



Churcham Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 115510
LEA Gloucestershire
Inspection number 279612
Inspection dates 20 June 2006 to 20 June 2006
Reporting inspector Julia Coop AI

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

Type of school	First	School address	Churcham
School category	Community		Gloucester
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Gloucestershire GL2 8BD
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01452 750467
Number on roll	60	Fax number	01452 750467
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	
Date of previous inspection	4 December 2000	Headteacher	Mrs Heather Ingram

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This very small school serves the rural village of Churcham and surrounding villages. Most pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. The socio-economic circumstances of the area are average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average and well above average in some year groups. Attainment on entry varies each year. Year group sizes are uneven and pupils are taught in two mixed-age classes. The school has gained an International Award and Artsmark Gold award and has achieved Healthy School status.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school with significant strengths that provides good value for money, a view shared by the school. It is rightly cherished by parents who value the outstanding care and support their children receive. It is an extremely happy school that is truly part of the local community. From the time they start in the Reception class, pupils are treated as individuals and sensitively encouraged. Teaching is good and the pupils thoroughly enjoy the exciting and excellent curriculum with its impressive range of additional activities. This very successfully broadens the pupils' horizons and prepares them extremely well for their future life. As a result, pupils develop mature and very sensible attitudes and achieve well whatever their capabilities. The school encourages pupils to develop their own general learning targets but recognises they could do even more to help pupils understand the next steps in their learning.

Children make good progress in the Reception class and get off to a flying start in their personal and social development. Standards at the end of Year 6 are above average overall and improving. However, the most able pupils do better in English and science than in mathematics because pupils are not as confident in using their good numeracy skills to solve mathematical problems. This influences overall mathematics standards, although there has been an improvement this year.

Effective leadership and management have been successful in creating a small but hardworking team of staff who are ambitious for the school's success. The school is forward thinking and innovative in working with partner schools and harnessing international links to improve provision and is well placed to go from strength to strength.

What the school should do to improve further

- Continue to develop pupils' problem solving skills in mathematics, particularly for the most able.
- Further develop the use of individual learning targets to improve pupils' knowledge of their own learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards are above average and improving, although in this very small school they vary each year. Boys do marginally less well than girls throughout the school but there is no underachievement. Overall, pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, make good progress in relation to their capabilities and achieve well in all year groups because of the effective way that the school meets each pupil's individual learning needs. Children, whose attainment on entry is average, make good progress in the Reception class whatever their starting point and achieve well. Recent changes to the way that the provision is organised mean that children have more opportunities to make choices about their own learning. This successfully helps them

become independent and happy learners who make very good gains in their personal and social development.

At the end of Year 6, more able pupils do particularly well in English and science and the school's challenging targets in these subjects are exceeded. Although pupils' basic mathematical skills are good, fewer more able pupils reach the higher levels because their problem solving skills are less well developed. As one pupil stated, 'I can do sums but it's hard to do problems.' More pupils this year are reaching the higher levels. This is because the school has begun to link subjects together to make learning more meaningful. However, the school recognises there is still some work to do to ensure all pupils confidently use and apply their mathematical skills when solving problems.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding. The development of independence and respect for others is a high priority. Because the school harnesses international links extremely well, the pupils very quickly learn to respect the different cultures in the world. Consequently, they become confident, very well-rounded young people by the time they leave.

Pupils are proud of their school and highly positive relationships between pupils and adults contribute significantly to the enormous enjoyment pupils experience in their learning. 'Staff are wonderful', they claim, 'they treat us like royalty.' Pupils demonstrate their unusual maturity and consideration in their contributions to assemblies and thoughtful approaches to all matters connected with their education. Attendance is above average because pupils want to come to this 'family' school and only stay away when they are ill. Parents speak glowingly of their children's enthusiasm, enjoyment and very positive attitudes to learning.

Pupils willingly take a great deal of responsibility for aspects of school life, with the school council, outdoor and 'eco-committees' recently leading impressive improvements to the outdoor environment whilst also taking responsibility for the training of their successors. Pupils know how to make very sensible and safe decisions. They gain a very good understanding of healthy lifestyles, for example, budgeting for and managing a healthy tuck shop. They make many very effective contributions to local, national and international communities and have an impressive understanding of democratic processes, for example, participating in a 'mock trial' at the magistrate's court and winning their case. By Year 6, pupils are very well prepared for future life. The only 'downside', they feel, is having to leave a school they love.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Pupils learn well because teaching is good. There is a very good sense of teamwork in the school with everyone working well together for the benefit of pupils. A strength

is the effective way that lessons are planned for the multi-age groups. Coupled with the careful matching of tasks to meet pupils' individual learning needs, this effectively aids learning.

