# **INSPECTION REPORT**

# **GREAT RISSINGTON PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Great Rissington

Cheltenham

LEA area: Gloucester

Unique reference number: 115525

Headteacher: Elizabeth Franklin

Reporting inspector: Paul Bamber 15064

Dates of inspection: 8 – 9 October 2001

Inspection number:193473

Short inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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# **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school: Infant and Junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 4-11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Great Rissington

Cheltenham Gloucestershire

Postcode: GL54 2LP

Telephone number: 01451 820857

Fax number: 01451 822139

Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr R Duester

Date of previous inspection: April 1997

# INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		
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#### PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

#### INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Great Rissington Primary School lies at the heart of a Cotswold village. There are 86 pupils on roll (14 more girls than boys), including 14 children aged under five who currently attend part-time. At present, there are no pupils claiming free school meals (well below average). Around ten per cent of pupils are registered by the school as having special educational needs (below average). No pupils have a Statement of Special Educational Need or use English as an additional language. Pupils enter the school with broadly average attainment. Since the previous inspection, the school has become a Beacon School and the Department for Education and Skills has very recently extended its status for a further three years. The school is currently over-subscribed.

#### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

Great Rissington is a very effective school. The quality of teaching is very good and pupils consistently leave the school with high standards in English and mathematics. The school is very well led and managed. Pupils achieve very well and have very good attitudes to learning. The school's excellent partnership with parents makes a significant contribution to the very good progress made by the pupils. The school provides good value for money.

# What the school does well

- The quality of teaching and learning is very good.
- Pupils behave sensibly, have very good attitudes to school and relate very well to each other.
- The school is extremely well led and managed.
- The partnership between the school and parents is very effective in promoting the pupils' learning, especially in literacy and numeracy.

There are no major areas for improvement.

#### HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made good improvement since its previous inspection in April 1997. By the time they leave the school, standards pupils attain in English and mathematics are now consistently high. The governors have ensured that for information and communication technology, the quality of provision and of teaching has significantly improved. Schemes of work and detailed policies now provide teachers with clear guidance about what they will teach in history, geography and in art and design. Good quality training has been provided to enhance teachers' subject knowledge and skills. The school has maintained its excellent partnership with parents.

#### **STANDARDS**

Because the number of pupils in Year 6 has been very small over the last few years, no comparisons are made with national averages or with similar schools. Since 1998, in national tests, pupils in Year 6 have attained very high standards in English, high standards in mathematics and broadly average standards in science. The school has been aware of the relatively lower standards pupils attained in science, in the national tests, and implemented an action plan to raise these standards. As a result, in 2001, Year 6 pupils attained very high standards in the science tests.

The present Year 6 contains a larger than average percentage of pupils with special educational needs. This means that average standards are lower than in previous years. However, pupils achieve very well and make very good progress. Most pupils read fluently, write well, especially for different purposes, and speak confidently using a wide vocabulary. The work seen during the inspection shows that pupils achieve very well in all areas of the curriculum. Their work in art and design is very good and their fluent writing contributes well to their good achievements in history, geography and religious education.

The school's results in the 2000 national tests for seven-year-olds show that compared with all schools standards were average in writing but below average in reading and mathematics. Compared with similar schools, standards were well below average in reading and mathematics and below average in writing. Last year the number of pupils in Year 2 was very small and the performance of individual pupils had a disproportionate effect on average attainment. Hence, any comparisons must be treated with extreme caution. The present Year 2 pupils achieve well and their standards are on average above those expected for their age. The school consistently sets realistic and challenging targets for its performance in national tests.

Able pupils and those who have special educational needs achieve well because they are challenged to attain the highest standards of which they are capable. The small size of the school hall places limitations on the standards pupils can achieve in gymnastics and dance.

#### **PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES**

Aspect	Comment	
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are proud to belong to the school community and have very positive attitudes to their work.	
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils are well aware of the impact of their behaviour on others and older pupils care well for younger ones.	
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils get on well together and this is very evident in the way they co-operate in their learning. They celebrate each other's successes and relate very well to adults and visitors.	
Attendance	Very good. Attendance is well above average and there is no unauthorised absence.	

