

Winchcombe Abbey Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	132782
Local Authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	360435
Inspection dates	28–29 June 2011
Reporting inspector	John Eadie

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	197
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Debbie Andrews
Headteacher	Helen Springett
Date of previous school inspection	29 November 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They visited 23 lessons or part lessons and observed 7 teachers. Inspectors held meetings with leaders and managers, staff, pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and another governor. They observed the school's work and looked at a variety of documentation, including the school's improvement plan, policies and procedures, particularly those concerning safeguarding. Inspectors looked at the data showing the progress that pupils are making and evidence from the school's own monitoring as well as that of the School Improvement Partner. Questionnaires, returned by 80 parents and carers, were analysed, as were others completed by 91 pupils in Years 3 to 6 and 14 staff.

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

- The progress of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, as data suggest that they are making less progress than others.
- The progress of more-able pupils compared to the less able, as data suggest that they are making better progress relative to their abilities.
- The effectiveness of initiatives to raise standards and improve pupils' progress in writing.
- The reasons for the significant drop in attainment in Year 2 in 2010 and whether this has been reversed this year.

Information about the school

The very large majority of pupils at this slightly smaller-than-average-sized primary school come from White British backgrounds. The majority of the remainder represent other White backgrounds. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language and those that do are at early stages of learning the language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is increasing, but is still below average. The proportion identified with special educational needs and/or disabilities is increasing and is above average, although it varies between year groups, differing from 10% to 40%. Most of those pupils have moderate or specific learning difficulties, speech, language or communication needs, or behavioural, emotional or social difficulties. The headteacher took up post in September 2010.

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, which gives outstanding value for money. Pupils learn and achieve well and they are extremely successful in many aspects of their personal development. Rates of attendance have been high for the last three years, reflecting pupils' enjoyment of school. The many positive features lead to outstanding outcomes for pupils. That is a considerable improvement since the last inspection, when the school was judged to be satisfactory.

There are a number of excellent features and perhaps the most significant of these is the outstanding care, guidance and support provided for pupils. That results in them feeling exceptionally happy and safe in school. That view is shared by parents and carers, many of whom commented positively, saying such things as 'The priority of the teachers is the children and their well-being.' Links with parents and carers are good and outside agencies are used very well when necessary to support potentially vulnerable pupils and their families.

Pupils behave extremely well and are thoughtful, considerate and very responsive to the needs of others. That was demonstrated very well in the way that even very young children react with great sensitivity to others with significant needs. Pupils have adopted healthy lifestyles exceptionally well and were keen to say how they encourage others to adopt this. They show considerable knowledge of the factors that affect many aspects of their health and emotional well-being. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding as the pupils have a keen understanding of ethical and moral issues. The pupils resolve conflicts intelligently and the school has worked hard to provide first-hand experiences so that they appreciate similarities and differences between their own and others' cultures.

One of the most important improvements since the last inspection has been in accelerating pupils' progress. It is now consistently good and, although the school has set its sights on raising standards in English and mathematics still higher, pupils' attainment is above average at the end of Year 6. The key reason for that is the very successful initiatives that have improved the quality of teaching. Staff were keen to say how they have valued the support they have received to develop their skills, particularly this year, and how this is benefiting pupils' learning. A few weaknesses remain. For example, there are some lessons when pupils spend too long in discussions and listening before getting on with a written task. Pupils, too, recognise that as there is a board in the school where pupils can suggest improvements. One pupil has written that they would like 'longer time for written work after discussion'. Although a good start has been made at setting targets to help pupils know what they need to learn next, this is not yet consistent between subjects or classes.

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The new headteacher has quickly established where improvements need to be made and staff were very keen to say that she has refocused their efforts and increased the pace of progress considerably. All staff are involved in the process of self-evaluation and the governing body is also involved well. A very accurate picture has been built of the school's strengths and areas for development. Bearing this in mind, alongside the progress that has been made, particularly recently, the school has a good capacity for sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' attainment and improve their progress by ensuring that:
 - pupils spend less time on whole-class discussions and learning and more on individual and group tasks that promote active learning
 - teaching assistants are involved more effectively in aiding pupils' learning
- Improve pupils' attainment and accelerate their progress in English and mathematics by:
 - using the current systems of assessment to set precise targets for pupils' next steps in learning that match each one's abilities and needs accurately
 - ensuring that teachers use the next steps when they are planning learning activities for future lessons
 - ensuring that teachers use the next steps when they are feeding back to pupils on the success of their learning and give time for pupils to respond to this feedback
 - sharing the next steps consistently with pupils.
 - by ensuring relevant activities are devised when whole-class learning is planned.