Teachers have begun to plan interesting links between subjects. Links between English and history, for example, have helped improve standards in writing. Mathematics is not always used creatively in other subjects. A useful project to address this has been started but it is too soon to have improved pupils' problem solving skills.

The Reception children are well integrated with older pupils. The recent development of the outdoor area and new summer house mean staff are beginning to plan a wider variety of activities to ensure children and pupils in Years 1 and 2 can make more choices about their own learning.

Throughout, very good relationships and use of praise and encouragement ensure pupils try hard to complete the tasks and to improve. Space is at a premium and can make whole-class teaching a challenge, but staff use every nook and cranny to support learning. During the inspection, groups of pupils were observed busily working in a variety of locations around the school. All said that they 'enjoyed learning' because they had 'great teachers'. Parents are delighted in the progress their children are making. As one parent stated, 'It is a testament to the encouraging atmosphere that is conducive to learning.'

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The school provides an outstanding curriculum not only in its variety and richness but in the way that it is based on an excellent balance between academic and personal development. Parents are delighted in the way every child is valued as an individual. All pupils have many opportunities to excel, especially in sports and the creative arts, saying that they have a 'wonderful experience' as they develop their knowledge and understanding. The huge range of extra-curricular opportunities, in addition to French, residential visits and projects with international schools, enormously enriches pupils' experiences and expands their horizons far beyond rural Gloucestershire. As a result of the very strong focus on improving pupils' confidence, citizenship and decision making skills, pupils develop a keen sense of healthy living, are noted by other schools for their fair play in sports events and are exceedingly well prepared for the future.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support are outstanding. Individuals are exceptionally well known to staff who work in very close partnership with outside agencies, parents and pupils themselves to ensure that all progress well and enjoy their education. This creates an atmosphere where pupils feel safe to work and develop socially and emotionally. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive excellent support, so they succeed well. Academic guidance is effective so that pupils become confident enough to plan their own general learning targets and write their own perceptive reports to parents

about their learning. However, the school recognises the need to develop this further so that pupils understand better the small step-by-step measures needed for improvement. Child protection measures are robust and very detailed risk assessments ensure safety on trips, visits and other activities. Very good transition from the playgroup ensures a positive start in Reception. Pupils have very good advice about transfer to secondary school and, whilst reluctant to leave this small family school, look forward to future challenges.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good overall and excellent in the way all pupils are included whatever their difficulties and valued as individuals. The headteacher with a considerable teaching commitment and a heavy load of responsibility successfully drives the work of the school. Other key staff are developing their management skills well partly as a result of the opportunity to share ideas and work alongside colleagues in other small schools. The school successfully promotes a strong sense of community and takes good account of parents' and pupils' views. Parents speak highly of its work and the hard work of the headteacher and staff, saying 'Not only do pupils make good progress academically but it develops the pupils socially as well.'

Governors are supportive, work in close partnership with staff and are confident to ask challenging questions. The school judges its work accurately and honestly. The school recognises that there is still some work to do to improve mathematics and pupils' knowledge of their own learning.

The headteacher, staff and governors are continually striving to explore ways to improve the school. There is an extremely effective partnership with other small schools and innovative links have been established with international schools. These have not only developed the professional skills of staff and broadened the curriculum, but have ensured that pupils' attitudes to learning have improved considerably. Staff work hard together as a team which embraces change. This desire to improve shows that the school is well placed to continue to develop.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

20 June 2006

Dear Children

Thank you so much for the mature and friendly way you chatted to us when we visited. We really enjoyed seeing your smiling faces when you were hard at work and play. We loved your beautiful art work and we were impressed with your ability to speak French. We know your families think Churcham is a good school that is like a family and we agree. We liked these things most:

- You are very confident and sensible and you behave extremely well.
- We think the teachers are good at teaching you new things.
- We were very impressed with the way you run the tuck shop and make very sensible decisions.
- We think that you must have a really good time in all the clubs and special events.
- Everyone takes very great care of you. We know you like keeping fit and active and eat lots of fruit and vegetables.
- Everyone works hard to make Churcham a special place to learn.

There are two things that the staff and governors want to do to make Churcham even better and we think they are good ideas:

- They are going to help you get better at solving mathematical problems.
- They are going to set you further learning targets and help you understand what you need to work on next so you can make even better progress.

We hope you go on enjoying all of the exciting activities which help you learn and play. We wish the Year 6 pupils well in their new school. We know that you will be a credit to Churcham and your families.

Yours sincerely

Julia Coop Lead Inspector