

Churchdown Village Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115579
Local Authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	311986
Inspection date	14 February 2008
Reporting inspector	Shirley Billington

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4-7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	180
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Richard Goddard
Headteacher	Katherine Rayers
Date of previous school inspection	31 March 2003
School address	Station Road Churchdown Gloucester GL3 2NB
Telephone number	01452 714178
Fax number	01452 714178

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following aspects: achievement and standards, particularly how the school achieves exceptionally high standards in reading, writing and mathematics; the way that the curriculum is planned and enriched; and the use made of assessment to support learning.

Evidence was gathered from lesson observations and scrutiny of pupils' work and a range of documents. Parents' questionnaires and discussions with pupils, governors and staff also contributed to the judgements. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

The school has six classes, two for each year group. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage and speak English fluently. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is lower than in most schools.

The school holds the International Award, which recognises the work it has done in linking with countries around the world. It also has an Active Mark award for provision of sports. It recently gained the information and communication technology (ICT) award and has just applied for Artsmark Gold.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school in which pupils thrive both academically and personally. The vast majority of parents are delighted with all aspects of its work, making comments such as 'The amount of fun that is injected into learning through extra activities and special school days really shines through.' Their confidence is well founded. All aspects of the school's work are excellent, but what is particularly special about it is the rich range of experiences that extends pupils' learning. These include, for example, the opportunity to learn Spanish from the Reception Year onwards and specialist teaching in physical education. The curriculum is enriched by visits out to places such as the Exploratory in Bristol and by a wide range of visitors that share their experiences and skills. There is a strong international dimension to learning so that pupils learn to appreciate a diverse range of cultures and traditions. Links with a school in Poland, for instance, led to pupils comparing their own Christmas celebrations to those in several other European countries.

Key to the school's success is determined and focused leadership from the headteacher and governors. Staff at all levels are continually reviewing their practice and looking to improve wherever possible. This has led to innovative developments in several aspects of the curriculum, including the use of information and communication technology (ICT). Pupils have been involved in video-conferencing with a school in America and exchanging information about themselves. Parents can access examples of their children's recent work on the Internet. They are also given information about computer programs used to support learning in school so that they can use these at home if they wish. ICT is used very effectively to support teaching and learning across a range of subjects. Teachers are confident in using interactive whiteboards to support demonstrations and explanations and to bring stimulus and interest to learning. Pupils have good opportunities to use ICT to research information, present their work in a variety of ways and to practise skills in areas such as numeracy.

Pupils' excellent personal development is promoted through a wide variety of opportunities to take on responsibility and demonstrate their skills. In a presentation led by Year 1, pupils spoke clearly and with a good degree of confidence as they explained the differences in education in Victorian times compared with their own experiences. In addition to demonstrating good knowledge, pupils explored how children must have felt under a strict regime in a Victorian schoolroom. A strong sense of community and excellent relationships were evident in the way that the pupils worked together and showed appreciation of each other's work. Their enjoyment of learning and sense of achievement were clear. These are also evident in lessons, where pupils are keen to succeed and benefit from well focused and purposeful teaching. By the end of Year 2, pupils are exceptionally well prepared for their next stage in learning.

High expectations underpin the school's very strong track record in maintaining high standards. Staff are aware that there is a significant proportion of very capable children joining the school in the Reception Year. All make very good progress. As a result, by the start of Year 1, the vast majority exceed expected levels in all areas of learning and have a particularly strong base of skills in reading. This excellent foundation is successfully built on through Years 1 and 2. As a result, by the end of Year 2, the majority of pupils attain the higher levels in national assessments in reading, writing and mathematics. Boys and girls do equally well because the school is very quick to pick up where potential gaps might appear. This led, for instance, to a sharp focus over the past year on boosting girls' skills in mathematics when it appeared that they were not

doing quite as well as boys. Girls were encouraged to take a leading role in the school as 'maths professors' in order to raise the profile of the subject and to enhance their confidence.

Very careful track is kept of individual pupils' progress so that extra support can be provided where they are not making expected gains in their learning. There is well focused support for pupils with learning difficulties so that they make very good progress, and often reach average standards by the end of Year 2. For pupils with coordination difficulties, small group support in the 'Fizzy Club' is proving extremely successful in improving physical skills and enhancing confidence. A watchful eye is also kept on those pupils who are particularly quick to learn. In the Reception Year, for instance, challenging activities are built into planning to encourage children to use problem-solving skills. Individual targets are used well to give pupils a view of what they need to do to improve. These are helpful in many respects but occasionally pupils are not clear about what their target means or what they have to do to achieve it.

The school's numerous awards are testament to the high quality of its work. It has a very strong enrichment programme including a wide range of sports and provision for performing arts. Through this, pupils make an excellent contribution to the community with, for example, the choir participating in the Cheltenham Festival and other local events. Sporting activities have a high status and participation rates are high. Pupils have an excellent awareness of the importance of regular exercise and a well balanced diet, saying for example, that 'fruit makes the best snack'. They are also very well aware of the importance of staying safe, knowing what to do, for instance, if there is a fire. Year 2 pupils enjoy taking on a range of responsibilities around the school as fruit monitors or distributing registers. Their views are sought so that, for instance, they comment on their end of year reports or what they have enjoyed on a visit. However, there is no structured system for pupils to put forward suggestions or ideas through a specific forum or school council.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children get off to a flying start and make excellent progress in their first year in school. They do particularly well in the development of basic skills in literacy and numeracy. Their personal and social skills are also extended well so that they become confident learners. Many show very good application and concentration when they work on practical tasks such as number games. Activities are very well organised and purposeful so that children are engaged in a wide variety of stimulating experiences. Work is well planned to build on earlier learning. Children's progress is very carefully tracked so that any early difficulties are quickly picked up and addressed. Parents are involved in supporting their children's learning and appreciate the progress that they make. One summed this up with the comment that 'In just over five months my daughter has enjoyed so many exciting activities and new experiences. I am very happy with the progress she is achieving in reading and writing; her confidence grows every week.'

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that pupils are clear about their targets and understand what they need to do to achieve these.
- Establish a structured system for seeking pupils' views so that they can contribute to plans for the school's development.

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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?	1
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 effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

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

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
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

16 February 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Churchdown Village Infant School, Churchdown GL3 2NB

You may remember that I visited just before the half-term holiday to see how you are getting on. Thank you to all those children who talked to me about what you were doing in lessons and explained what happens at playtime. A special thanks to the group of Year 2 pupils who met with me to tell me what they think about school. I thought you would be interested in what I am saying in my report. Yours is an outstanding school with some very special qualities.

One of these special things is you yourselves! You behave extremely well and you work hard. Your teachers make sure that you learn quickly so that you do very well with your reading, writing and mathematics. You told me you enjoy learning things in geography and history. I was impressed with how much you know about how the Victorians used to live. You also learn lots about the wider world through links with countries such as Poland and Afghanistan.

Your headteacher and teachers are always looking for ways to make your learning more interesting. One of the ways that they do this is by using interactive whiteboards in lessons to help you to understand new ideas. They also make sure that you have plenty of opportunities to use computers yourselves to find information or to present your work.

I have asked the school to do two things now.

- To make sure that you understand what you have to do to reach your targets.
- To find ways in which you can put forward ideas about how the school could help you even more.

I know you have super ideas, so you have lots to contribute!

Thank you again for your help.

With best wishes

Shirley Billington Lead inspector

Annex B



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Shirley Billington
Lead inspector