



Minchinhampton School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 115747
Local Authority Gloucestershire
Inspection number 290327
Inspection dates 23–24 January 2007
Reporting inspector Tom Simpson

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	School Road
School category	Foundation		Minchinhampton
Age range of pupils	4–10		Stroud GL6 9BP
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01453 883273
Number on roll (school)	286	Fax number	01453 884829
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Alison Blundell
		Headteacher	Rod Harris
Date of previous school inspection	1 April 2002		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an above average sized primary school serving a socially mixed community. Nearly all the pupils are White British and none are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. A below average number of pupils have learning difficulties or disabilities. The number of pupils entitled to free school meals is also below average. Attainment on entry varies from year to year but overall is a little higher than for most schools.

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 many strengths and few weaknesses. Its leadership and management are good. The headteacher and other senior staff are not complacent and continually strive to raise standards and improve the quality of pupils' learning even further. They are proactive in introducing new strategies when these are necessary, a recent example being a more effective system for assessing and tracking pupils' academic progress. Self-evaluation procedures are strong and the outcomes of self-evaluation are effectively used to promote improvements. For example, the school recognised that the quality of boys' writing was not good enough and successfully introduced a number of strategies to improve this. The school's own assessment of its effectiveness is close to that of the inspection team. Teaching is carefully monitored and the overall quality of teaching and learning is good. One parent commented: 'I am proud to say my child goes to Minchinhampton School'. Another wrote: 'The education provided is excellent. I am completely satisfied with all that the school does'. Although provision for children in the Reception Year is satisfactory and most parents are happy with it, there are a number of ways in which it could be improved further. Some tasks could be made more challenging, particularly for the more able children, and more activities could be provided to develop their creative and decision-making skills. Throughout the school, pupils are very well known to staff, and their support, care and guidance is good. Consequently, their personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. The pupils behave well and have positive attitudes toward the school and their work. Most enjoy being in school. There are consistently good relationships at all levels. Although it appropriately focuses on raising basic skills, the curriculum provided by the school is rich and varied and successfully engages the pupils' interest. There is a good number of out-of-lesson activities, and information and communication technology is used well to support work in other subjects. Standards are consistently above average and pupils' overall achievement is good. The school has successfully addressed the small number of concerns raised by the last inspection team and it has a good capacity to improve even further in the future.

What the school should do to improve further

- ensure children in the Foundation Stage have more opportunities to develop their creative and decision-making skills and are given tasks that consistently challenge the more able.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' achievement is good and standards are above average overall. Children make satisfactory progress in the Foundation Stage and nearly all reach the expected standards by the end of the Reception Year. However, children's creative development is relatively weaker than the other areas of learning. In the 2006 assessment of pupils

at the end of Year 2, the results were significantly above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. In the tests for pupils in Year 6, the results were also significantly above average in English, mathematics and science. Overall national assessment results have been above average in both Year 2 and Year 6 for a number of years. Although pupils make good overall progress in Years 1 to 6, this has not been consistent in all areas. For example, in the 2006 Year 6 assessments, there were weaknesses in the standards being reached by boys in writing, particularly at the higher levels. The school's system for tracking the progress made by pupils indicates that, as a result of positive action by the school's senior management and good teaching, boys' standards in writing have now risen. The achievement of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is good and most are making good progress in relation to their individual targets.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. They behave well in lessons and around the school and have positive attitudes towards their work. They enjoy school and appreciate the out-of-lesson activities that are provided for them. They feel safe in school and say that they 'learn a lot'. They are kind to one another at play and supportive in lessons. Attendance is satisfactory and the pupils are punctual. However, a number of absences are the result of holidays being taken during term time. The school does what it can to counter this. The pupils have a good understanding of the need to stay healthy and enjoy the regular opportunities they have to take responsibility. For example, they see membership of the school council as a real chance to have a say in the working of the school and consider that their views are listened to by the school's management. The pupils appreciate the regular opportunities they have to contribute to the local and wider communities by, for example, supporting a wide range of charities. They are prepared effectively for their future well-being through gaining good standards in their basic skills. All elements of their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good and the pupils empathise well with those less fortunate than themselves.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good and enables pupils to make good overall progress in Years 1 to 6. Teachers' enthusiasm and professionalism shine through in lessons. Across the school, teachers capture and maintain pupils' interest, and relationships between teachers and pupils are consistently good. Teachers know what they expect pupils to learn and their explanations are clear. Consequently, pupils are confident about tackling their work. 'You know teachers will help if you get stuck,' commented one pupil. Teachers usually know when to provide guidance and when to

