

Meysey Hampton Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115636
Local Authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	312008
Inspection date	3 October 2007
Reporting inspector	Christine Huard

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	97
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Barnes
Headteacher	Kate Carden
Date of previous school inspection	21 January 2003
School address	Meysey Hampton Cirencester GL7 5JS
Telephone number	01285 851441
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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 issues: •the effectiveness of systems to track progress and how these are used to decide on actions to raise standards in writing •the aspects of provision which were solidly good and could be potentially outstanding •the contribution of all staff, as well as leadership and management, to the continuing success of the school. 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 pupils attend from the local and surrounding villages. The school admits many pupils from a nearby air force base and this means that a high number of pupils move in and out of the school each year. Most of the pupils are of white British descent and none is at an early stage of learning English. Attainment on entry into Reception varies greatly from well below to above average, but is broadly average overall. Some pupils, mainly those from the United States of America, join the school in Years 1 and 2 having had no previous schooling because of differences in the education system.

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. It provides an excellent education in an exciting and stimulating learning environment, which fully reflects its Christian ethos. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and very pleased with their children's progress. One parent echoed the views of many: 'There is an excellent school spirit, very good teaching and school management'. The key to the school's success is the dynamic leadership of the headteacher and the whole-hearted commitment and support of the whole staff team and governors. All willingly take on new challenges in order to provide the best possible education for the pupils. As the chair of governors explained, 'If you are standing still, you are going backwards'. As a result, the school is constantly striving to improve the provision made for its pupils.

Children in the Reception class receive an outstanding start to their education. Activities match their individual needs in a vibrant and exciting learning area. In Years 1 to 6, pupils sparkle. They speak of being on a 'learning journey'. They attain high standards in a range of subjects such as history, geography and art as well as English, mathematics and science. Achievement in these areas is outstanding although progress in mathematics slows a little in Years 3 and 4. The school has already recognised this and taken appropriate action to ensure that it is quickly addressed. The school makes excellent provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and holds regular discussions with parents and outside agencies to ensure that their needs are met. Similarly, pupils who are especially gifted or talented are identified, and care is taken to make certain they are sufficiently challenged, both in the classroom and in many out of school activities such as the primary mathematics challenge. Pupils joining the school in Years 1 or 2 who have had no previous school experiences are quickly assessed. Support is swiftly provided to enable them to learn basic skills and catch up with their peers. Curriculum action plans are boldly headed 'Committed to Excellence', and a walk around the school clearly confirms this. The vibrant displays of pupils' work, particularly those resulting from the Arts Week, show the breadth of the inspirational curriculum and are evidence of the way in which pupils' work is valued. Excellent links are made across a range of subjects and the use of information and communication technology is fully integrated into all topics. There is an emphasis on a wide range of writing which successfully supports the current whole-school focus in this area. Pupils are nurtured, and the care and support provided for them are excellent. A comprehensive programme for their personal, social and health education contributes very effectively to their outstanding personal development.

The excellent behaviour, eager responses and excitement generated in each classroom illustrate how pupils greatly enjoy their education. They bubble with enthusiasm. An exhilarated Year 2 pupil exclaimed, 'that's onomatopoeia' when discussing the imagery in a poem, whilst other pupils excitedly searched for examples of their own. Teachers ensure that pupils know what they are going to learn. They use resources, such as interactive whiteboards, skilfully. These make explanations clearer and lessons more interesting, and occasionally more thought provoking, as pupils from Years 5 and 6 discovered when they watched and discussed an autobiographical video clip. In these mixed age group classes, teachers are particularly successful at planning a wide range of tasks. These are carefully devised to meet the learning needs of all pupils so that all are appropriately challenged or supported. This excellent planning is a key factor in why the pupils manage to achieve so well. Pupils are encouraged to explore and share ideas with their peers and in small groups. They say marking is particularly helpful and even the youngest pupils know and understand their individual targets.

Pupils are lively and responsive in class, and thoughtful and reflective in assembly. They are considerate in their dealings with each other. The playground is a happy and harmonious area where Year 6 pupils happily and willingly fulfil the role of 'buddies' to the youngest children. Pupils have an excellent understanding of the importance of a healthy lifestyle and the need to stay safe. They have a very mature understanding of their responsibility to the global, as well as local, community. They talk eagerly of their links with the Siriba School in Uganda and of the fact that they raised enough money for the school to be able to buy a copier. The school council is very active and aware of its role in bringing pupils' views to the notice of the school management as well as organising a range of fund-raising events. They are very aware of contemporary environmental concerns and their excellent numeracy and literacy skills provide a very good preparation for their future economic well-being.

Staff and governors know how well the school is doing. Targets set for future development are demanding – but the school thrives on challenge. Although their self-evaluation is a little cautious it is totally accurate in its assessment that there is an outstanding capacity to improve further. There is a clear understanding of what the school needs to do, as illustrated by its speedy identification of the hiccup in mathematics and the action taken to address it. The school uses data exceptionally well to check its performance and the robust monitoring system ensures that the quality of teaching and learning is rigorously evaluated. Teachers are mutually supportive. They share good practice and discuss strategies for helping pupils to become independent in their learning. The school improvement plan and subject plans are meticulous, and are vital constituents in the concerted efforts to drive this school forward.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children in the Reception class make excellent progress and they join Year 1 having already reached above average standards. Children are eager to learn because teaching is vibrant and lively. There is a very good balance between those activities led by the teacher and those that children choose for themselves. Visits and visitors, interesting themes, as well as the excellent utilisation of the outside area as an exciting learning environment, make the curriculum and learning relevant and exciting. The care and attention given to children's welfare are very good. The emphasis placed on the development of early writing skills effectively supports the whole-school focus.

What the school should do to improve further

- Build on and monitor carefully the actions taken to ensure progress in mathematics improves in Years 3 and 4 to the rate shown throughout the rest of the school.

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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	2
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

4 October 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Meysey Hampton CE Primary School, Cirencester, GL7 5JS

Thank you for the very warm welcome you gave me when I visited your school. You certainly seem to be very happy and it was good to hear how you really enjoy your work and all the extra activities in which you are involved. I think your school gives you an excellent education and is working hard to make it even better.

These are the things I liked best:

- Your behaviour is excellent and you are really keen and enthusiastic about your learning.
- You are all doing very well in English, mathematics and science and in many other subjects as well.
- You take very seriously the importance of eating healthily at school and taking physical exercise.
- Teachers make learning interesting and fun for you, and you know how to improve your work from marking and target setting.
- You have an outstanding and varied curriculum and the special activities arranged to enhance it are excellent. Your work from the Arts Week is stunning.
- The teachers and staff take excellent care of you while you are in school.
- Your headteacher and governors lead the school extremely well and are very keen to make it even better.

There is only one small area that could be a little better:

- I would like to see the pupils in Years 3 and 4 make as much progress in mathematics as they do in English.

I am glad you enjoy your school and hope you will continue to work hard.

Very best wishes

Mrs Christine Huard Lead inspector



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