Pupils are welcoming and friendly. They are confident in their relationships with adults and each other. Teachers promote pupils' self-esteem very well and this encourages pupils to accept challenge, both in their learning and personally. Pupils are very confident and articulate and discuss sensitive issues in a mature way. Because the school takes pride in its environment, pupils respond by looking after accommodation and valuing resources.

#### **TEACHING AND LEARNING**

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Very good	Very good	Very good

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.

Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is very good. All teachers promote pupils' literacy and numeracy skills very well. Teachers are particularly skilful in helping pupils make links between subjects and applying the skills and knowledge they acquire to many areas of the curriculum. This is particularly effective in the way in which pupils use information and communication technology in many lessons. Pupils make good progress and achieve well because teachers assess their work very thoroughly and nurture pupils' ability to evaluate their own performance, and to recognise what they have to do next in order to improve. Lessons are conducted in an orderly, calm and purposeful manner because teachers expect pupils to behave well and to work hard. Teachers expect all pupils to give of their best. They set the brightest pupils demanding work and pupils with special educational needs are provided with challenging targets and very good support. This ensures that all pupils work at an appropriate level. Strengths in pupils' learning include their willingness to tackle demanding work, the interest they show in all aspects of the curriculum and their ability to work with sustained concentration, either independently or in small groups. Because teachers set and mark homework regularly, pupils diligently complete homework tasks and this helps them make good progress, particularly in reinforcing basic literacy and numeracy skills.

#### OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good throughout the school. The school fully meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. It enriches pupils' experiences through strong links with the community and by organising weeks with a particular subject focus. Extra-curricular activities promote pupils' physical and aesthetic development well.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. These pupils have appropriate targets set for them and are well supported both in and out of the classroom. As a result, pupils often make very good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good in all areas. Pupils behave very well, are polite, friendly and generally mature. This is because of the school's very good provision for their social and moral development. In many lessons and in assemblies, there is a strong sense of spirituality.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. Procedures for child protection are secure and the school ensures that pupils' health, safety and welfare are very well looked after.

The school provides pupils with a well-balanced and integrated curriculum. It makes very good use of the church and other members of the local community to broaden pupils' cultural experience and to enhance their academic curriculum. The school's partnership with parents is excellent, has received national recognition and greatly contributes to pupils' quality of learning and to their attitudes to school. Staff know pupils very well and as a result cater sensitively for their individual needs.

#### HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and manage- ment by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher leads the school with a determination to achieve the highest standards possible. She is ably supported by a close team who work unstintingly to promote the aims and values of the school. Subject co-ordinators are very effective in raising standards.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. Governors are knowledgeable about the standards the school achieves and why. They directly monitor the quality of education the school provides by observing lessons. All governors are involved in setting priorities in the school's improvement plan.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. The school is self-evaluative and ensures that individual pupils are challenged to achieve their highest standards. The quality of planning and of teaching and learning is monitored closely. Test data is analysed in detail to identify strengths and weaknesses in pupils' attainment, in order that targets can be set for improvement.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. Astute financial planning and rigorous budget monitoring ensure the school's educational priorities are adequately funded. For instance, the resources made available for information and communication technology have enhanced the quality of pupils' learning throughout the curriculum.

The school's close monitoring of standards and of the quality of teaching and learning, is a strength of the school and promotes high standards. Governors are well aware of, and rigorously apply, the principles of best value. This ensures that the school challenges itself, compares its own performance with other schools, consults with pupils and parents and secures competitive services. The school's administration is very efficient and makes good use of new technologies.

# PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved	
<ul> <li>Children like the school.</li> <li>Their children progress well.</li> <li>Behaviour is good.</li> <li>Their children are taught very well.</li> <li>The school keeps them very well informed about how their children are getting on.</li> <li>Teachers work closely with parents to support children academically and personally.</li> <li>The school is very well led and managed.</li> <li>Children are helped to become mature and responsible.</li> </ul>	The school does not provide an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	

Inspectors agree strongly with the positive views expressed by many parents. Whilst there are few clubs provided for infant pupils, the range of after-school clubs for older pupils is as wide as in most similarly sized schools. The contribution of parents and friends to the school in organising activities is much greater than normally found.