let pupils work things out for themselves. Nevertheless, there is still scope for improvement. At present, teaching in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory overall and means that children make sound, rather than better, progress in Reception. This is largely because tasks are sometimes too prescribed to allow children to make decisions about their work and opportunities are sometimes missed to use structured play to fully benefit their learning. Assessment procedures are good in Years 1 to 6 and ensure that tasks are generally well matched to pupils' needs. Pupils' progress is carefully tracked and any pupils who may be slipping behind are quickly identified and benefit from extra help. In the Foundation Stage, assessment procedures are satisfactory and improving. However, they are not always used effectively to ensure that the most capable children are given sufficiently challenging work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good overall. Provision in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory and all areas of learning are covered. However, opportunities are sometimes missed to set tasks which stretch the capabilities of the most able, and to promote children's creative and decision-making skills. In Years 1 to 6, the curriculum is rich and caters for all pupils well. Whilst an effective emphasis is given to the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills, care is also taken to provide a broad range of learning experiences. Good use is made of information and communication technology to support work across the curriculum, pupils' personal development is fostered strongly and all pupils benefit from specialist music teaching.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good overall and support pupils' personal development well. A strength of the provision is the way that the pupils are well known to staff as individuals and have good pastoral care and guidance. Rigorous procedures for child protection, health and safety and safe staff recruitment are in place. There are close links with outside agencies, such as the educational psychology service and social services, which provide specialist support and guidance for pupils. Marking of pupils' work regularly guides them successfully on what they need to do next in order to improve their work. Academic target setting is also in place but this is not always used consistently as a tool for self-assessment.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good and are having a strong impact on the quality of education at the school and on the standards being reached by the pupils. The headteacher and the other members of the senior leadership team are very committed to maintaining good academic standards while still giving a high level of priority to the care and welfare of the pupils. All senior members of staff have a clear idea of

where the school needs to develop further and are proactive in adopting new procedures to achieve this. The monitoring of the school's work by senior staff is effective in improving provision and there is a rolling programme of review by other staff with management responsibilities, which includes data analyses, the examination of planning and the observation of teaching. Largely as a result of recent changes to individual responsibilities, some subject coordinators have not had time to fully impact on the work of the school. Governance is good. The governing body is supportive but also committed to maintaining and further raising standards. Individual governors are well involved in the life of the school at all levels and have significant roles in the strategic monitoring of the school's work. Procedures for school self-evaluation are good and involve all relevant parties at appropriate stages.

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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	3
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?	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	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?	2
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 for making us so welcome at your school. We enjoyed meeting you and hearing about your work. You told us how much you like your school. We enjoyed our visit and now want to share with you what we thought about your school. We found that your school is providing you with an education that is good. Here are some of the things that we found to be particularly good:
- you are well behaved and your personal development is good
- most of you make good progress and reach good standards in your work
- most teaching is good
- you are provided with good quality and interesting work
- you are well cared for, supported and guided by the adults at the school
- the headteacher and other senior staff lead the school well and are working hard to make the school even better. Here is the one thing we have suggested to help the school improve:
- although the work provided for the youngest children is satisfactory, there are a number of ways in which it could be made even better. Thank you again for your help.