

Slimbridge Primary School

St John's Road, Slimbridge, Gloucestershire, GL2 7DD

Inspection dates 25–26 September 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils are making good progress and achieving well. This is an improvement since the last inspection when pupils' achievement was satisfactory. There has been particularly rapid progress in the last two years and pupils' attainment has returned to average by the time they leave.
- There are several strengths in the teaching. Teachers plan well for the range of ages and abilities in their classes. They are also very good at asking questions to extend pupils' learning. Teaching assistants skilfully contribute to pupils' learning.
- Pupils' behaviour and safety are good. Pupils are considerate and caring. Relationships between pupils and between pupils and adults are particularly strong.
- The whole staff team is involved in planning and there is a very clear and determined drive for improving pupil achievement. This drive is shared by governors, though many are relatively newly appointed. There is effective monitoring of the quality of teaching and carrying out of initiatives to improve it.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils' achievement in writing, while still good, is not as strong as their achievement in reading and mathematics.
- The targets set for pupils' next steps in learning are not as well matched to their individual needs and abilities as they might be.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector visited 16 lessons. Five of the lesson observations were paired with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with leaders and managers, staff, pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector met informally with parents and carers at the beginning and end of the school days and analysed the 31 responses to Parent View, the Ofsted online survey.
- He observed the school's work, and looked at its self-evaluation, development planning and policies and procedures, particularly those relevant to keeping pupils safe.
- The inspector evaluated the school's information on the progress that pupils are making.

Inspection team

John Eadie, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Slimbridge Primary School is a smaller-than-average primary school.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is below average, as is the proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is broadly average, and few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils identified as disabled and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is broadly average. The proportions supported at school action plus or who have statements of special educational needs are below average. Most of the latter two groups have speech, language and communication needs.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.
- The school opened a playgroup in September 2011, which moved to a dedicated room in January 2012.
- The headteacher took up her post in January 2011 after a period of significant instability in leadership, as there were five changes of headteacher in a period of less than five years.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' achievement in writing by:
 - putting in place a plan to ensure that the basic skills of spelling and sentence structure are taught rigorously
 - ensuring that pupils' handwriting is developed consistently through the school
 - reinforcing the links between reading and writing by giving pupils more opportunities to base their writing on their reading and other experiences
 - taking further opportunities to develop writing skills in subjects other than English.
- Improve the effectiveness of targets set for pupils' next steps in learning by ensuring that:
 - teachers set very precise targets for each pupil, closely matched to their abilities and needs
 - teachers refer to these targets when they feed back to pupils on the success of their learning.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils **is good**

- Standards attained in the national assessments in Year 6 declined in 2010. This was reversed in 2011 and the provisional results for 2012 show further improvements, particularly in mathematics and reading.
- Pupils' attainment in reading is above average by the end of Year 2. Attainment overall is broadly average by the time they leave at the end of Year 6, though it is above average in reading and mathematics.
- Pupils are making good progress in all classes, from their differing starting points, and the number of pupils making better than expected progress compares favourably with figures nationally.
- Although still good, pupils' achievement in writing is not as strong as that in reading or mathematics. This is because plans to improve pupils' skills in spelling and sentence structure and to improve handwriting have only recently been put in place.
- Pupils have limited opportunities to write from their own experience and to practise their writing skills in subjects other than English.
- Pupils are making rapid progress in acquiring reading skills because of the well-taught scheme of teaching letters and sounds (phonics).
- Children make a good start in the playgroup and make good progress there, and even more rapidly in Reception. Children were observed in Reception discussing in pairs questions they might ask to identify dinosaurs. The questions they asked showed considerable understanding.
- The pupils identified as disabled and those who have special educational needs make good progress from their starting points. Several were seen enjoying success doing work which they found challenging.
- Pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium are making good progress.
- Pupils from ethnic minorities make the same progress as their classmates. The few who speak English as an additional language have sufficient command of English to enjoy all aspects of school life and make the same good progress as their peers.

