

Churchdown Village Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115512
Local Authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	311958
Inspection dates	13–14 May 2008
Reporting inspector	Lorna Brackstone HMI

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	232
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Andrew Peacock
Headteacher	David Clough
Date of previous school inspection	1 December 2003
School address	Station Road Churchdown Gloucester GL3 2JX
Telephone number	01452 712330
Fax number	01452 855978

Age group	7–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This large school serves a suburban community where numbers eligible for free school meals are low. A very small proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and disabilities is below the national average, but includes those with moderate learning difficulties, communication problems, behavioural issues and physical disabilities. The school has won a number of nationally recognised awards for health and sporting provision. In September 2006, the deputy headteacher became the temporary headteacher of the school, and this was substantiated in January 2008. Most of the pupils transfer from the adjacent infant school.

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 all pupils achieve well and attain standards that are significantly above average. Pupils say their work is interesting and challenging. They are confident that their teachers help them to succeed because, as one pupil explained, 'they get things done'. The vast majority of parents confirm that their children make good progress. One parent explained that teachers 'make sure learning is both interesting and fun'. Most parents are happy with all aspects of the school and, as one commented, 'I couldn't have wished for a better school for my children.'

The good curriculum is enriched through an excellent range of out-of-class activities. The school works exceptionally well with the wider community to ensure that pupils receive the best possible education. This is evident when, after completing a transition unit of work, Year 6 pupils move on smoothly to the local secondary school. Close links with the local university enable the pupils to benefit from meeting students from around the world. Across the school, well-planned activities ensure that the pupils know what it is they are learning. Teaching and learning are good because teachers are enthusiastic and interested in what they teach and this motivates pupils very well. Consequently, pupils engage willingly in lessons, concentrate well and produce good work. Teachers have started to link subjects so that pupils can see how the different aspects of learning fit together. There are examples of work being well marked and this helps the pupils understand what they need to do to improve their work. However, this is not consistent across all subjects.

Pupils' personal development is good. They thoroughly enjoy coming to school and excitedly participate in all activities as shown by their good attendance. Sport is a firm favourite and this contributes to their outstanding awareness of healthy lifestyles. They treat each other with respect, behave well and genuinely want to learn. Pupils are well cared for and feel secure and happy. As one parent explained, 'Staff are not only strong on an educational front but also on a more personal level.' Pupils have targets set for them but they are not always specific enough to help the pupils understand what the next step in their learning should be.

Leadership and management are good and most parents confirm this. One parent explained that 'the school is led in a very professional manner'. There is a good understanding of the strengths and areas for development within the school. All adults are working hard to secure further improvements to this successful school so that it can be outstanding in every way. Leaders and managers are fully aware that their overview and evaluations of provision are not yet broad enough to ensure that best practice in teaching is shared across the school. Governors are knowledgeable about the school and discharge their responsibilities well. The school has continued to improve since the last inspection and the drive and enthusiasm of school leaders ensure that it has good capacity for further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that marking and the use of targets consistently provide guidance for all pupils so that they can improve their work and move on in their learning.
- Introduce systematic ways to share best practice throughout the school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Attainment on entry is well above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. Standards in other subjects are broadly average. Pupils achieve well and make good progress as they move through the school. The standards reached by the end of Year 6 are significantly above average and have been so for a number of years. Recently the school rightly identified that the higher-attaining pupils needed to make greater progress. Current standards in Year 6 indicate that steps taken to rectify this, such as improving boys' writing skills and developing a wider vocabulary in science, have successfully raised the attainment of these pupils. Standards in physical education, art, music and the humanities are well above the expected level for pupils of this age group. This reflects the breadth of the curriculum and the expertise of the teaching staff. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities achieve as well as their peers because the provision is adapted well to meet their needs.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' excellent understanding of healthy lifestyles has been recognised through the 'Healthy School' accreditation and the 'Activemark' and 'Sportsmark' awards. Pupils also show a good awareness of personal safety, demonstrated by their excellent knowledge of the school fire drill routine and their keen awareness of the dangers of glue guns. They develop into mature young people who have a high regard for the well-being of others and are clear about school rules and sanctions. Whilst most pupils are confident that they can approach an adult in school with a problem, not all pupils feel that these issues are resolved satisfactorily. A small minority of parents who raised issues about behaviour echo this concern. Inspectors found that pupils behave well in class. Although break times reflect lively and enthusiastic play, no incidents of antisocial behaviour were observed at playtime during the inspection.

