

# Miserden Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	115692
<b>Local Authority</b>	Gloucestershire
<b>Inspection number</b>	312035
<b>Inspection date</b>	18 June 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Martin Kerly

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	71
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	John Jessop
<b>Headteacher</b>	Merilyn Davies
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	9 February 2004
<b>School address</b>	Miserden Stroud GL6 7JA
<b>Telephone number</b>	01285 821463
<b>Fax number</b>	01285 821463

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

The school is much smaller than average. Pupils come from the village of Miserden and the surrounding small rural communities. Almost all are White British and all speak English as their first language. The number of pupils fluctuates and the school reduced from four to three classes in September 2007. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average. Pupils are taught in three classes, each containing more than one year-group. Major building works in the last two years have created a large multi-purpose hall, a new permanent classroom, a large entrance providing space for a library and small group teaching areas and administrative areas.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could be reasonably expected to perform. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to the school's leadership and management.

The school's overall effectiveness is inadequate, because leadership and management are inadequate. The headteacher and governors have an over-generous view of the school's performance because systems for monitoring its work are not sufficiently robust and are not followed up clearly enough to bring about the required improvements. There is a lack of trust in the leadership by a significant proportion of parents and the majority of parents replying to the inspection questionnaire expressed significant dissatisfaction about the school. Governors have not consistently followed statutory procedures in their work and there are continuing tensions within the governing body about the perception of their roles and the way they conduct their business. These weaknesses have resulted in a deterioration in performance since the school was last inspected, when the main features were all good, including pupils' achievement, and leadership and management. Pupils' achievement is now satisfactory. Children join the school in the Foundation Stage with standards above those expected for their age. The good progress made in the Foundation Stage is not maintained consistently from Year 1 to Year 6. A few pupils, particularly in Years 3 to 6, do not make adequate progress, and most older pupils make only satisfactory progress. Progress is faster in reading than it is in writing and mathematics.

Nevertheless, the school is providing a satisfactory education because teaching, the curriculum and the care, guidance and support offered to pupils are satisfactory and contain some good features. Indeed, these combine well to promote the pupils' good personal development and well-being, including the very good behaviour and attitudes of pupils. Pupils feel safe and well cared for. The school implements procedures designed to safeguard pupils, including staff recruitment, but does not fully meet the statutory requirements for the way these are recorded.

Teaching in the Foundation Stage is good, as it is frequently in Years 1 and 2. Teaching and learning of older pupils, although good at times, is less consistent. The work set for these pupils is not always matched well enough to their different levels of learning and therefore many are not being fully extended. This slows the rate of learning, as do the missed opportunities for explaining carefully to pupils how they can improve and what they need to practise.

The significant additions to the building, especially the creation of the large hall, have enabled better opportunities for pupils in physical education and in helping create the strong spiritual atmosphere during school worship. However, at present, the school does not have a convincing track record to demonstrate the capacity to improve because of the recent declines in achievement and provision, the limited progress in addressing the few previous weaknesses, and the continuing concerns expressed by so many parents.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Children settle well into the routines of their class, which they share with Year 1 pupils. They move confidently around the classroom and school and enjoy the various activities provided.

Their attainment on entry overall is above that expected nationally for their age, especially in speaking and listening, personal development and early counting skills. They make good progress in the first year, attaining standards above average in all areas of learning. Teaching is good, including the teaching of phonics. The teacher plans carefully and makes good use of the well qualified teaching assistant. Together, they make the most of the small classroom but are unable to set out a full range of activities from which children could choose independently. The room allocated has no direct access to outdoors. The lack of a designated outdoor area, identified as an issue in the last inspection, has not been resolved and this restricts the opportunities to learn through independent play.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Raise expectations and effectively monitor the work of the school, making better use of the information gained in order to improve provision and raise standards.
- Build the parents' trust and confidence in the leadership of the school.
- Ensure all the statutory requirements are fully met, including the recording of arrangements for staff recruitment.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning in Years 3 to 6 by ensuring work set matches the wide range of pupils' abilities in each class, and that teachers provide clear guidance to pupils about how they can improve.

### **Achievement and standards**

#### **Grade: 3**

Achievement is satisfactory. Standards are above average. Children make good progress in the Foundation Stage. This is generally maintained up to Year 2 and standards by the end of Year 2 are usually above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. The good progress in the early years is not maintained by many of the older pupils so that by the end of Year 6 standards are frequently only marginally above average, being higher in speaking and listening and reading than in writing and mathematics. The school's records show that some of these older pupils, although now accelerating, made limited progress when they were in Years 3 and 4. This concerns a number of parents, one of whom wrote, 'The progress in the lower school is not sustained in the upper school.' Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress, with a few making good progress as a result of good additional support. The targets set for pupils are becoming more challenging this year but a few pupils' targets are surprisingly modest given their starting points.

