



Birdlip Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 115515
Local Authority Gloucestershire
Inspection number 290244
Inspection date 25 September 2006
Reporting inspector Helen Barter

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Birdlip
School category	Community		Gloucester
Age range of pupils	4-11		GL4 8JH
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01452 862331
Number on roll (school)	95	Fax number	01452 862331
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Andy Fautley
		Headteacher	Chris Adams
Date of previous school inspection	1 April 2002		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Pupils attend this four-class school from a wide catchment area around the village of Birdlip. Nearly all pupils are White British and all are fluent in English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is average. Children enter the school in Reception with skills and abilities which are in line with the levels expected for their age. The school is situated in two buildings, separated by a village hall and public car park.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school which gives its pupils a very high quality, all-round education. Parents wholeheartedly endorse this, making comments such as 'it's fantastic', 'exceptional', 'like being part of one big family'. At the heart of the school's success are the first-class leadership and management of the headteacher and dedicated staff. Every single adult is committed to providing each child with the best possible education. The school has gone from strength to strength since its last inspection. Its track record of improvement and consistently high standards demonstrates that it has outstanding capacity to develop even further. The work done to assess the performance of every child in every subject is a shining example of a school which considers all areas of learning to be equally important and wants to make sure that no child misses out. A parent summed this up by saying, 'The school consistently strives towards best practice and for goals for each child's individual needs'.

Pupils' academic achievement is outstanding. Children settle well into the Reception class and all make good progress so that most meet the levels expected and some reach beyond this. Pupils build on this good progress in Years 1 and 2 and accelerate further in Years 3 to 6 to reach standards in English, mathematics and science that are exceptionally high by the time they leave. These very high standards have been built on steadily since the last inspection and are significantly above those achieved by pupils elsewhere in the country. Although slightly fewer pupils achieved the higher Level 5 in English in 2006, a greater focus on opportunities for writing in all subjects is helping more capable pupils in the current Years 5 and 6 to reach their potential.

A key factor in pupils' excellent all-round development is the consistently high quality of teaching and the good quality curriculum which engages pupils' interest in everything they do. As a result, this is a school where pupils really want to learn and relish the challenges given to them to do as well as they possibly can. They arrive each morning ready for the new day and behave exceptionally well. When one pupil said, 'we don't have bullying in this school, not at all, no way', others vigorously nodded in agreement. Pupils' personal development is outstanding and testimony to the first-rate care and guidance they are given, both personally and academically. They are very aware of the importance of eating healthy food, keeping fit and staying safe. They talk enthusiastically about physical education lessons and sport and using their muscles on the playground traverse wall. Through the school council and open, honest relationships with everyone, pupils feel free to express their views. They show great enthusiasm in taking part in community events, such as helping to remove litter from the woods to clean the environment and keep animals safe. One parent describes pupils as 'interested, motivated and literate individuals'. They are prepared exceptionally well, socially, emotionally and academically, for their future roles in society. So what could be improved? In Reception, parents are delighted with the way children are carefully helped to settle in and to enjoy learning through high quality teaching and a wide range of practical activities. Children are able to make choices and develop good independent learning skills as a result. Nevertheless, they are often reluctant to get going with writing because they want to be perfect from the start and are afraid

to 'scribble'. The introduction of 'journals' for children to experiment with writing is a good feature but children do not often take up other opportunities, such as using note pads in the home corner, to experiment on their own. The school continues to seek ways to improve its accommodation. Outdated buildings and a split school site present daily challenges but the school makes no excuses and strives to make sure that pupils' education is not affected. 'The school has made a silk purse out of a sow's ear', exclaimed one parent!

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide more opportunities and encouragement for children in the Reception class to develop their independent writing skills.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

