



Calton Infant School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 115486
Local Authority Gloucestershire
Inspection number 290238
Inspection date 7 February 2007
Reporting inspector Jill Arnold

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

Type of school	Infant	School address	Calton Road
School category	Community		Gloucester
Age range of pupils	4-7		GL1 5ET
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01452 527689
Number on roll (school)	171	Fax number	01452 300622
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Dennis Mundy
		Headteacher	Sue Welbourn
Date of previous school inspection	1 March 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This small school shares its site with a playgroup, a junior and a secondary school. Almost all children are White British. Over a third of the children have learning difficulties, which is above average. The school provides an extended range of services for the community, including family learning and support, adult education classes and after school clubs. It has Investors In People and 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 where the children are happy, keen to learn and achieve well. This is the result of the good care and teaching and the outstanding curriculum they receive. Good leadership and management, including accurate self-evaluation and effective action planning, have successfully moved the school forward since the last inspection. This provides the school with a good capacity to continue to improve. The school is a welcoming, inclusive and harmonious community in which children's emotional and educational needs and interests come first. Parents and carers have high regard for the school and their active involvement supports their children's progress and development. The headteacher's vision for the school is supported by an enthusiastic and knowledgeable team of staff and governors, all pulling in the same direction. Teamwork and good communication result in consistency of approaches to teaching and care which help the children to feel safe and well supported. Productive partnerships with other schools and external agencies support the work of the school to benefit the children. The quality and provision in the Reception Year are good. Effective links with the playgroup ensure a smooth entry to school because staff already know the children and their families well. Most children achieve well, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities. Many children start school in Reception with skills that are below the levels expected for their age, but they make good progress and by the time they leave at the end of Year 2, they attain broadly average standards. However, there are some differences in how well they do in different areas. Since the last inspection, reading standards have been raised to above average. This is the result of effective assessment procedures, close monitoring of children's progress and the provision of effective support for those encountering difficulties. Standards in writing are average and in mathematics they are below average. The school recognizes the need to improve its use of assessment to focus more effectively on raising achievement in mathematics. Central to the school's vision is making learning meaningful and enjoyable. An exciting, well-planned range of activities and lively teaching engage the children's interest and inspire them to learn. The curriculum is successfully tailored to the children's emotional and academic needs and interests. This encourages them to learn through purposeful experiences and opportunities to apply and develop their skills. Teachers and support staff create a stimulating and supportive learning environment for children through attractive displays, high quality resources and classrooms organized to promote independence. High expectations and very good relationships underpin the teaching and ensure children understand what is expected of them. The school is working hard to improve the quality of children's writing and is planning to review its teaching approaches in a further effort to raise attainment. Children's personal development and their social, moral, spiritual and cultural development are good. The school's caring, family ethos develops in the children a sense of belonging and an appreciation for each other's feelings. Most children develop independence and a sense of responsibility from an early age through the opportunities the school provides. This contributes well to their preparation for the future. Although most children thoroughly enjoy school, attendance is slightly lower than the national

average, mostly because of termtime holidays. The school is working with families to try to improve the situation.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve achievement in mathematics by using assessment more rigorously to support and accelerate children's progress.
- Improve achievement in writing by refining approaches to the teaching of basic skills.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

