

# Inspection of an outstanding school: Winchcombe Abbey Church of England Primary School

Back Lane, Winchcombe, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire GL54 5PZ

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Inspection dates: 13 and 14 March 2023

## **Outcome**

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of outstanding as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. Inspectors are recommending the next inspection to be a graded inspection.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils are happy and feel safe at this inclusive school. They take care of each other and form strong friendships. Pupils trust staff to help them sort out any concerns quickly. Bullying is rare and dealt with appropriately. Pupils play enthusiastically at social times, where there is always plenty to interest them.

Leaders have high expectations and ambition for pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Teachers readily make appropriate adaptations to learning to ensure they include all pupils. Staff and pupils understand the importance of the eight school values and how they build the foundations of school and community life.

Enrichment beyond the academic curriculum is an important part of leaders' vision. Pupils enjoy the trips, visitors, special events and clubs offered. They embrace leadership roles and responsibilities with enthusiasm because what they do makes a difference to the school and local area.

Pupils behave well in lessons and around school. Pupils are keen to learn, not giving up when they find work tricky. They are benefitting from the improved curriculum leaders have put in place. On the whole, pupils achieve well, talking enthusiastically about their learning. They look forward to celebrating their achievements in assemblies.

## **What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?**

Leaders are embedding a well-ordered curriculum that builds from the early years. This is most evident in mathematics and history. Teachers deliver these subjects confidently. They check pupils' understanding before moving on to new learning. Teachers understand the importance of revisiting knowledge so that pupils remember more over time. However, in some other subjects, leaders' work to design the curriculum is less well developed.

Leaders understand that being a good reader allows pupils to access the whole curriculum. They want all pupils to love reading and to read with fluency and comprehension. Leaders carefully select high-quality books, which teachers share with pupils. These books expose pupils to an extensive range of authors, text types and vocabulary, and they celebrate diversity. Children in Reception begin to learn phonics by following a systematic and structured teaching approach. They continue to build their knowledge through key stage 1, learning and recognising increasingly complex sounds. Overall, teaching is consistent, and pupils understand the routines and respond well. However, some staff, particularly those who support pupils who are struggling to learn to read, use unhelpful strategies that are not part of the phonics programme.

In the early years, children receive the help and support they need to achieve well. The learning environment is purposeful and inviting. It is a place where children thrive, with focused activity and positive relationships. Right from the start, children learn important skills, such as curiosity and resilience. Staff teach children to regulate their emotions, take turns with equipment and settle into school routines. Leaders help staff to identify children with SEND and provide pupils with the support they need.

Pupils concentrate hard in lessons. They work well on their own, showing determination and resilience. They work equally well together. Generally, pupils remember important knowledge in each subject, and teachers are skilled at helping them to do this. However, pupils' work and understanding in some subjects do not always reflect the intended learning and leaders' high ambition.

Leaders provide pupils with varied and interesting opportunities for personal development. The curriculum for personal, social, health and economic education is well sequenced and gets pupils ready for their move to secondary school. Pupils learn how to stay safe in their local community and online. They understand democracy and respect other people's points of view. Pupils are kind and think about others, organising several fundraising events. They value the range of leadership posts they can apply for and the impact they have on the school and the local community.

Those responsible for governance know the school well. They have an accurate understanding of its strengths and what they need to do to improve it further. Alongside the trust central team, they provide well-considered support and challenge to leaders. Staff are proud to work at this school. They appreciate the training they receive to improve professionally, as well as the way leaders manage workload. Parents who completed the survey are positive. One parent, typical of many, said, 'my child thrives here and is excited to learn.'

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders promote a safeguarding culture where pupils' protection and well-being are prioritised. Staff are well trained to spot and raise concerns. Leaders ensure that pupils who are at risk of harm receive the help they need, seeking outside agency support when required. Leaders' actions bring about positive change for pupils and families. Leaders know the community well. They make sure that pupils know how to keep themselves safe. Checks on adults appointed to work in the school are thorough and monitored effectively by leaders. During the inspection, leaders corrected minor weaknesses in record-keeping.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- The school's approach to teaching pupils who are struggling to learn to read is not embedded. As a result, some of these pupils are not catching up as quickly as they could. Leaders must ensure that all staff know how to support this group of pupils as they learn to read using phonic strategies.
- Pupils' work and understanding in some subjects in the wider curriculum do not always reflect the intended learning. This means that pupils do not have the detailed knowledge and skills across all subjects to prepare them for their next stage of education. Leaders should continue to refine the curriculum and ensure that pupils achieve highly in every subject.

## **Background**

When we have judged a school to be outstanding, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains outstanding. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually, this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be outstanding in March 2017.

## **How can I feed back my views?**

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

## **Further information**

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	140797
<b>Local authority</b>	Gloucestershire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10256718
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	304
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	The Venerable Hilary Dawson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sally Johnson
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.winchcombe-pri.gloucs.sch.uk">www.winchcombe-pri.gloucs.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	7 and 8 March 2017

## Information about this school

- The school currently uses one registered and one unregistered alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

The inspector carried out this inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher and other senior leaders. The inspector met with governors, including the chair of governors. He held a meeting with the vice chair of the trust board and representatives of the trust central team.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, art and history. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers and teaching assistants, spoke

to some pupils about their learning and looked at a sample of pupils' work. The inspector also heard pupils read.

- The inspector considered the wider curriculum and met with the curriculum leader.
- To inspect safeguarding, the inspector reviewed a wide range of safeguarding documentation, including the school's record of recruitment checks. The inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead. The inspector also spoke with pupils and staff.
- The inspector took account of parents' responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and parents' written comments.
- The inspector gathered pupils' views throughout each day, including during lesson visits. The inspector considered responses to the pupil survey.
- The inspector met with a range of staff to gather their views about the school and took account of staff's responses to Ofsted's confidential staff questionnaire.

### **Inspection team**

Alan Derry, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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