# **PART B: COMMENTARY**

#### WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

# The quality of teaching and learning is very good

- 1. The very good quality teaching contributes significantly to the high standards pupils attain by the time they leave the school.
- 2. Teachers plan meticulously, both in the medium and short term. This means that they and the pupils are very clear about the purpose of a series of, or individual lessons. Because teachers think very clearly about what pupils will learn and how learning can be integrated across the curriculum, pupils develop a good understanding of the links between individual subjects and apply their knowledge and skills well across the curriculum. For instance, in a literacy lesson for Years 5 and 6, the teacher skilfully used the work they had covered on habitats, in science, as the basis of their text level work and non-fiction writing.
- 3. Throughout the school, teachers make very good use of high quality learning resources and interesting teaching methods to enthuse pupils, and to enhance their quality of learning. The quality of display, in and out of the classrooms, is very good and contributes significantly to pupils' motivation and interest in a wide range of subjects. The creative use of resources and teaching methods was well illustrated in a religious education lesson for Year 1 pupils. The focus of the lesson was the christening ceremony. The teacher involved all pupils in the acting out of this ceremony and all were dressed in appropriate clothing and used well-made artefacts. Because pupils took on the roles of minister, parents, godparents, organist and congregation members, they were rapt in their attention and gained an excellent insight into an important ceremony of the Christian faith.
  - 4. Teachers have high expectations, challenge pupils to give of their best and to work both independently and co-operatively. In a numeracy lesson for Years 5 and 6, many pupils found the concept of ratio and proportion demanding, but as a result of the teacher's high expectations and the very good relationships that exist between pupils and the teacher, they persevered through initial difficulties and mastered the concept well. In the same lesson there was a telling example of the very good quality of learning. Several pupils were given the choice between tackling very demanding or less demanding problems. Without exception they chose the more demanding tasks, illustrating their desire to do well and their willingness to accept challenge.
  - 5. Since the last inspection an evident improvement is the teachers' and pupils' use of information and communication technology to support learning across the curriculum. This was evident in a science lesson for Years 2 and 3, which focussed on seed dispersal. Pupils used computers to categorise the different ways in which seeds dispersed and why. They chose different sized fonts to record their findings and manipulated text well to present their information in different ways.
  - 6. Teachers' very carefully assess pupils' attainment in lessons, and through formal methods. As a result, the level of difficulty of the tasks pupils are set is well matched to their current needs. Thus, individual pupils are able to spend more

time consolidating learning when they have difficulty or move more rapidly on to the next steps in their work when they master concepts quickly. Pupils work at a good pace because teachers make very good use of time and make clear their expectations of how long individual tasks should take. Learning is fun for pupils because relationships are warm, success is celebrated and teachers and pupils share humour.

# Pupils behave sensibly, have very good attitudes to school and relate very well to each other

- 7. In the questionnaire that parents completed prior to the inspection, they indicated that their children enjoy school and that they are encouraged to become mature and responsible. Inspectors concur with these views and conclude that these are important factors in the very good achievements of pupils.
- 8. Throughout the school, pupils are confident when expressing their ideas and in questioning when they are unsure or want to know more. They listen very well to all members of the class, respect the views and ideas of others and learn from each other.
- 9. Pupils express genuine pleasure in their own achievements and those of their classmates. They help each other willingly in group work and share tasks in order to maximise their efforts.
- 10. Membership of the school council is much valued by pupils. Parents report how proud their children are to be elected as councillors. Observation of a meeting of the council revealed pupils to have a mature sense of responsibility, a caring attitude to fellow pupils and to be assertive enough to make alternative suggestions to those of teachers.
- 11. Pupils volunteer readily to carry out tasks and independently take responsibility for the care of the building and resources when they notice things need to be tidied or put away.
- 12. Pupils are sensitive to each other's concerns and personal circumstances. The school promotes their personal development well during whole school and class assemblies. All adults make it clear that they value pupils, and this encourages pupils to deal with minor upsets and problems confidently.

