

Minsterworth Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115691
Local Authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	312034
Inspection date	8 May 2008
Reporting inspector	Stephen Lake

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	53
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Catherine Thomas
Headteacher	Angie Ritchie
Date of previous school inspection	14 June 2004
School address	Main Road Minsterworth Gloucester GL2 8JH
Telephone number	01452 750283
Fax number	01452 750283

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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 the strategies used by senior leaders and governors for checking on the work of the school
- The current attainment and achievement of pupils
- The contribution to learning made by learning support workers.

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

This smaller than average school serves a largely rural area. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties, including moderate reading, communication, social and emotional problems, is well above average. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is well below average. The school has a large proportion of pupils from Traveller families. Many more pupils than average enter or leave the school part way through their school career. A new headteacher has been in post for four months and the chair of governors has been in post since October 2007. The school is part of a loose federation of small schools that work closely together and share expertise. The current Year 2 has too few pupils to make a valid judgement on their overall attainment.

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. It has some outstanding features. It is particularly good at supporting pupils and encouraging them to stay fit and healthy. As one parent wrote, 'The school promotes a healthy and active approach which my son really enjoys.' The school's great success in providing opportunities for physical education was noted in a recent subject inspection for physical education that found this aspect of the school's work to be outstanding.

Achievement is good. Children start school with skills in line with those expected for their age. They make good progress in Reception and start Year 1 well prepared for learning. Pupils make good progress through the school to leave with standards in English, mathematics and science that are above average at age 11. Standards are above average in art and physical education but are average in information and communication technology (ICT).

A key element in the good progress made by pupils is the outstanding care, guidance and support that they receive. Rigorous systems for checking on pupils' progress are used effectively to plan work that challenges and extends pupils, including those with moderate learning difficulties and those with English as an additional language. The progress made by pupils from Traveller families is excellent when they are in the school because of the very good support provided for them. Progress over time slows a little because of absences. Nevertheless, the school, with very good support from local authority agencies, makes excellent provision for these children when they are travelling. Packs of work are provided for pupils to complete when away. Any school that they attend when travelling is able to contact this school for support. This helps to maintain academic learning for these pupils during periods of absence.

The good quality teaching is another factor in the good progress made by pupils. Teachers are skilled at making lessons interesting and enjoyable. As one pupil said, 'Teachers make lessons fun.' Although teachers make good use of interactive whiteboards to present lessons, the use of ICT to support learning across the whole curriculum is a little inconsistent. For example, not enough use is made of word-processing as a learning tool in English. Marking is thorough and usually gives pupils clear guidance on how to improve their work. It is particularly effective with the oldest pupils in the school where they are often set challenging targets as part of the marking. Learning support workers make a strong contribution to learning for all groups of pupils including those who are more able. They are particularly skilled at supporting those with additional learning needs and work very closely with teachers to ensure that these groups make the same progress as other pupils.

A wide range of topics, visits to places of interest and visitors to the school enhances the good quality curriculum. The close links with other local schools not only allow a wider range of activities but also provide good opportunities for pupils' personal development. Pupils' excellent understanding of how to stay fit and healthy reflects the outstanding provision for physical education and the school's 'Activemark' and 'Healthy Schools' awards. Pupils benefit from the wide range of activities offered, including French. Nevertheless, although provision for ICT is satisfactory, it is not as good as other aspects and is not fully utilised across the whole curriculum.

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good. Pupils enjoy school. This, together with the good support from education welfare officers, has enabled the school to reduce unnecessary absence and improve attendance, which is now satisfactory. Pupils understand how to eat healthily and participate eagerly in the

many opportunities for sport. Pupils say that they feel safe in school and the high quality guidance they receive means they really know how to stay safe. Pupils' views are valued and acted upon. For example, pupils have identified that an outdoor play area can be slippery and are working with a governor to find a solution. The skills gained in this exercise, together with the standards attained, prepare pupils well for later life. Pupils make an outstanding contribution to the school community through the school council and the many opportunities provided for them to take responsibility. Pupils say that the good behaviour is because the trained 'playground friends' help resolve arguments and support the few pupils who present challenging behaviour.

The good leadership and management are central to the success of this school. The new headteacher has already communicated her clear vision for the school effectively to staff and governors. She is working closely with the new chair of governors to improve the currently satisfactory governance of the school and deal with identified issues. Her strong and knowledgeable leadership, together with the good quality support of the loose federation of local schools, is maintaining the previous successes of the school and ensuring further improvement is taking place. The effective team of teaching and non-teaching staff is committed to maintaining high standards and raising them further. The headteacher and senior staff have effective systems for checking on the work of the school that enable them to have an accurate picture of what works and what needs to improve. Although governors support the school well, the good quality information on school performance is not available in a way that enables governors to check easily how well the school is doing. In addition, minutes of governing body meetings do not show clearly enough how governors challenge the school and hold it to account. The improvements that have occurred, together with high quality leadership and the strong links within the federation of schools, mean that the school is well placed to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision is good with some outstanding elements. Most children reach above the expected standards at the end of the Foundation Stage in many areas of learning, particularly personal, social and emotional development. Attainment in communication, language and literacy is lower than in some other areas. This represents good achievement from when children start school. All areas of learning are covered well, and there is a suitable balance between direct teaching and opportunities for children to learn through purposeful play. The leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are good. The leader is aware that even more opportunities to learn through play would benefit many of the children if resources to support this were available. Children settle in quickly, have positive attitudes and learn to relate well with others. The care provided by adults is good and helps children to feel secure and confident. A strength of the Foundation Stage is the way all adults work together to support children's learning and monitor their progress.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in ICT to match standards in other subjects and ensure that it is used well in all areas of the curriculum.
- Refine the way in which data is presented to governors to enable them to monitor the school's performance more effectively, and ensure that governing body minutes provide sufficient detail of how governors challenge the school and hold it to account.

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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 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	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
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	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?	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?	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	3
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

9 May 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Minsterworth C of E Primary School, Minsterworth, GL2 8JH

Thank you for making me so welcome when I visited your school. I really enjoyed talking to you and watching your school council meeting.

Yours is a good school and I can see why you enjoy learning. Some of the things that I liked about the school are:

- You all make good progress throughout your time at the school and by the time you leave at age 11 your standards are above average.
- The care, guidance and support that you receive are outstanding. You show one of the effects of this in your excellent understanding of how to stay safe.
- You behave well. I was most impressed by the way you help each other behave so well through the playground friends.
- You are learning well because the teaching is good and your teachers make learning interesting. The support for those who need extra help with their learning is really good.
- Your understanding of how to stay fit and healthy is outstanding. I was impressed by your 'Activemark', and by how well you understand what healthy foods are.
- Your school is led and managed well. The new headteacher and other staff all work together well to find what works well and what needs improving in the school.
- The links that your school has with other local schools make a really good contribution to your learning.

I have asked the headteacher and governors to do just a few things to help the school get even better:

- To improve standards in information and communication technology (ICT) and to make sure that it is used even more across the curriculum.
- To find better ways to share information on how well you are doing with governors, and to record their discussions, so that they can check on the work of the school more easily.

Yours sincerely

Stephen Lake Lead inspector