

Glenfall Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115577
Local Authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	311985
Inspection dates	13–14 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Alison Grainger

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	175
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mike Cooke
Headteacher	A Sutcliffe
Date of previous school inspection	19 May 2003
School address	Glenfall Way Charlton Kings Cheltenham GL52 6XZ
Telephone number	01242 234055
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school draws most of its pupils from the surrounding area of mainly owner occupied housing although some travel from further afield. Almost all pupils are White British. Very few from minority ethnic backgrounds are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. When children enter the Reception Year, most have the skills expected for their age and many are confident socially and in speaking.

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 that develops pupils as well-rounded young people. Parents are really pleased with the balance of attention given to their children's academic and personal development. As one parent said, reflecting the views of many, 'My children have thrived at Glenfall, not only academically but socially too.' At the heart of the school's success lie good leadership and management. The headteacher is an outstandingly good role model in the high level of care shown for others and in his determination to ensure that all pupils do well. Parents value the headteacher's strong leadership and the dedication of the staff team. They see the staff and governors as having created a school that 'has a real sense of community and is filled with warmth and welcome'.

Children get off to a strong start in the Reception Year because the provision for them is good. This effective beginning is built on well in Years 1 and 2, with the result that standards are significantly above average at the end of Year 2. Although standards remain high when pupils reach the end of Year 6, pupils' progress is uneven from the start of Year 3 to the end of Year 6. As a result, the total gains made by pupils over this four-year period are not as significant as those made lower down the school.

Pupils achieve well because teaching and the curriculum are good. Teaching is usually characterised by high expectations of the standards all pupils are capable of attaining, with activities varied to match pupils' different needs. The curriculum not only covers all the required subjects but is also enhanced by many musical, creative and sporting activities, visits and visitors. Pupils also study a modern foreign language. With such a varied range of opportunities for learning and having fun, it is no wonder that pupils enjoy school and that the attendance rate is very high. However, the reason for pupils' uneven progress in Key Stage 2 is that there is variation across these years in how well teaching and the curriculum provide challenge.

The strong emphasis given to pupils' personal, social and health education, together with outstanding pastoral care, contributes much to pupils' good personal development and well-being. Pupils know a good deal about how to stay fit and healthy and also about how to keep safe both in school and outside. They make a significant contribution to the school and wider community; for example, through the school council and by raising funds for charities. Relationships are very good at all levels and pupils are caring. One parent of a Reception child told inspectors how pleased she is that 'Every pupil seems to "look out" for others.' She went on to say that 'My daughter knows so many older children just from being helped at lunchtime.'

While the attention to pupils' personal welfare is exceptional, the guidance to help them improve their school work is not as good. There is inconsistency in how well marking is used and individual targets are not specific enough. The school's self-evaluation process is thorough and accurate. As a result, the school has made good progress since the last inspection and is well placed now to build on its strengths and improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

As a result of the strong start they are given, almost all children reach the standards expected at the end of the Reception Year and a good number exceed them. Learning opportunities are well matched to children's needs in a bright, attractive and well-organised classroom. Teaching is consistently good although, occasionally, the most capable children are not stretched fully.

Children settle in well because the arrangements for supporting their entry to school are exceptionally good. At the same time, the school's very effective partnership with parents begins. One parent of a Reception child summed up children's start in Reception by saying, 'Glenfall is a happy and safe place for our son and we feel he's already learnt so much in the short time he's been attending.' Reception provision is well led and managed, with the two teachers working very well as a team. Staff have rightly identified the need to develop the outdoor area to support learning even more effectively.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make sure that teaching and the curriculum always challenge pupils fully, in particular to increase their progress over the four year period.
- Ensure that all pupils are given clear guidance through marking and targets to help them to improve their performance.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' achievement is good and standards are significantly above the national average. Good progress is made from children's start in the Reception Year to the end of Year 2. The outcomes of this are clearly evident in the school's track record of high standards in the national assessments in reading, writing and mathematics.

Taking the full four year period, most pupils make the expected gains and some do better, maintaining high standards at the end of Year 6. Consistently good progress is evident in Year 3 and significant spurts of progress take place in Years 5 and 6. However, progress is not as smooth or as rapid as in the earlier years. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities do as well as others in relation to their starting points and capabilities.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The school's website states that, 'Glenfall is a caring school where all children are welcome, where they feel secure and valued.' This statement sums up the school's ethos, which results in pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils really enjoy the many opportunities they have to achieve in areas such as music and sports and the wide variety of situations in which they work and play together. Very good relationships are evident among pupils of all ages, such as when Year 6 pupils act as buddies to those in Year 1, developing their library skills and understanding of books. Behaviour is good in lessons and around the school, and is often exemplary. Occasionally, there is some restlessness in lessons and pupils do not give their full attention to the teacher but there is no significant misbehaviour.