In Reception, children make very good progress in learning sounds and letters as a preparation for reading. They develop strong personal and social skills through the excellent support and guidance given to them at the start of their school careers. Across the school, pupils are very confident in speaking and listening and this helps them to develop good language skills and vocabulary for use in their writing. In all classes, pupils use their literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills very well in other subjects. Specialist science teaching for each class enables pupils to reach exceptionally high standards. The mathematical reasoning of more able pupils in Years 5 and 6 is very good. Pupils thoroughly enjoy all the subjects they are taught. Standards in art are very good, such as the quality of shading in pencil drawings of shoes. They are also high in music because all pupils learn to play musical instruments, such as guitars and recorders, and are keen members of the new school orchestra.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' good attendance reflects their very positive attitudes to school. Pupils really enjoy their education. They say that they are 'learning things that are really important for when we are older'. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They gain a sensitive awareness to the world around them as was seen in a discussion when pupils talked about their plans to create a memorial garden for a much-loved member of staff. They have a very strong sense of right and wrong and value the chance to work with others and to take care of younger children. Pupils' cultural and multicultural awareness is excellent. They gain a real appreciation of the lives of others through art, music, French and Spanish, and through international links with other schools.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Teachers' planning is excellent, especially in meeting the needs of all pupils in lessons. A significant strength is the way in which teachers assess learning in previous lessons and amend planning accordingly. Teachers' subject knowledge is very good and their expertise is well used when teaching in different groups and classes. Assessment is very good and used most effectively to identify and support pupils who require additional help so that they do not fall behind. Teaching assistants are an important part of the teaching team and are well skilled in their support of pupils with learning difficulties. In lessons, pupils are particularly good at working independently because they know what is expected of them. Teachers set high expectations and pupils respond positively, rising to the challenges presented to them. In their enthusiasm to learn, pupils sometimes do not pay enough attention to how well they present their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

In Reception, children are able to learn well through a wide range of practical activities. The outdoor learning environment is much improved since the last inspection. Activities are planned to help children experiment with writing but many do not take these up because they lack confidence to 'have a go.' Resources for ICT have also improved to a good level and are used well by teachers to stimulate interest in learning and to develop pupils' ICT skills which are very good. The school ensures that pupils receive a rich education in art, music, sport and foreign languages. The good links established with local schools broaden pupils' experiences. There is a very good range of after-school activities with almost all pupils attending regularly. Although planning is in its early stages, the school is striving to develop greater creativity in its curriculum so that pupils understand how they can link their learning throughout every subject.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The quality of care, guidance and support for all pupils, including the more vulnerable, is exceptional. This is reflected in pupils' outstanding personal development and sense of well-being. Every pupil is valued and cared for as an individual. The support for those who need additional pastoral care, or help with their work, is outstanding. It gives them confidence to learn and enables them to make the same excellent progress as others. Pupils really value the targets to improve their learning because they discuss them regularly with teachers and know that they will be helped to achieve them. Regular dialogue between pupils and teachers and thorough marking in books are particular strengths in the academic guidance provided.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Leadership and management are outstanding. The headteacher shows excellent leadership and keeps the school moving forward at a very good rate. He persistently holds the expectations of what should be achieved at a high level and creates an atmosphere in which all staff work together as a highly effective and enthusiastic team. Adults and pupils alike strive to fulfil the motivating school aim of 'The Future's Bright, the Future's Ours'. Governance is excellent. While being supportive of the school's obvious strengths, it is well informed enough to challenge plans and decisions being made in the best interests of the pupils. Rigorous analysis by staff at all levels about how well pupils are doing ensures that the school is very clear about its own strengths. It is cautious in some aspects of its self-evaluation because it believes that there are always areas to be improved, for example by continuing to develop partnerships with other schools to gain a wider picture of standards and provision beyond its own small school environment. This is a school which does not rest on its laurels and has outstanding capability to drive forward further improvement for its pupils.

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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?	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

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

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?	1
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	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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

As you know, I came to your school recently to find out how well you are getting on. I had a lovely day with you all and appreciated how friendly and welcoming you were. Thank you for talking to me as I went round the school. I really enjoyed hearing about all the things that you think are great about Birdlip Primary. You told me how proud you are of your school and that it deserves 'ten stars out of ten'. I agree with you!

One of the most outstanding things is the way that teachers know you all very well and make sure that they give you work which is not too easy and not too hard, but which makes all of you really have to think. You told me how much you like a 'challenge'. It is this enjoyment of learning new things which makes you all do so well. Your teachers work really hard to help you learn as well as you do and are very careful to make sure that you are safe and know who to go to for help. They also make sure you have lots of fun!

You are extremely well behaved and make the school a very happy place for everyone to be. I was very impressed with the way that you concentrate in lessons, listen to your teachers and then are raring to go when you have work to do. I know you are very keen, but some of you must be careful not to rush too much because it makes your work a bit untidy, especially in mathematics. You told me how much you enjoy all your interesting lessons. It is fantastic that so many of you want to stay on after school to play sport and music, learn Spanish and work in your school garden. You are very fit and active young people. No wonder with that enormous field to play on. I think that you are being very well prepared for the next step to secondary school and for life ahead.

Your teachers know exactly what works well and what they need to do to make the school even better. To help them a little bit more, I have asked them to give the children in Reception lots of activities which will help them to get going with writing. This is because some of them find it difficult or are worried about making mistakes.

Keep up the good work and best of luck in everything you do in the future!