



Field Court Church of England Infant School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 115644
Local Authority Gloucestershire
Inspection number 290288
Inspection date 1 March 2007
Reporting inspector David Westall

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

Type of school	Infant	School address	Courtfield Road
School category	Voluntary controlled		Quedgeley
Age range of pupils	5-7		Gloucester GL2 4UF
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01452 720257
Number on roll (school)	217	Fax number	01452 720257
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Brian Gazzard
		Headteacher	Karen Hart
Date of previous school inspection	15 April 2002		

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The school is situated on the southern outskirts of Gloucester, and the vast majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. However, the percentage identified as having special education needs is a little above the national average. On entry to Reception, children's standards are generally at the lower end of the average range, with a significant minority demonstrating limited communication skills.

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 which has some outstanding features. The school's success is quickly sensed by the visitor who is met by well motivated pupils, bright and interesting displays that show high quality learning experiences, and professional, committed staff who clearly love their jobs. In these circumstances, it is not surprising that pupils do well and that parents hold the school in high regard. A typical remark to the inspector included, 'What more could I ask? My children love school, they are learning new things every day and the teachers are brilliant.'

Pupils' achievement is good. Provision is good in the Foundation Stage. Children get off to a flying start and soon develop very positive attitudes to learning. The vast majority make good progress across all areas of learning but the most capable could sometimes do better in communication, language and literacy. In Key Stage 1, pupils' progress is consistently good. As a result, pupils' overall standards are above average by the end of Year 2 and significantly better than in most schools.

Pupils achieve well because the teaching is good. Teachers' enthusiasm and professionalism shine through in lessons. Their planning is effective and they have high expectations for their pupils. Teachers have the knack of making learning interesting. 'Didn't want the lesson to end,' commented one Year 2 pupil after enjoying grappling with a mathematical problem during the inspection. The curriculum is also good. Much of the learning stems from practical activities, which help pupils to develop knowledge and skills across a range of subjects. The school accepts, however, that pupils could make more use of information and communication technology (ICT) to support their learning across the curriculum.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding, and stem from the supportive relationships that exist across the school. It is clear that pupils like and respect their teachers, and that these feelings are reciprocated. As a result, pupils know that teachers have their best interests at heart, and have a clear sense of self-worth because they know they are valued as individuals. The quality of care, guidance and support is also outstanding. All of these factors contribute to pupils' enthusiasm for school and learning. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They are polite, readily listen to others, accept differences of opinion and know how to have fun together.

Good leadership and management are at the heart of the school's success. Self-evaluation procedures are penetrating and effective. As a result, the school has an accurate view of its strengths and areas for development. The headteacher works tenaciously to improve pupils' educational opportunities and communicates her high expectations to staff persuasively so that all have a shared sense of direction and feel part of a successful team. Staff morale is high. Responsibility is delegated wisely, and the senior management team, subject leaders and governors all fulfil their roles well and contribute to the school's success. The school has made good progress since its last inspection and the determination and high expectations of staff mean it is well placed to get even better.

What the school should do to improve further

- Extend the communication, language and literacy skills of the most capable children in the Foundation Stage by ensuring they are given sufficiently challenging work.
- Provide more opportunities for pupils to use ICT to support their work in other subjects.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good. Children make good overall progress in the Foundation Stage. As a result, nearly all reach the expected standard in each area of learning by the end of Reception. However, not enough of the most capable children exceed this standard in communication, language and literacy because they do not always achieve as well as they should. Pupils' progress in Years 1 and 2 is consistently good. As a result, the school has maintained significantly above average standards in Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics for a good number of years. In addition, there is clear evidence that pupils achieve very well in art and in their personal development.

Pupils with learning difficulties make good progress, across the school, as do the very few who learn English as an additional language. The progress of the most capable pupils is satisfactory, overall, in the Foundation Stage and is good in Years 1 and 2.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils are very keen to learn and their attendance rate is above average. Pupils are proud of their school, and school council members talk enthusiastically about explaining its merits to headteachers at a local conference. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils develop very good relationships with others, work and play together amicably and know the difference between right and wrong. They respond well when given responsibility, for example as members of the active school council or as 'Playground Friends' for those who need support at break times.