#### The school is extremely well led and managed

- 13. The headteacher and her team work diligently to maintain high standards and to promote the school's aims and Christian values. As a result, the school is very highly thought of by parents and the wider community.
- 14. Being a small school, teamwork is paramount and this is evident in all its work. Staff work very closely together to plan pupils' programmes of work. This ensures that pupils progress well in their learning. Where classes contain pupils in three different year groups, planning needs to be very detailed. The school manages to plan challenging work for pupils of all ages and abilities within these classes, because the teachers use very effective systems to assess pupils' progress and monitor their personal development. The detailed plans also highlight how learning can be

- integrated across subjects. As a result, pupils are enabled to apply literacy, numerical, scientific and technological skills to many areas of their learning.
- 15. The strength of the school's teamwork, and its resolve to provide the best possible provision, was severely tested during the recent building programme which caused considerable disruption to the school over a much longer period than was forecast. It is testimony to the great efforts made by the headteacher, staff and governors that there was so little evident impact on the quality of education the school provided for pupils during this very difficult period.
- 16. The staff and governors closely monitor standards, the quality of education and the school's provision for pupils' health, safety and welfare. Governors are pro-active in setting the school's priorities for improvement, and as critical friends. As a result of governors' monitoring, there have been improvements in the teaching of religious education in the junior years. This has resulted in Year 6 pupils presently attaining standards above those expected for their age.
- 17. The headteacher and subject co-ordinators systematically monitor and evaluate provision in all subjects. Test data is rigorously analysed, to identify strengths and weaknesses in pupils' attainment. For instance, analysis of pupils' science test papers, in 2000, identified specific weaknesses in their knowledge and understanding of earth and space and electricity. An action plan was drawn up to address these weaknesses and the 2001 science results show good improvement in the standards pupils reached. Careful analysis of provision and standards has also enabled the school to take action to improve pupils' work particularly in information and communication technology.
- 18. The school's improvement plan is a very potent management tool. It is clear and pragmatic, pinpointing areas for action very well and is carefully costed. All staff and governors take demographic factors, and national and school priorities into account when planning in the medium term. For instance, in the present financial year, governors prudently held back some reserves to enable the school to maintain its present staffing levels, in the event of the school not retaining Beacon status. It also had clear plans for spending this reserve if, as was the case, Beacon status was reaffirmed.
- 19. By seeking value for money when buying services, consulting regularly with parents and pupils and by challenging itself rigorously about the standards the school achieves, the governing body applies the principles of best value very well. Parents are asked to comment upon school routines and procedures. Pupils, through the school council, influence decisions about changes to the school's facilities, and its procedures for managing behaviour and playtime and lunchtime routines.
- 20. The school makes very good use of its existing accommodation, which is kept in very good order. However, even though there have been recent improvements in the school's accommodation, the school hall is still small. Despite the best efforts of the staff, this restricts the range of activities it is possible to offer the older pupils in dance and gymnastics. This in turn limits the progress they make in these areas of their physical education curriculum. The playground is very small which means that there are inevitable restrictions placed upon pupils' play activities at lunchtimes and a lack of quiet areas for pupils to sit and relax. The school is aware of the latter situation and is taking action to improve its provision.

# The partnership between the school and parents is very effective in promoting pupils' learning, especially in literacy and numeracy