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

Children join the school with levels of skills and knowledge lower than those expected for their age. They make good progress through the school and leave with above-average attainment. That is the case for all groups of pupils. The headteacher identified that more-able pupils were making faster progress than the less able. Initiatives were put in place and have been successful in tackling the slower progress of the less able. They have been effective especially for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, whose progress has accelerated rapidly. The headteacher had also identified that pupils known to be eligible for free school meals seemed also to be making slower progress. Deeper analysis revealed that it was due to the particular characteristics of the groups of pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 last year. Attainment in Year 2 for this year has improved well.

Pupils are achieving well and say they, thoroughly, enjoy learning as teachers make their lessons fun. That was clear in a mathematics lesson in Year 3, when the initial task for the more able was to see how many multiplication sums they could complete in three minutes. The pupils' enthusiasm from their success was tangible as one pupil completed all 144 sums on the sheet and almost all the others managed more than 100 in the given time. Enjoyment in learning was also evident in an English lesson in Year 6, when pupils were planning to write a biography. Great enthusiasm was promoted as the teacher acted as

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though she was at a school reunion in 2031 and was delighted to meet many ex-pupils who are now famous. That approach, which involved good interaction with the pupils, led into the task extremely well and ensured that rapid learning took place.

Pupils help significantly in aiding the smooth running of the school, taking on responsibilities willingly and effectively, such as peer mediation. Their views are valued and they feel that they have a voice in the school. Pupils' involvement in the wider community is good, but actions to bring about improvements are restricted to charity collections. Pupils are developing a good range of skills to prepare them for the life of work, such as those of working independently and in groups. The development of their basic skills is good, but not as good in information and communication technology (ICT) as it is in English and mathematics.

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	2
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	2
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	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

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 quality of teaching has improved and is now good. Lessons are typified by enthusiasm and enjoyment and this is due to the excellent relationships that exist between pupils and other adults. Lessons are planned well to move learning on progressively. Teaching assistants play a valuable role in aiding learning when they are working with groups, particularly, although not exclusively, for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. However, the use of teaching assistants is not always planned so effectively when the teacher has the whole class together. There are also times in lessons when a

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whole-class session goes on for too long and learning for some pupils slows, as either they have already understood or are struggling to keep up.

There have been improvements in the systems for assessing pupils' progress and teachers are now well aware of what pupils have learnt already. A close check is kept on the progress of each individual and these assessments are used well to identify any in danger of underachieving. Effective strategies are put in place to help any such pupils to catch up. Assessments are also used well to identify the effectiveness of learning in lessons so that teachers can adapt their planning accordingly. Pupils are involved in the process of assessment, often being asked to evaluate the effectiveness of their, or their classmates, learning. Teachers are beginning to use assessment information to inform pupils of the next steps they need to take to improve. However, such targets are not yet sufficiently precise or used consistently.

The curriculum is planned well to provide a good range of learning opportunities to interest and engage the pupils. It is enhanced well by visitors and visits and a good selection of well-attended clubs and activities. The sporting activities are particularly popular and the school does well in inter-school competitions. Strategies to improve pupils' progress in writing have been particularly successful and, for example, in Year 6, this year most pupils are reaching standards at least as high in writing as in reading. The school has recognised the need to improve pupils' learning in ICT and plans are already in place to improve provision.

Pupils are valued as individuals and feel that there is always someone to whom they can turn if they have a problem. That is indicative of the high levels of care and support provided by all adults.

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?

There is a clear ambition, shared by all staff and the governing body, to continue to improve and become an outstanding school. That ambition emanates from the headteacher and has been communicated extremely well. On their questionnaires, all staff agreed, almost all strongly, that they know what the school is trying to achieve and are involved in the process. The governing body has also refocused and has become a strong and well-organised body, with the capacity to meet the school's needs. It understands the school's strengths and key areas for development well and takes a constructive approach that supports and challenges the school well.