### **Personal development and well-being**

#### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal development and well-being are strengths of the school and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils clearly enjoy school and their attendance is good. They feel proud of the many contributions they make, for example as school councillors, when managing the recycling of paper or helping to lead church services. The older pupils are eagerly anticipating being trained to become play leaders. Behaviour is good, and at times, such as when going to and from assembly, it is exemplary. Older and younger pupils play well together. They reflect sensitively on special moments such as when every pupil planted a sapling in the willow shelter, and older ones appreciate the experience of mixing with pupils from different cultural backgrounds when on the recent residential visit. Pupils say bullying is rare and are confident an adult in school would listen to them and act if they needed to share a

problem. Pupils have a good understanding of the importance of healthy lifestyles and the school has received Healthy School and Activemark awards in recognition of its good work in these aspects. By the time pupils leave the school, they have the skills needed for the next stage of education and adult life, with many having good language and computer skills.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Within the satisfactory teaching there are a number of good features. It is consistently good in class 1 with some good teaching in classes 2 and 3. Teachers strive to meet the needs of all the pupils and often plan different work for each year group, and sometimes within year groups, especially in mathematics, but less so in other subjects, including English. However, at the beginning and end of lessons, some pupils are not fully engaged or encouraged to work independently whilst the teacher explains or reviews the work of other groups. This tends to slow learning. At times, classes are split to enable focused teaching for a particular year group and this helps improve the rate of learning, for example in Year 2 when doing physical education the teacher was seen providing individual attention and ensuring pupils reflected on how to improve. Teachers do not always mark pupils' work adequately. In mathematics, older pupils frequently mark their own work using the answer book. This reduces the teacher's ability to probe each pupil's level of understanding or explain what they need to do to improve. The classrooms contain displays that include some prompts and key words, but there are relatively few displays linked directly to the objectives being taught in ways that promote learning.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum is enriched well by a good range of additional activities, including visits, special events and a residential experience at an activity centre; these are appreciated by the pupils. Good use is made of the school grounds, for example with pupils growing and harvesting various produce. The new hall has extended curricular opportunities significantly. There is a rolling programme of topics and the school is beginning to develop creative links between subjects but does not have clear guidance to ensure the progression of key skills from one year to the next. The school is gradually introducing new national guidance for English and mathematics. The curriculum is satisfactory rather than good because some of the new initiatives are yet to be embedded and it is not sufficiently adapted to meet the varying needs of pupils in mixed-age classes.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 3**

The staff know all the pupils well and this contributes to the good day-to-day care and support for all pupils. There are good supervision levels at break and lunchtimes. There are effective systems for ensuring the most vulnerable receive the extra support they need. Procedures designed to safeguard pupils are implemented, for example carrying out risk assessments. Academic guidance is satisfactory. Whilst pupils' long- and medium-term progress over the year is tracked satisfactorily, long- term targets are not always challenging enough. Teachers are beginning to introduce short-term targets for pupils in literacy but not yet in mathematics, and many of these targets are not precise enough to be useful.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 4

The leadership of the school has not demonstrated high enough expectations or provided a clear steer on exactly what needs to improve and how to achieve this. The headteacher's very positive view of the school is not backed up by evidence of such performance. The school improvement plan has too many priorities and not enough guidance on how the success of these priorities will be measured. The headteacher conducts very few checks on the quality of teaching and other aspects of the school, therefore there is insufficient feedback to teachers about how to improve, or summaries of points that need following up. There is insufficient clarity about what is expected of teachers in their roles as subject leaders, although they do carry out some useful activities such as analysing how well pupils have performed in national tests in mathematics.

The headteacher and governors do not have the confidence of a significant proportion of those parents replying to the inspection questionnaire. The headteacher and governors did not effectively manage the organisation of classes last year or the way information about this and other issues was shared with parents. This contributed to the parents' continuing concerns about the school and the progress made by their children. Comments such as, 'issues raised with the headteacher and governors have largely been unresolved' and 'I am very disappointed with the school this year' reflect the pattern of views given to the inspector. The governors do not receive enough information about the weaknesses in the school and this contributes to their limited impact on school improvement. The new chair has overseen some improved ways of working but substantial tensions remain within the governing body surrounding the way governors operate and contrasting views about how to fulfil their roles. Statutory procedures have not always been followed and the mechanism to record safeguarding procedures when recruiting adults to work with pupils does not meet legal requirements, although all adults have been through the required checks. Despite significant weaknesses in leadership and management, the school is still providing an acceptable standard of education and therefore it is offering satisfactory value for money.

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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?	4
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	4

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

### 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	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?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	4
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	4
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	4
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	4
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	No
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	Yes

## Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

20 June 2008

Dear Children,

Inspection of Miserden Church of England VA Primary School, Stroud GL6 7JA

Thank you for welcoming me into your school. I enjoyed talking to you, visiting your classrooms and seeing some of your work. Although I found you are getting a satisfactory education, there are a few important things that need to improve. Here are some of the highlights I found:

- You behave well in school and take good care of each other.
- You work well in lessons and make progress. Most of you make good progress in your first few years in the school, but some of you who are older do not learn as much as you could because the work set is not always suitable for each group in the class.
- Some of you told me about all the things you like about the school, including the trips and special events and using the school grounds. I could see how well all your vegetables and flowers are growing as well as the willow shelter you all helped plant.
- Everyone who works in the school takes good care of you and makes sure you are safe. I was pleased that you know this and feel there is always someone you can go to if you have a problem.
- Your new hall is great – I enjoyed your joyous singing in worship and could see how good the hall is for PE lessons.

I have asked the staff and governors to work together on four things to make the school better. I am recommending that they get some extra help with these:

- Make sure everyone is working towards making things in school the best they possibly can be and that regular checks are made so as to be sure that improvements are being made.
- The headteacher and governors need to think of ways to work more closely with your parents to explain what is going on in school and why.
- Make sure all the regulations about schools are fully followed at all times.
- Help the teachers of older pupils make sure work is always not too easy or too hard and when marking your work they explain what you need to do to improve.

I am sure you will have some ideas of your own about how you can help the school to improve.

Yours sincerely Martin Kerly, Lead Inspector