

Inspection of Winchcombe Abbey Church of England Primary School

Back Lane, Winchcombe, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire GL54 5PZ

Inspection dates: 5 and 6 June 2024

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

The headteacher of this school is Sally Johnson. This school is part of the Diocese of Gloucester Academies Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Rachel Howie, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Tim Brock.

This school was last inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 seven years ago and judged 'Outstanding' under a previous inspection framework. This reflected the school's overall effectiveness under the inspection framework in use at the time.

From then until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between graded inspections under section 5 of the Act. The school received an ungraded inspection under section 8 of the Act on 13 and 14 March 2023. Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Winchcombe Abbey is a school where everyone is welcome and accepted. Committed staff make learning purposeful and interesting so that pupils thrive and achieve highly. This is especially true in the early years. Children flourish thanks to the aspirational curriculum and expert teaching.

The school is a safe and harmonious place to learn. Pupils need few reminders about how to behave. They work hard in lessons, listen attentively and cooperate with their classmates. Staff are kind and patient. This gives pupils the confidence to talk about any worries or concerns they might have.

Staff encourage pupils to develop key character traits through the school's values. These underpin all aspects of school life. For example, pupils show respect for people's differences and compassion by caring for others.

The curriculum offers a wealth of opportunities to broaden pupils' understanding of the world around them. These include a residential trip to London, work with local charities and visits to different places of worship. Pupils develop responsibility as play leaders and members of the school parliament. They maturely explain that 'even though we are young, we matter and make a difference'.

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

Reading is at the centre of the curriculum. Staff choose books to build pupils' vocabulary and enhance learning in other subjects. For example, pupils in Year 6 build empathy and humility through the books they study about World War Two. They confidently explain the meaning of words such as 'persecution'. Older pupils enthuse about discussing books at the avid readers club. Over time, pupils become skilled and confident readers.

From the start of school, children quickly learn to read. Well-trained staff teach the phonics programme with precision. The school has invested in new books that closely match the sounds that pupils know and need to practise. This gives pupils the confidence to use their phonic knowledge to read unknown words. Staff are determined that no pupil is left to fall behind when learning to read.

The school is relentless and reflective in its drive for excellence. The curriculum has improved since the previous inspection. All subjects set out the knowledge, skills and vocabulary pupils need to learn. Within established subjects, pupils can connect new learning to what they already know. For example, pupils use their knowledge of locations to compare mountains in different parts of the world. In mathematics, children in Reception Year display proficiency in counting and solving calculations. Improvements to the curriculum in a few subjects, such as music and Spanish, are newer and need time to embed. Therefore, some groups of pupils do not have the same depth of knowledge in these subjects as others.

Teachers assess what pupils understand regularly and accurately. They recap important knowledge at the start of lessons. However, the system for checking what needs to be revisited in the long term is still being refined. As a result, some misconceptions are not identified or acted upon swiftly enough.

Staff demonstrate secure subject knowledge. They present information clearly to pupils. For example, they use visual resources and ask probing questions to make pupils think deeply. Staff adapt the curriculum so that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) can learn alongside their peers. Pupils with SEND receive a wide range of support and have their needs identified early. Trained staff provide pupils with extra pastoral support to help overcome barriers to learning.

The provision for early years is impressive. Whether counting in Spanish or learning outdoors, staff expertly guide children to deepen and extend their understanding. Children become engrossed in their learning tasks, which capture their interests and feed their curiosity. Throughout the whole school, pupils display positive attitudes towards their learning.

The curriculum supports pupils' personal development well. Pupils learn to embrace people's differences. Visits from the police help pupils learn how to behave online. The school expects pupils to treat others as they want to be treated and stand up for what they know is right. Pupils get to debate and discuss wider issues, such as stereotypes in the media. All of this helps them grow into well-rounded young citizens.

Governors and trust leaders strike the right balance of challenge and support to improve the school. They know what questions to ask to check the impact of actions taken. Staff feel valued and appreciate leaders' efforts to support their workload. While a minority of parents would like to see better communication, most have a favourable view of the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Improvements to the curriculum in a few subjects are more recent and need time to fully embed. As a result, some groups of pupils do not have the same depth of knowledge in these subjects as others. The trust and the school should continue to embed the changes that have been made to the curriculum so that pupils secure important knowledge in all subjects.
- In some of the wider curriculum subjects, the school is in the process of refining the checks on pupils' knowledge retention. This means that some misconceptions

are not identified or acted upon swiftly enough. The trust and the school should ensure that checks on pupils' knowledge identify areas of learning that need to be revisited to help pupils remember more in the long term.

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](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	140797
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	10322286
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	285
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
CEO of the trust	Rachel Howie
Chair of trust	Tim Brock
Headteacher	Sally Johnson
Website	www.winchcombe-pri.gloucs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	13 and 14 March 2023, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Diocese of Gloucester. It received a section 48 inspection for schools of a religious character in October 2023.
- The school currently uses three unregistered alternative providers.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors held discussions with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the assistant headteacher, central trust staff, a trustee and members of the local governing board.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, music, modern foreign languages and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with the school, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in history and personal, social, health and economic education.
- An inspector listened to pupils in Years 1 to 3 reading to an adult.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and during breaktime and lunchtime. They spoke with pupils and staff about behaviour.
- Inspectors spoke with a range of staff to discuss how the school supports their workload and well-being.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the lead inspector: met with the designated safeguarding lead; checked the single central record of adults working in the school; took account of the views of staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- An inspector considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. They also took into consideration the staff survey.

Inspection team

Dale Burr, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Heather Barraclough	His Majesty's Inspector
Lizzy Meadows	Ofsted Inspector

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