Pupils attend school regularly and make useful contributions to the day-to-day running of the school by sensibly undertaking responsible jobs at lunchtime and participating in the school council. They also show a good responsibility towards the wider community by singing to local senior citizens and regularly organising fund-raising to support charities. Pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development underpins all aspects of school life. Their international week and the links they share with other countries around the world develop the pupils' knowledge and understanding of other cultures well.

Pupils are able to organise their work independently and have good levels of competence in both basic skills and in other subjects across the curriculum. This is good preparation for future life and learning.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers know their pupils well and have high expectations of them. At the start of each lesson teachers ensure that the pupils know what they are learning. This enables the pupils to evaluate their own progress. Teachers use questioning skills well to discover the extent of pupils' understanding. They use pupils' responses successfully to consolidate previous learning, clarify new ideas and to move pupils on to more challenging work. Teachers are knowledgeable and

their enthusiasm for the subjects they teach encourages the pupils in their learning. In a tennis lesson in Year 3, there was a good emphasis on using the correct technique to hit a ball. One pupil showed sheer delight when, after managing to hit the ball correctly, they exclaimed 'I did it, I did it!' Pupils' independence develops well when they are encouraged to work independently or in small groups. Good planning ensures that pupils who find learning difficult or experience behaviour problems are fully involved in the activities. The support they receive from teaching assistants is good. The marking of work is good in English but is less effective in other subjects. Consequently, pupils do not always know what they need to do to improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Provision for the development of basic skills is good and ensures that all pupils achieve well. Good educational plans support well those pupils who find learning challenging. The extensive range of enrichment activities allows pupils to develop their talents and interests, particularly in music, drama and sport. Parents are delighted with the 'excellent opportunities the school provides'. The school acknowledges that in recent years, its curricular planning has not suited all of the pupils but a significant minority of parents also raised this as a concern in the inspection questionnaire. The school is revising its approach to teaching subjects in isolation and is now developing a more topic-based approach to planning. Senior leaders have put plans in place to ensure that there is a consistent curricular approach across the whole school. This had already started in one Year 4 lesson based around the Vikings. It was evident that pupils' art, design and technology, and mathematical skills were fitting together well to help their learning in history.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Personal support, care and guidance for pupils are good and actively promote equality and individuality. Health and safety arrangements and child protection procedures are robust and reviewed regularly. Support for pupils with moderate learning difficulties is good because the school liaises well with specialist agencies. A social skills group guides well pupils with behavioural problems. Weekly workshop sessions support the most able pupils with their problem-solving skills. The quality of academic guidance is satisfactory. Pupils know about their targets and confidently talk about the levels they have reached. However, these targets do not always reflect individual steps of progress because they are not sufficiently personalised or specific.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Parents recognise that the school has undergone a period of change but most are very happy with its management. They feel that the school is led by a headteacher who is 'very interested in all aspects of school life'. Management of change is effective and the school runs smoothly. The introduction of pupil tracking systems has enabled the new leaders with particular responsibilities to quickly pinpoint any areas of underachievement and accelerate progress through support programmes. Challenging targets have been set. The school is fully aware that it has not yet fully developed its monitoring of teaching strengths and areas for development. Governors are supportive of the school and good use is made of their personal experience to

inform their work within the well-organised committee structure. They have correctly recognised that their own monitoring systems are not yet sufficiently formalised to ensure that there is consistency and breadth in their approach.

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Annex A

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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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.

Annex A

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

14 May 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Churchdown Village Junior School, Gloucester GL3 2JX

A big thank you for making my colleague and me feel so welcome at your school. We enjoyed spending time with you and finding out about Churchdown Village Junior School. I would like to say a special thank you to those pupils who talked with me about your school.

I agree with you and most of your parents who feel that Churchdown is a good school. Your work is good and this prepares you well for the next stage of your education. It is very clear that you take a full part in the life of the school and thoroughly enjoy all aspects of school life, even the tests! You behave well and make a good contribution to your own school and the wider community. Your understanding of living healthily is exceptional.

You are taught well and make good progress. You appreciate the exceptional range of enrichment activities provided for you and we were most impressed to see you participating in cross-country before school started in the morning. I enjoyed hearing about all your other sporting events and was very interested to learn about the trips and residential visits you are involved with. You feel safe because the school looks after you and you confidently talk to adults if you have a problem.

Your headteacher is a good leader and works well with all the staff and governors as a successful team. To help the school become even better I have asked them to find ways to take the best bits we saw in some of the teaching, and use them throughout the school. I have also asked them to make sure that they set specific targets for you and provide pointers on how you can improve when they mark their work.

Once again, thank you for your help. Keep doing your best and working with the adults in school to make sure that Churchdown Village Junior School gets even better.

Best wishes

Lorna Brackstone Her Majesty's Inspector