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Equality of opportunity is at the heart of the school's ethos and is evidenced by the way that differences in performance between groups are identified and eliminated. The school is almost entirely monocultural and the school recognises the need for pupils to have opportunities to challenge stereotypical views. Safeguarding procedures are robust and all necessary policies are in place and clear. However, a few of these are in need of updating.

Community cohesion is promoted well. The school is an extremely cohesive community and there is a very good understanding of the context of the local community and its needs. Some links have been developed with more culturally diverse areas, although pupils' understanding of cultural diversity in the United Kingdom, Europe and the wider world is still a little limited.

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	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	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	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make a good start in the Reception class. By the time they join Year 1, they have made good progress and their attainment is average. They make particularly good progress in developing skills to support their future learning in writing and in their learning of letter sounds to help them to start reading. For some children, their progress in social and emotional development is not so good, but this has been analysed well by the teacher and steps have been put in place to tackle this.

The outside area and spacious classroom are stimulating and contain a good range of well-planned learning opportunities. They are integrated well into daily routines, such as when the children released their butterflies, which they had hatched from chrysalises. Careful questioning by the adults led the children to think about such things as why they were releasing them on this particular day, for example. They had good ideas, such as 'so that they can get juice from the flowers' and 'to let them lay eggs'. When discussing where they should be released, one child suggested that it should be at the top of the rise

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at the top of the playground because 'then they are already in the air'. The session promoted great excitement and learning opportunities were not curtailed when the butterflies flew away, as photos were taken and uploaded onto the computer immediately so that children could enjoy the moment again.

The leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. A strong team has created a nurturing and supportive ethos where children are safe and secure. At present, assessment is an area for development, as it is not often carried out by all adults during the initial parts of lessons.

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 an above-average response rate to the questionnaire for parents and carers. The responses were very positive and a number of comments were made, such as 'I am very happy with my child at this school and am very confident in the school' and 'All staff are supportive, friendly and approachable.' A few parents or carers expressed concerns about the information they received about their children's progress. New-style parents' evenings have run this year, alongside a new report format to be sent out at the end of the year, and these will provide much clearer information than in the past. No other significant concerns were expressed.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Winchcombe Abbey Church of England 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 80 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 197 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	49	61	31	39	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	60	75	18	23	2	3	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	29	36	43	54	7	9	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	26	33	46	58	6	8	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	31	39	45	56	2	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	33	41	45	56	1	1	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	38	48	35	44	4	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)	38	48	38	48	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	25	31	46	58	6	8	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	34	43	39	49	4	5	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	22	28	49	61	6	8	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	28	35	50	63	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	32	40	46	58	2	3	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	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 2010 to 31 December 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 2010/11 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.



30 June 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Winchcombe Abbey Church of England Primary School,
Cheltenham GL54 5PZ**

Thank you so much for welcoming us so warmly when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed meeting you and hearing how much you enjoy school. We are not surprised that you enjoy it, as it is improving rapidly and is a good school.

There are many things that we found to be outstanding. For instance, you are provided with excellent care, guidance and support and you told us that you feel exceptionally safe and that you always have someone to help you when you have problems. Also, you have an extremely clear understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle. You behave outstandingly well and are very supportive of each other. Rates of attendance have been high for the last three years. Your spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent and you are growing into sensible and sensitive young people.

You are making good progress through the school, as you are being taught well. That is a major improvement since the last inspection, when the pupils were only making satisfactory progress. Much of the reason for the improvements that have been made is down to your headteacher and staff, who have very good plans to make your school even better; they want it to be outstanding!

There are just two things that we have suggested could be improved.

- You spend too long sometimes on whole-class discussions before getting on to your written tasks and this slows your learning, particularly as it means that the teaching assistants are not always helping you during these times.
- The targets set for you to know how to improve your work are not always matched well to your particular abilities and teachers do not always use these targets when they plan what they want you to learn or when they mark your work. It would be good if they shared these targets with you and your parents or carers more regularly.

We know you will help by continuing to work hard.

Yours sincerely

John Eadie (on behalf of the inspection team)

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