

Minchinhampton Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	115747
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	379138
Inspection dates	2–3 May 2012
Lead inspector	Alwyne Jolly

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	287
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Liam Eaglestone
Headteacher	Nick Moss
Date of previous school inspection	23–24 January 2007
School address	School Road Minchinhampton Stroud GL6 9BP
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Alwyne Jolly

Additional Inspector

Christine Huard

Additional Inspector

Jill Arnold

Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors visited 19 lessons delivered by 13 teachers. Inspectors met with staff, pupils and representatives of the governing body. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. They observed the school's work, looked at school self-review and planning documents, policies, the governing body minutes, school performance data, safeguarding procedures, and the work of pupils in lessons. They considered the results of questionnaires from 188 parents and carers, 38 pupils and 13 staff,

Information about the school

This is a larger than average-sized primary school. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below the national average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of educational needs is well below the national average. The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- This is a good school. Much-improved provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage gives children a good start to their learning. Standards in reading are exceptionally good. The school is not outstanding because a small minority of pupils have not always made as rapid progress as others and not all middle leaders have a full overview of performance in their areas of responsibility.
- Achievement is good overall. Attainment is above the national average by Year 6 and most pupils make good progress from their starting points. The achievement of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, although good, is occasionally restricted because some of their individual educational plans are insufficiently clear or precise to help them fully understand what they need to do to improve.
- Consistently good teaching throughout the school is characterised by a lively, stimulating content which engages pupils well in lessons. Teachers have high expectations, which ensures even the most-able pupils receive challenging tasks to extend their learning.
- The behaviour of pupils is consistently good. In lessons, they have positive attitudes to learning and respond enthusiastically to questioning to give perceptive responses. Almost all pupils and their parents and carers consider the school to be very safe.
- The leadership of teaching and the management of performance are good. The headteacher and governing body have led the school well and have a very accurate grasp of its strengths and weaknesses. Some key middle managers are relatively new to their positions. Although they have quickly grasped the priorities, they have not yet carried out thorough lesson observations to ascertain fully standards and the quality of provision in their subjects. The monitoring of teaching by the headteacher, however, has been thorough and effective. Effective actions have been taken at all levels to improve the school, so it is securely on a path of sustained improvement.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure all pupils make equally rapid progress and improve the quality of individual education plans by ensuring:
 - they are written in language clearly understood by children
 - children know what they have to do to improve
 - desired outcomes can be clearly identified and measured.
- Develop the skills of middle leaders so they can confidently carry out lesson observations to gain a fuller overview of the standards and progress in their subjects or areas.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Pupils' achievement is good throughout the school. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are now developing better the creative and decision-making skills which were judged to be lacking in the last report. Although there are clear strengths in personal development, children's attainment on entry is broadly in line with age-related expectations. They make good progress in both Nursery and Reception Year as a result of effective planning and teaching, so that virtually all pupils reach the nationally expected learning goals and many exceed expectations by Year 1. There is an effective emphasis on developing pupils' essential early literacy skills and their above-average, confident reading is evident by the end of Year 2 in the daily guided reading sessions and literacy lessons. This reaps significant dividends by Year 6, when almost all pupils attain the expected levels and many exceed them, reflecting sustained, above-average standards in reading. The reading and writing of the older, more-able pupils in classrooms is particularly impressive and they are fluent and articulate in responding to probing questioning.

The quality of writing is improving throughout the school. All groups are now achieving well. Previous test results indicate a small minority of lower-attaining pupils underachieved in the past, but current work in classrooms and books indicates that they are now making better progress. Attainment in mathematics is above average in all classes and pupils showed a confident grasp of numerical skills in their daily mathematics lessons. The overall level of attainment is above average by Year 6, reflecting good, often rapid, progress from their starting points.

Pupils are well prepared for their next stage of education. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, generally, make good progress to narrow the gap with pupils nationally. They benefit from very well-focused support from teaching assistants, although some individual educational plans, which are unclear and suggest outcomes that are difficult to measure, restrict the progress for a few.

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Quality of teaching

Teaching is good. There has been a successful drive to develop a shared vision for learning in the school, which is reflected in consistent approaches in all classrooms, highlighted by the effective teaching of reading. Pupils and their parents and carers are very appreciative and one parent observed 'The teachers go above and beyond every day.' Lessons throughout the school are almost always interesting so that pupils' attention is fully engaged. In Year 1, for example, pupils moved from collective singing to an analysis of diary writing, with sustained enthusiasm because of the pace of the learning. It is only occasionally in the less-impressive lessons that pupils lose interest because the introductions are prolonged.

