

The pupils help and encourage each other to good achievement in all aspects of school life. Relationships are a noticeable strength. The pupils say that if anyone is lonely, sitting to one side at playtime, or unhappy, others will encourage them to join their game or work with them. The pupils show great support for those with learning difficulties. Some researched sign language to help them share their fun with pupils with language and communication difficulties. Such support for other pupils contributes strongly to the excellent progress made by pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

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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	2
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	1
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
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	2

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

How effective is the provision?

The proportion of good teaching has risen steadily since the previous inspection and outstanding features are now to be observed in many lessons. Planning is detailed and focused on key skills and knowledge. Teaching assistants provide very successful support for their pupils, many of whom have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Pupils make good progress in their learning because lessons are usually packed with practical activity. This was observed as Years 3 and 4 pupils retrieved a parachute discarded on the school field by the pilot of a crashed Spitfire. They pieced together a reconstruction of the events leading to its discovery, acted out some of the events and then planned a factual retelling in a newspaper article. In this lesson, the teacher made good use of assessment to support learning. The pupils were provided with several opportunities to talk together about how successful they were in meeting their target for the lesson. Each classroom contains a display of pupils' targets and graphic illustration of where each pupil has reached. The pupils know their targets well and marking in books takes good account of the pupils' self-evaluation. However, the classroom-displayed targets are not always identified clearly enough in the books, especially of middle attainers, which reduces their potency as aids to best progress.

The curriculum is particularly effective in promoting pupils' personal, social and health education. It is also well planned to develop the necessary basic skills in English, mathematics and information and communication technology. There is ample time for

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physical education and the pupils talk highly of the many opportunities for sports and games, both within school time and as part of the good programme of out of school activities. The refinement of provision to ensure middle attainers make maximum progress is the current focus of curriculum improvement.

The sterling quality of care, guidance and support is very marked in the way the school works with pupils with any form of vulnerability or barrier to learning. Thus, pupils' attendance rates, behaviour, attitudes and ambition are fostered most effectively. The school has developed a strong web of partnerships with outside agencies, parents and carers to ensure pupils' individual needs are met with conspicuous success. Provision in the Jellybeans setting is underpinned by very effective arrangements for childcare, which show in the keen focus on children's welfare. The children very much enjoy their time with Jellybeans and are well prepared for the next stage of their development.

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 very strong educational direction, sensitive support and high expectations of the headteacher have helped the school through the recent period of unsettled staffing. This high-quality leadership has led to high staff morale, a very strong team approach to challenges and full acceptance of accountability for pupils' progress. Staff are actively involved in auditing the school's work and tracking pupils' progress. Communication between the headteacher, staff and the governing body is open and efficient. Everyone knows their role in improving pupils' learning and progress, managing the different subjects, and in planning lessons that take account of individual needs and interests. For these reasons, along with the excellent care, guidance and support, pupils have good equality of opportunity. There is absolutely no tolerance of any form of discrimination.

The safeguarding of pupils is also good. The pupils are kept safe and secure in school, which they and their parents and carers recognise. All the adults in school are vigilant, risks are minimised and the vetting of adults is robust. Safeguarding documentation is up to date, reflects the latest guidance and is checked regularly.

The school promotes community cohesion well. The pupils' pride in the achievement of others and willingness to support their many friends demonstrate their strong sense of their own community and why it matters. The pupils have some good opportunities to communicate with children in The Gambia and to meet pupils from other parts of the United Kingdom. School leaders are working successfully to make such experiences more frequent and meaningful.

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Parents and carers are very supportive of their children's learning and a good partnership has been forged between home and school. They recognise the school's many good features, including the effectiveness of staff in helping their children enjoy school. After a difficult period for staffing, it is evident that the school uses its many resources well in promoting improved progress and attainment.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
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	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

The Reception children are enthusiasts for learning. Great fun is had as they choose from the many activities on offer. Some visibly enjoyed ironing their cloaks or vacuuming the carpet which was done with great gusto. Others took the role of knight in the castle, whilst a few investigated the interactive whiteboard, producing elaborate patterns of colour and texture. They also enjoy their outside time. Plunging their hands into cold water was the source of great amusement and enthusiastic talk of what it felt like.


Provision in Reception is a well-planned blend of such child-centred learning and adult-led, more formal guidance. The children are keen to learn about letter sounds and blends and to take the first steps in writing. They make good progress from their starting points, which are slightly below the typically expected levels of skills and knowledge. Provision and outcomes in Reception are much improved over the situation at the previous inspection and are evidence of the good leadership and management of the phase.

This good leadership extends to provision in Jellybeans. The children are happy and content and thoroughly enjoy discovering what is held in the 'big box'. The Chinese lanterns, costume, toy dragon and rabbit introduced them to another culture and was planned to lead later into a celebration of the New Year of the Rabbit. The children showed excellent response as they walked to the school hall for their physical

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development session. Intense concentration was shown on their faces as they balanced on benches and climbed over apparatus.

At present, much of the provision in the two parts of the Early Years Foundation Stage  Jellybeans and Reception - is planned and operates separately. Since there are complementary strengths in each part, the school recognises that greater opportunities for shared learning are the logical way to build on what has already been achieved. This includes increased shared use of the well-resourced and attractive outside area that is easily accessible from both classrooms and also from the Years 1 and 2 base.

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

There was a good return rate of questionnaires so parents' and carers' views are clear. Positive views were much in the majority with many parents and carers identifying strengths of the school, including how it helped pupils to keep safe and the welcome extended to all pupils and their families. A small number shared concerns. Apart from some questions about the management of behaviour, there was no noticeable trend in these. Inspectors judge outstanding behaviour to be a very noticeable feature of the school and the pupils and majority of parents and carers share this view.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Brimscombe CofE 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 46 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 84 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	23	50	21	46	2	4	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	33	72	13	28	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	21	46	22	48	3	7	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	18	39	24	52	2	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	31	67	10	22	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	26	57	18	39	2	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	30	65	13	28	1	2	1	2
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)	22	48	20	43	1	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	26	57	15	33	4	9	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	20	43	18	39	7	15	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	27	59	12	26	3	7	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	27	59	17	37	1	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	25	54	18	39	2	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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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 February 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Brimscombe CofE Primary School, Stroud GL45 2QR

We were impressed with the welcome you gave us when we visited your school recently. We also thought your behaviour was excellent and that you work well together. We judge that you go to a good school. You told us this yourselves and your parents and carers agree with you. We have identified a long list of strengths in our report. These are the most important ones.

- You make good progress and do well in your work. Some of your writing is of very good quality.
- Children in Reception thoroughly enjoy their learning.
- The Jellybeans play and learn happily. They had great fun finding out about China and particularly liked repeating the name of that country!
- You have an excellent understanding of how to keep healthy and safe.
- You are extremely well cared for and helped to do well.
- Your teachers make your work interesting and help you learn lots of new things.
- Your school is well led and is improving all the time.

To help the school become even better we have listed two main things for more improvement.

- Make sure that the work provided for different groups is not always the same and that your targets are clearly listed in your books.
- Give children in Jellybeans and Reception more chances to work and play together.

You can help your teachers make these improvements by sharing your ideas for the topics you might study and the different ways you can find out about them. We thought some of the things you shared with us about how to improve your learning were really helpful.

Yours sincerely

David Carrington

Lead inspector

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