When children start in Reception, their abilities are wide ranging, but many have skill levels that are below those expected for their age, particularly in their language development. Effective teaching enables most children to make good progress and achieve well in relation to their starting points. Boys' attainment on entry is generally lower than that of girls, and remains so at the end of Year 2. The school's results in the national tests at the end of Year 2 have been above average for several years in reading. Results in writing are average. Although standards in mathematics improved in 2006 as a result of the school's focus on problem solving skills, they are below average. In writing and mathematics, a few of the more capable children are not reaching the higher levels, which the school is trying to address. Children with learning difficulties and disabilities achieve well in relation to their starting points as a result of the effective additional support they receive. The school sets itself realistic but challenging targets, which were met in 2006.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Children really enjoy school, feel safe and are confident to talk and try things out. Most children behave well and incidents of bullying are rare. The few who have difficulty behaving appropriately are managed skilfully by staff to ensure that their behaviour does not have a detrimental effect on others. Children are well aware of the importance of a healthy diet and lifestyle, and many benefit from the good range of physical activities provided for them. At lunchtime during the inspection, children discussed how too much sugar and fizzy drinks 'rot your teeth and might make you 'hyper' in the afternoon'! Social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is promoted well through assemblies, the creative curriculum and class discussions. Multicultural events and celebrations raise children's awareness of cultural diversity and promote racial harmony.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is good throughout the school, and at times it is inspirational. Children benefit from the staff's good understanding of their needs and a consistent approach to classroom organisation. This helps to develop their confidence and enables them to be independent, for example, in finding resources, mixing paint for themselves and tidying up. Careful planning and organisation help children to adjust to the increased demands made of them as they move up the school. Teaching is characterised by high quality explanations which develop children's understanding step by step, and questions which encourage participation and assess progress. Lessons are focused on the progressive teaching of skills, on getting the children actively involved and on making learning fun. Where appropriate, links are made between subjects to make learning more meaningful. Good relationships and positive management of behaviour contribute significantly to children's attitudes to learning and to their achievement. Although teachers work hard to improve the quality of children's writing, the school recognises the need to refine its approach to developing children's vocabulary and skills in sentence making to promote more rapid progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is outstanding because it is planned very effectively to meet children's interests and needs. Its emphasis on creative and first-hand activities provides children with experiences that inspire them to talk, think and learn. The curriculum has a thematic approach which is underpinned by the progressive teaching of skills. A recently introduced mathematics scheme is providing a useful structure for teaching and assessment to support the development of skills and understanding in this subject. Provision for information and communication technology has improved greatly since the last inspection, resulting in improved levels of enjoyment, confidence and competence in the children. The extensive range of carefully planned visits, visitors and clubs supports and enriches the children's learning and contributes greatly to their personal development and enjoyment of school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school works hard to ensure the health, safety and well-being of the children. Effective procedures, record keeping and communication with parents and external agencies support this aspect of the school's work. Assessment is used very well in reading and writing to monitor the academic progress of individual children, to identify where they need additional support and to set targets. However, it is not used quite so effectively in mathematics. Although teachers assess the progress of individuals in lessons well, the use of assessment to boost achievement of groups of pupils is less

rigorous. A common approach is used across all classes to make children aware of their targets and what they need to do next to improve their work. This helps to boost achievement by beginning to involve children in measuring their own progress. The range of extended activities offered to parents and carers encourages involvement in their children's learning, which supports their wellbeing and achievement. The school has an open door policy and works closely with families. The learning mentors' work with vulnerable children and in promoting attendance and punctuality make a valuable contribution to the quality of care provided by the school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The leadership and management of the school are effective at all levels. Responsibilities are shared and decisions are made collectively by the staff. The school runs very smoothly day to day and everyone is clear about what is expected of them. The headteacher has created a supportive and open culture in which staff are confident to share their ideas and to be adventurous. The school has succeeded in raising children's attainment in reading so that challenging targets have been met. It is in the process of tackling writing and mathematics, and recognises that more rigorous use of assessment and more sharply focused teaching are required in these areas. Governors work effectively to fulfil their statutory duties. They keep themselves up to date through good communication and organisation supported by regular training. They have a realistic view of the school and are involved well in school self-evaluation and improvement planning. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and appreciate what it provides. One parent's comment reflects the views of many: 'We find it a lovely school where the staff work well as a team. They care very much for the individual and their family, through encouraging parent participation in the child's learning and by empowering parents to continue their own education.'

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

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

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you very much for making me so welcome when I visited your school recently. I was impressed with how many of you remembered my name and wanted to talk to me. I am writing to tell you what I found out about your school. Yours is a good school. The people who run it do a good job in making decisions and keeping things organised. All the adults who work at your school care for you and do their best to make sure you are safe and happy. Your parents and carers are very pleased with the school. You behave well and are keen to learn. I was really pleased to hear how much you enjoy coming to school. It's not surprising, because the teaching is good and the different activities that you do are excellent. The teachers plan exciting things for you to do which keep you busy and help you with your learning. Most of you are learning well, especially with your reading. To help you improve your writing a bit more, I have asked the school to find some different ways of teaching you to make sentences and to use interesting words. In mathematics, I have asked the teachers to look more closely at how well you are doing and to give you work that will help you to move on more quickly. You can help, too, by trying hard to achieve your targets. I really enjoyed my visit and send you my best wishes.