Teachers make painstaking efforts to plan work which reflects the curriculum's focus on promoting the pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development and challenging pupils of all abilities. In a Year 3 and 4 class, pupils were learning enthusiastically about life in Mexico and enjoying dressing in basic Mexican dress, while other pupils spoke positively about the links with Nkokoto in Tanzania, which is twinned with Minchinhampton village. Occasionally, planning was insufficiently precise to address fully the needs of the pupils who were just below average. However, the school has addressed this by giving an increased focus to the learning needs of those pupils, so they know what they have to do to improve and have guidance to measure whether they have progressed. Although some individual education plans have limitations, the individual and group teaching of pupils with disabilities and those who have special educational needs is effective because of the careful diagnosis of their needs and the consistent, well-targeted support they receive.

Marking is good with thorough, helpful analysis of pupils' attainment and what they need to do better. Good targets are provided for pupils in literacy and numeracy, which they keep in their books and to which they refer regularly. Teachers have good subject knowledge and specialist music teaching helps to promote the good standards in that subject.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

In assembly, the school's own DVD about bullying captivated the pupils, who identified physical, emotional, cyber, and verbal as distinct, different forms of bullying and the need to 'Tell, tell, tell and tell again'. Individual pupils commented positively on the school's proactive response, which limited any form of bullying. The good behaviour is evident in assemblies and contributes to the strong development of a spiritual ethos. Pupils are consistently well behaved in lessons and only occasionally, in the few satisfactory lessons or during prolonged introductions, do they become restless and less responsive to questioning. Pastoral support is strong, supporting the needs of pupils, notably at lunchtime, with stimulating opportunities

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to develop their imagination through play and discovery. Pupils and their parents and carers all had very positive views about behaviour over time and safety in the school. The school has effective approaches to discouraging absence, which ensure the above-average attendance continues to improve.

Leadership and management

The headteacher and governing body display a relentless drive for improvement. They have gained a strong, shared commitment from all staff to improve the quality of learning further. The governing body is suitably questioning, challenging and supportive where necessary. It is extending the range of its monitoring activities, so it is even better informed, and the minutes of its meetings reflect a purposeful, well-organised group. Arrangements for safeguarding met requirements fully at the time of the inspection. The school is committed to equal opportunities, exemplified by its determination to improve the progress of lower-attaining pupils when data indicated some were underachieving and its clear commitment to tackle any form of discrimination.

There are good systems to assess pupils and track their progress, which leads to identified support where necessary. The monitoring of teaching by the headteacher has been thorough, with areas for development clearly identified to teachers. This links well with rigorous performance management arrangements and a strong commitment to professional development to develop staff expertise further. A few of the middle managers, who are relatively new to their positions, have carried out little classroom observation of the teaching of their subjects in classrooms, but have monitored lesson planning and carried out work analysis. This means that the school is not completely certain of the quality of learning in all subjects.

The school's broad and balanced curriculum includes a developing 'creative' curriculum. This development benefits from good external support and links with a successful school. There is a particularly wide range of extra-curricular activities, and pupils in Year 4 and Year 6 benefit from residential visits which extend their learning. Although a small minority of parents and carers were critical of the school's communication with them, the school gives this a high priority and produces detailed newsletters, offers regular parent workshops and has an interesting website. The pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is promoted well. Regular paired and group discussions help their social interaction and pupils have a good knowledge of other cultures as well as their own. A spiritual ethos permeates through all aspects of school life and pupils are taught to reflect deeply on their lives and the world in which they live. This is best exemplified by the pupils' good quality 'reflection books', which contain their carefully considered thoughts on moral and religious issues.

Members of the governing body and staff all contribute and monitor an effective school development plan which clearly identifies priorities and necessary actions with specific associated success criteria. The school has a very accurate understanding of its strengths and weaknesses and has addressed the key issue in the last inspection

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report. It has also maintained its strengths, particularly in sustaining above-average standards. It, therefore, is well placed to sustain improvement.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data 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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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



4 May 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Minchinhampton Primary School, Minchinhampton GL6 9BP

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave to the inspection team when we visited your school. We enjoyed meeting you, listening to your views and seeing you in lessons. We found that Minchinhampton Primary School is a good school, and we know this view is shared by almost all of your parents and carers, and yourselves.

This is what we found out about your school.

- The school is well led and managed.
- The vast majority of you attend regularly, are well behaved and enjoy your lessons.
- You told us that you feel very safe in school and that the staff care for you well, and we agree.
- You have good standards in reading in all years.
- You make good progress in lessons because of the good teaching.
- There are good opportunities for promoting your spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

The headteacher, staff and governing body are working hard to help you do better. This is what we have asked your school to do now.

- Make sure that individual education plans are written so that it is easier for those who receive them to know what they have to do to make better progress and how to measure if they have improved.
- Develop the skills of subject leaders in observing the lessons of others so they can gain an accurate picture of what needs to improve.

All of you can help by listening intently to any advice offered and telling your teachers if you do not understand what you need to do to improve.

I wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Alwyne Jolly
Lead inspector

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