The quality of teaching **is good**

- The key reason for pupils' good and improving progress is the quality of teaching.
- A major strength of teaching is the way that teachers plan to match work to the wide range of ages and abilities in their classes. As a pupil put it, 'Our work is just right, not too hard or too easy.'
- Teachers use questions well to extend pupils' learning. For instance, pupils in Year 2 were expressing the feelings of the *Owl Babies* when they were left alone in the forest, and having written, 'They were terrified,' the teacher asked if the pupil could add reasons, such as 'They were terrified because...'
- Teaching assistants are included in teachers' planning. They are skilled and make a good contribution to pupils' learning, particularly for the pupils identified as disabled and those who have special educational needs.
- Teachers' assessment of pupils' progress is good and examples were observed where plans for lessons had been adapted on the basis of the success or otherwise of previous learning. Just occasionally the pace of learning dips when pupils are asked to spend too long sitting listening.
- Teachers' marking is helpful and gives pupils good indicators of how they might improve. Time is set aside regularly when pupils can respond to this and develop their work. Targets are set for pupils' next steps in learning but they are rather general and do not always match pupils' individual needs well enough. Teachers rarely refer to these targets when they mark pupils' work.
- Teaching for the children in the Reception class is good and matched well to their needs. Opportunities are often taken to extend learning and all adults working with these children are skilled at developing pupils' understanding in all areas of learning, for example by questioning

and using new language.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils behave well in and around the school. They are caring, and many instances were seen of their good awareness of the needs of others.
- Pupils play sensibly, with due regard to the safety of others. They are also well aware of how to act safely, both in school and in the wider community.
- The responses of parents and carers to the online survey, Parent View, were almost unanimous in their view that behaviour is good, and pupils spoken to agreed. Staff and governors also regard behaviour as being very good.
- Children in the playgroup and Reception class have clear structures set out and they respond well to these, for instance listening well when others are speaking. A good example of this was seen in the Reception class when children were guided to tell their partner what activity they wanted to do and the partner had to report back to the teacher.
- Pupils have very good attitudes to their work and this is demonstrated in lessons by the calm and orderly environment and the enthusiasm for learning.
- Attendance levels are high and there are no problems with punctuality.
- Pupils say that the rare incidents of bullying are dealt with well. They are well aware of the range of types of bullying, for example being able to talk knowledgeably about racist behaviour. Parents and carers who used the online survey agreed that all types of bullying are dealt with well.
- Although there were a few short-term exclusions in the previous two years, the number declined and there have been none this year.

The leadership and management are good

- The major reason for the improvements that have been made in pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching is the accurate analysis of the areas for development, through thorough monitoring, and the clear plans made to address them.
- The whole staff team has been involved in the process of evaluation and there is a very evident sense of teamwork and shared responsibility for driving improvement.
- The management of teaching and learning has been very effective in driving up the quality of teaching. Careful analysis has been carried out of individual teachers' needs and good training and support provided to meet these needs.
- The use of data is particularly effective. The progress of all groups is monitored very carefully, even though many of these groups are very small, and very successful interventions are put in place to address any potential underachievement. The effectiveness of these interventions is scrutinised assiduously to ensure best value.
- Excellent links have been established with parents and carers. All those who responded to the online survey were extremely positive about the school, as were those spoken to.
- A broad curriculum ensures that pupils are engaged well. They say that lessons are interesting and fun.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and reinforced through many aspects of the curriculum. The school seeks to broaden pupils' awareness of cultural diversity by organising visitors and trips, including a visit to a local mosque.
- Funding for pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is carefully managed and used to further their progress.
- Safeguarding procedures are thorough and pupils are kept safe.
- Equality of opportunity has a high profile and any potential discrimination is challenged strenuously.
- The local authority has been supporting the new headteacher and has been effective in supporting developments.
- The improvements since the last inspection, alongside the shared determination of all staff and governors, indicate that the school is well placed to continue to improve.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- governors are now better able to challenge the leadership, they receive appropriate training and they are now more involved in monitoring and evaluation.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	115536
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	401517

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	113
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Laura Price
Headteacher	Alison Cooke
Date of previous school inspection	13–14 October 2009
Telephone number	01453 890216
Fax number	01453 899085
Email address	admin@slimbridge.gloucs.sch.uk

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