

# Littledean Church of England Primary School

## Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|-----------------|
| <b>Unique Reference Number</b> | 115631          |
| <b>Local Authority</b>         | Gloucestershire |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 290282          |
| <b>Inspection date</b>         | 16 May 2007     |
| <b>Reporting inspector</b>     | Jacqueline Ikin |

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

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|---|---|
| <b>Type of school</b>                     | Primary   |
| <b>School category</b>                    | Community   |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                | 4–11  |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                   | Mixed   |
| <b>Number on roll</b>                     |   |
| School                                    | 64  |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>              | The governing body                                    |
| <b>Chair</b>                              | Nick Scott  |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                        | Valerie Ann Huggett                                   |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b> | 26 November 2001                                      |
| <b>School address</b>                     | Church Street<br>Littledean<br>Cinderford<br>GL14 3NL |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                   | 01594 822171  |
| <b>Fax number</b>                         | 01594 822171  |

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This village school is smaller than most primary schools. Nearly all pupils on roll are from White British backgrounds. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is also above average.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

This is a school which is moving forward as a result of the strong leadership of the headteacher, who is determined to further improve the sound education it currently offers. Staff, pupils and governors say that she has 'turned the school round' and this is evident in the school's purposeful and nurturing atmosphere in which everyone feels involved, trusted and valued. Pupils' good personal development and behaviour, their growth in confidence and their positive attitudes towards learning are a result of the very good relationships that teachers have with their pupils and the good care, guidance and support that the school provides. This includes some outstanding outreach work by the family liaison worker and excellent links with local Christian groups. Parents are overwhelmingly appreciative of the school's work. One parent, summing up the views of many, commented, 'I wish my son had come to this school from day one'.

Teaching and learning are sound and result in pupils' achievement being satisfactory in relation to their starting points. Standards are below average but in reading and writing there is an improving picture. Mathematics standards lag behind and some pupils, particularly the more able, are not yet doing as well as they should in the subject. This is in part because they have gaps in their knowledge of how to use numbers in problem solving and mathematical investigations. However, it is also because there is not enough planning for pupils' different needs in mathematics, particularly those who are more able. The curriculum is good, with excellent links with the church and local community and good use of visits and activities after school to bring learning to life. There is a strong focus on the arts and the school has a superb choir. Satisfactory provision for Reception-aged pupils ensures a soundly balanced range of opportunities to learn through direct teaching and practical activities. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is good. These pupils do well as a result of the work of a very knowledgeable coordinator and the good support given by the adults who work with them.

The overall leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. Governors support the school well and take a knowledgeable interest in all that it does. However, the school's procedures for checking the impact of its work in lessons are too informal and not yet sufficiently focused on the impact of teaching on standards and progress. Consequently, the school's view of its effectiveness is not quite as accurate as it should be.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and achievement in mathematics by improving pupils' skills in problem solving and investigation, and planning more precisely for the needs of more-able pupils.
- Improve the accuracy of self-evaluation by ensuring that lesson observations are more systematic and that they focus on the impact of teaching on standards and achievement. A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next Section 5 inspection.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 3

Attainment on entry to the Reception class varies from year to year but overall it is lower than usually found. Most children make satisfactory progress during their Reception Year. Although many do not reach the goals expected for children of this age, particularly in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development, most do so in their physical, personal,

social and emotional development. Although overall standards by Year 2 and Year 6 are below average, this represents satisfactory achievement in relation to pupils' starting points at the beginning of Year 1. Standards in both reading and writing are beginning to improve. This is a result of the emphasis that is now put on helping both boys and girls acquire regular reading habits and the provision of opportunities to write for a variety of purposes. However, standards in mathematics are not moving forward to the same extent and too many pupils, particularly those who are more able, do not achieve as much as they should. They have gaps in their knowledge of how to investigate the patterns and relationships between numbers and of mathematical problem solving. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities achieve well because of the good support they receive from the adults who work with them.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' good personal development and well-being are a result of the school's genuine regard for the unique nature of each individual pupil and the very good pastoral care and guidance it provides. The opportunities that are given for quiet reflection and meaningful discussions, pupils' joyous singing and their work on the school council make a significant contribution to pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The vast majority of pupils say they thoroughly enjoy school. They demonstrate a growing appreciation of literature, particularly poetry, which is contributing to rising standards in English. Together with the satisfactory development of basic skills, they are soundly prepared for their future lives. Although pupils clearly know what they need to do to adopt a healthy and safe lifestyle, they do not yet apply this knowledge to their own nutrition, for example, by eating healthily at lunchtime. Behaviour is good in lessons and around the school. Pupils report that incidents of bullying are rare but when they happen they are quickly sorted out by the headteacher. Effective steps have been taken to improve attendance, which is now satisfactory.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