Pupils are very safety conscious and show considerable care for others. They enjoy a good range of physical activities and understand the importance of healthy eating. The school has achieved both the 'Healthy Schools' award and 'Active Mark'. Pupils grow their own organic fruit and vegetables, and make their own compost. They understand the need for energy conservation and recycling, and the school has achieved the prestigious 'Green Flag' Eco Award. Pupils have a strong social and community awareness, the ability to work together well and good literacy and numeracy skills. Consequently, they are well prepared for their future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Throughout the school, teachers know exactly what they expect pupils to learn. Their explanations are clear so that pupils are confident about tackling their work. The teaching captures pupils' interest well and this is reflected in pupils' enthusiasm for learning and their excellent behaviour. Teachers know just when to intervene with well judged questions and when to stand back and let pupils work things out for themselves. Teaching assistants are well briefed and provide good support, particularly for pupils with learning difficulties. Assessment procedures are good and ensure that work is usually well matched to pupils' learning needs. However, in Reception opportunities are sometimes missed to extend the communication, language and literacy skills of the most capable children. Good use is usually made of lesson time but the pace of learning occasionally falters if teachers talk for too long.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Children in the Foundation Stage benefit from a rich range of learning opportunities, including through purposeful play, which means they love coming to school. In Years 1 and 2, while a strong and effective emphasis is given to the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills, the school also provides a broad range of worthwhile learning experiences. For example, first-rate opportunities are provided in art, and are reflected in the school's achievement of the Artsmark Gold award. Pupils also benefit from a very strong emphasis on their personal development. Their awareness of environmental issues is promoted particularly well, including through the school's Eco Committee and a popular club that focuses on the care for creatures and plants in the school grounds. However, pupils have limited opportunities to use ICT to support their work.

The curriculum is enriched by a wide range of educational visits, visitors and clubs. These are greatly enjoyed by pupils. After reflecting on a visit to a building development, one pupil commented, 'It was great. We had to wear hard hats and I learned lots about how houses are made.'

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school provides an exceptional quality of care for its pupils, valuing each as an individual. The warm family atmosphere results in pupils growing in confidence and developing into well-rounded young citizens. This begins as soon as children enter the Reception Year where they are helped to settle in quickly and become valued members of the school community. As a result of the high quality of personal care, pupils feel safe and are confident that they have an adult to turn to if they have any worries. Child protection procedures are robust and regular health and safety checks

are carried out. The school works very well with parents and external agencies to support pupils when this is required. Support and guidance for pupils' academic development is good. Pupils receive well focused feedback and are beginning to make informed evaluations of their own achievements.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher uses a range of rigorous procedures to check the school's performance. She is quick to recognise and praise the good work of staff and pupils, and alert to situations where people need advice and guidance. Because teachers benefit from detailed and helpful feedback, including from the senior management team, a climate has been created where everyone is constantly trying to improve the school further. Strategic planning is well focused and effective. For example, recent initiatives have improved pupils' mathematical problem-solving skills and helped to make pupils' behaviour exemplary. The school recognises there is now a need to focus more strongly on improving the standards of the most capable reception children and on enhancing ICT opportunities throughout the school. The governors are committed and effective. They have developed an accurate view of the school's performance through visits to see it in operation.

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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?	1
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	2
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?	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	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?	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?	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 for welcoming me into your school and for being so friendly, polite and helpful. Here are some of the good things I found out:

- You think Field Court Infant is a good school and I agree with you.
- You enjoy school, like your teachers and have lots of friends.
- Your behaviour is excellent.
- The grown-ups take very good care of you, and you know whom to go to if you need some help.
- You have a really good understanding of the importance of keeping safe and healthy.
- You are doing well with your school work because the teaching is good.
- Your school is well organised and you have many opportunities to learn different things.
- I was very impressed with the work of the Eco Committee and the Bug Club. I could do with your help in my garden because you know lots about vegetable growing and compost.

I could only find two things the school needs to improve:

- Some of you could do even better in the Reception classes.
- You need to use the computers more to help you with your work.

I know from talking to your headteacher that these two things will be sorted out quickly. Thank you again for your help. I really enjoyed my day at your lovely school.