Pupils make a good contribution to the school and wider community, for example through recycling and putting on performances for senior citizens. Responsibilities are undertaken diligently. Pupils' good personal and social skills, together with their competence in areas such as information and communication technology (ICT), result in them being well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Most teaching is at least good, and there are examples of outstanding teaching. A real strength is the way in which additional adults in lessons, whether they are teaching assistants or volunteer helpers, are deployed to give focused support to groups of pupils. This careful grouping of pupils, with each group receiving intensive teaching, leads to rapid progress for pupils of all capabilities. In Year 3, excellent deployment of adults is a highly effective feature of well-paced lessons. Currently, pupils in Year 5 are making significant strides in reading comprehension as a result of effective team teaching by the class teacher, deputy headteacher and a teaching assistant. While teaching is usually well matched to all pupils' needs, this is not always the case. Unevenness in the match of teaching to pupils' needs is a reason why pupils' progress is less significant in Key Stage 2 than in the earlier years.

In all lessons, good relationships between adults and pupils create a climate supportive of learning. Instructions and explanations are usually clear, and resources are readily to hand so that no time is lost. ICT skills are used and developed well in lessons across the curriculum, with some highly effective practice in Year 6.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Enrichment of the curriculum through a wide range of activities additional to daily lessons is excellent. As one pupil said, 'It doesn't matter if you're not particularly good at mathematics or English, there's always something to be good at like music or sport.' All pupils are offered the chance to learn to play a musical instrument from Year 2 upwards. During the inspection, a group of boys in Year 6 enthusiastically practised playing their electric guitars and drums in the hall at lunchtimes. Visits and visitors enrich learning and pupils in Years 5 and 6 have two opportunities to go on residential visits, including a visit to France.

There is good coverage of all the recommended areas of learning in the Reception Year. All the required subjects are taught in Years 1 to 6. The school is rightly increasing the attention given to practical and investigative science to help more pupils reach the higher levels in this subject at the end of Year 6. As the school develops its links between subjects further, it is aware of the importance of ensuring that skills in each subject are built progressively from one year to the next. It knows that this needs improvement to rectify inconsistency in how well subject skills are developed in Key Stage 2.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

One pupil said of the school, 'It won't let me down, you can trust them.' Another talked about the school Christmas dinner being 'like a big family party, relaxed'. The warm family atmosphere and the care for each pupil are tangible. Pupils say that adults are approachable, 'not too strict and not too easy going'. They are confident that, should they have any worries or concerns, the adults will listen to them. Pupils have a real voice in the school through the school council, discussing issues of importance to them during 'circle time' and by responding to questionnaires. The school gives much careful attention to ensuring pupils are safeguarded. It does a good deal to develop their understanding of how to stay safe and keep healthy. There are examples

of exceptionally good attention to the specific needs of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Support for pupils with English as an additional language is good.

Pupils' progress is carefully monitored. In most classes, pupils' work is marked regularly and pupils are given some feedback on how well they are doing. Teachers discuss pupils' work with them too. However, academic guidance is inconsistent and does not consistently do enough to help pupils to improve their performance. Marking seldom tells pupils what they need to do to improve their work and individual targets are not used well enough for this purpose.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are characterised by the strong teamwork of the headteacher, staff and governors. There is much open and honest debate focused on maintaining the school's strengths and making it more effective. One parent commented that the headteacher 'brings out the best in both teachers and children'. He is highly committed and enthusiastic, demonstrating strong pastoral leadership and also continually seeking to improve the pupils' academic performance.

The deputy headteacher provides good support to the headteacher and also contributes significantly to all aspects of school life. During the inspection, the school was celebrating the recognition of the deputy headteacher's work in music. On the eve of the inspection he won the Music Teacher of the Year Award. Other teachers fulfil their leadership and management responsibilities well. Some are new to their current responsibilities, for example for leadership of English and science, but have already taken some good action. Subject leaders recognise, however, that it is important for them to check up more closely on the effectiveness and consistency with which new initiatives are implemented.

Governance is outstanding. Governors know the school very well, are proactive, and are highly effective in both supporting and challenging senior leaders. They take a balanced approach to how the school should develop immediately and in the longer term.

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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?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
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	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	1
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	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

15 November 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Glenfall Community Primary School, Cheltenham, GL52 6XZ

Thank you for helping us when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking with you and finding out about the many exciting opportunities you have to learn and play together. We agree with you that Glenfall Community Primary School is a good school.

You make good progress and standards are high. You do well because teaching is good and you have a good curriculum. One of you told us, and we agree, that you have opportunities to do well in lots of areas, not just in mathematics and English. We saw that many of you really enjoy music. We know that you like sports as well. We saw how well the older pupils are doing using computers.

Your personal development and well-being are good. Your school takes a balanced approach to ensuring that you grow into well-rounded young people. You are successfully prepared for your future lives in many ways. You behave well, enjoy school and form very good relationships with each other and with the adults. We are impressed by how well the older ones of you look after the younger children.

The school looks after you very well and works closely with your parents. This begins the moment you start in the Reception Year. The school's arrangements for settling you into school and getting you off to a good start work extremely well. You told us that the adults are approachable and that the school is like one big family.

All the adults work hard to maintain the things that your school does best and to help to make the school even better. We have asked the school to do two things:

- Make sure that teaching and the curriculum help you to do as well as possible in Key Stage 2. When your progress over your last four years is put together it is not as rapid as when you are younger.
- Give you clear guidance about how you can improve your work through marking and targets. This will help you to take more responsibility for your learning too.

Thank you once again for your help and for being so friendly and welcoming.

Yours sincerely

Alison Grainger Lead inspector