- 21. Returns from the pre-inspection questionnaire and parents' comments and opinions expressed at the meeting held before the inspection, indicate a high level of satisfaction with the work of the school.
- 22. Parents were very enthusiastic about their partnership with the school to support their children's learning. Although one or two felt that the younger children received too much homework, the vast majority welcomed the regular diet of tasks teachers set for pupils to do at home. They were particularly pleased with the way in which the school systematically provides them with guidance on how they can support their children's learning in literacy and numeracy.
- 23. Before pupils begin school, they receive 'rainbow packs' that contain a range of stimulating materials and tasks for pre-school children to work on. Because parents are encouraged to bring their children into school to exchange packs, good relationships are built up between parents and their children and the school, particularly with the Reception class teacher. As a result, by the time the children enter the school, they know their teacher, their classroom and some of the older pupils with whom they will share learning. This gives them a very good start and it was evident during the inspection that the younger children were confident learners.
- 24. Parents are provided with detailed guidance about how to support the teaching of phonics and spelling rules in order to help their children learn to read and write. Throughout the school, parents regularly monitor their children's reading and there is much two-way communication between parents and class teachers about pupils' progress in reading.
- 25. The school also regularly sends home guidance on how parents can develop their children's mathematical skills by hearing them recite multiplication tables and by playing mathematical games with them.
- 26. Parents also comment very positively on the good quality information they receive on a regular basis about their children's progress. Pupils each have a 'progress book' in which test data is recorded and which includes examples of pupils' writing and targets for improvement. Parents report that this enables them to be very aware of how well their children are getting on and what they can do to help them improve. The annual reports that parents receive also contain detailed information about their children's progress, the standards they presently attain and targets for improvement.
- 27. The partnership and relationship between the school and the parents extends to extra-curricular provision. Parents and other members of the local community willingly give of their time to run a choir and after school clubs in football, netball, and French. This voluntary provision promotes pupils' social and cultural development well. Pupils attend a 'Thursday club' at the local church which adds to their spiritual and moral awareness. The local minister conducts a weekly assembly for the whole school. Observation of one of these assemblies indicates that pupils' spiritual development is very well promoted as a result.

- 28. The school's excellent partnership with parents is the focus for its work as a Beacon school. The extra funding the school receives as a result of this status is used to organise conferences, workshops and seminars to disseminate the school's work in its partnership with parents. Analysis of the evaluations completed by participants in the conferences show that the participation and contribution of parents is highly valued.
- 29. There is strong evidence that the excellent partnership between the school, the parents and the wider community contributes significantly to the high standards that pupils attain in English and mathematics, by the time they leave the school, and to the very positive ethos of the school community.

# PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

# Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	14
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	28

# Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	11	2	0	0	0	0
Percentage	7	79	14	0	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than seven percentage points

# Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		80
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		9

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	3
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	6

#### Attendance

#### **Authorised absence**

	%
School data	3.3
National comparative data	5.2

#### **Unauthorised absence**

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

# Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total	
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2000	7	5	12	

National Curriculum T	est/Task Results	Reading	Writing	Mathematics
	Boys			
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Girls			
	Total	10	10	12
Percentage of pupils	School	83 ( 93 )	83 ( 93 )	100 ( 93 )
at NC level 2 or above	National	83 ( 82 )	84 ( 83 )	90 ( 87 )

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
	Boys			
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Girls			
	Total	10	10	12
Percentage of pupils	School	83 ( 93 )	83 ( 86 )	83 ( 93 )
at NC level 2 or above	National	84 ( 82 )	88 ( 86 )	88 ( 87 )

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

# Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	73
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

# Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

#### Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR - Y6

# Financial information

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24
Average class size	27

# Education support staff: YR - Y6

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	56

Financial year	2000-2001
	£
Total income	258664
Total expenditure	250738
Expenditure per pupil	2883
Balance brought forward from previous year	19000

# Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	0
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	0

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

# Results of the survey of parents and carers

#### Questionnaire return rate 66 per cent

Number of questionnaires sent out	86
Number of questionnaires returned	60

# Percentage of responses in each category

My child likes school.

My child is making good progress in school.

Behaviour in the school is good.

My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.

The teaching is good.

I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.

I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.

The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.

The school works closely with parents.

The school is well led and managed.

The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.

The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.

Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
68	30	0	0	2
76	17	2	0	5
53	40	0	0	7
43	43	10	0	4
85	13	0	0	2
65	28	2	2	3
58	33	7	2	0
88	10	0	0	2
75	20	0	3	2
88	10	0	0	2
69	26	0	0	5
33	37	20	7	3