The sound teaching that pupils receive enables most pupils to make satisfactory progress as they move through the school. Some good teaching also occurs, particularly in English, and this is helping to improve standards. Teachers have conveyed their own enthusiasm for literature to their pupils and introduced them to books that appeal to both boys and girls. They also insist that pupils read on a regular basis, both to their parents at home and in school. This has improved pupils' reading skills, introduced them to a wide range of writing styles and extended their vocabulary. Good attention to spelling and presentation and the use of a wide range of purposeful opportunities for writing are also contributing to raising standards. Pupils greatly appreciate the way that their teachers help them to learn; as one said, 'Teachers take something complicated and explain it in an easy way'. Planning for the different ages and abilities of pupils varies. It is satisfactory in English and good for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. However, planning for average and more-able pupils in mathematics is too similar and not enough attention is given to developing pupils' understanding of problem solving and mathematical investigations.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum, including that for Reception-aged children, meets the needs of most pupils because provision is constantly being adapted in response to the changing numbers in year groups and ongoing checks of pupils' progress. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is good. The attention given to their individual needs can be exemplified by the way both pupils and all staff have learned signing to support pupils with hearing impairment. There is good provision for pupils' personal, social, health education and citizenship. Good links between subjects are being developed and are contributing to improved opportunities for writing. However, they are not yet fully formalised and opportunities are missed to extend learning and make it more meaningful in mathematics. The curriculum is enriched very well through the excellent links that the school has with the church, parents and the local community. For example, these have resulted in pupils having opportunities to learn German, grow organic vegetables and take part in a highly successful school choir. In addition, there is a good range of after-school activities, which pupils support with enthusiasm.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The high level of pastoral care provided by all staff is very much appreciated by parents and contributes significantly to pupils' personal development. Pupils take very good care of each other and are confident to approach an adult if they have a problem. The school has thorough and effective systems in place to keep pupils safe and to safeguard their welfare and there are excellent links with outside agencies when their help is needed. The academic guidance given to pupils is satisfactory. Assessment systems are used well to plan work which closely meets the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. Most pupils know what they need to do in order to improve their work. As they get older they start to develop the skills they need to assess their own work, particularly in writing. However, not enough use is made of assessment information to set challenging targets and plan work for more-able pupils in mathematics.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The school is well led and soundly managed. The school's improving trend owes much to the good leadership of the headteacher, who has high expectations for pupils' personal and academic growth. There is very strong sense of teamwork amongst staff and governors and the school is held in high regard in the local community. All are very committed to the school because they are respected, their work is valued and they are fully supported and involved.

Self-evaluation procedures are satisfactory. There is good use of the data from annual tests to identify priorities for improvement. However, the school's view of the impact of its work on standards and achievement is not always as accurate as it should be because procedures for lesson observations are too informal and not sufficiently focused on the impact of teaching on standards and progress. The commitment and the dedication of all staff to helping pupils to do their best and the good improvements that are already evident in reading and writing indicate that the school's capacity to improve further is good.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

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

### Overall effectiveness

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| <b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b> | 3   |
| How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?  | 1   |
| The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage  | 3   |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation  | 3   |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements  | 2   |
| Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection   | Yes |

### Achievement and standards

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>How well do learners achieve?</b>   | 3 |
| The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners   | 4 |
| How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners | 3 |
| How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress                              | 2 |

### Personal development and well-being

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>                           | 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   | 2 |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices   | 2 |
| The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles   | 3 |
| 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 | 3 |

### The quality of provision

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>          | 3 |
| <b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b> | 2 |
| <b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>   | 2 |

<sup>1</sup> 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.



## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| <b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>                                       | 3   |
| 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   | 3   |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can                     | 3   |
| How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money  | 3   |
| 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

17 May 2007

Dear Pupils,

Littledean Church of England Primary School, Littledean, Gloucestershire GL14 3NL

Thank you for making us feel so welcome when we visited your school. We really enjoyed talking to you and watching you learn and play. We can see why you are so proud of your school and why you like your headteacher and teachers so much. We think that it gives you a sound education.

### What we liked about your school

- Your headteacher is doing a good job in making the school a better place for you to learn and all your teachers and governors support her well in this.
- You work hard and your teachers are helping you to make better progress in reading and writing.
- The singing in the choir is excellent.
- The people who work in the village and the church give excellent support to the school and help it to provide a lot of interesting ways to help you learn, including gardening and clubs after school.
- You act in a confident and grown-up way and do a lot to look after the school and each other and to help make the school a happy place.
- The school takes very good care of you and gives you all the support you need in your personal lives.

### What we think needs to be improved

- The progress that you make and the standards that you reach in mathematics.
- The way that the school checks how well it is doing by looking at lessons.

You can help in all this by continuing to work hard and make the school a happy place.

Yours sincerely,

Jacqueline Ikin Lead inspector