

Withington Church of England Primary School

Inspection report - amended

Unique Reference Number	115703
Local Authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	312037
Inspection date	23 September 2008
Reporting inspector	Denise Morris

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	2–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	20
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	8
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	7
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Webb
Headteacher	Angela Reed
Date of previous school inspection	20 June 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	11 June 2008
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	High Street Withington Cheltenham GL54 4BQ
Telephone number	01242 890349

Age group	2–11
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Amended Report Addendum

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a very small rural school in which year group numbers vary from none to five. All pupils have English as their first language. A large number of pupils enter the school other than at the normal starting times. The number with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is currently higher than average. There is Early Years Foundation Stage provision (EYFS). The on-site Pre-school is managed by the governing body, run by two qualified staff and occupies half of a large open plan room. The Reception children and Key Stage 1 class are taught in the other half.

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 aspects. Its major strength is the excellent care, guidance and support that is provided for all pupils. This results in their outstanding personal development, behaviour, attitudes and enjoyment of school. The high quality of pastoral care produces a supportive and positive ethos in which pupils thrive. The family atmosphere and close-knit community is valued by pupils. 'I love this school because it is small and everybody gets a chance to do things like jobs, and be in the school teams,' is a comment written by a pupil and displayed on the entrance wall.

The school is well led and managed by the headteacher and governors. They have made some key improvements since the previous inspection. For example, the school accommodation has been completely remodelled and now provides a good learning environment with increased space and opportunities for small group work. Resources have improved and good new programmes to raise standards in phonics and mathematics and good new writing walls to improve writing skills have been introduced. These are beginning to have a positive impact on standards. Leaders keep pupils safe and secure. Parents are very happy with the quality of education and care that their children receive. 'I cannot recommend this school more highly,' wrote one parent; 'I am delighted with the support, flexibility and care provided.'

Standards are broadly average, although they vary significantly from year to year because of the very small year groups. Pupils enter Year 1 with a range of skills and knowledge. They achieve well from their starting points, as shown by the school's own comprehensive checking systems. These show overall good progress and some very good progress in reading. Standards by Year 6 are better in science and reading than in writing and mathematics.

Good teaching results in good learning in both classes. Relationships are strong in lessons, where a calm and harmonious atmosphere helps pupils to concentrate and enjoy learning. Pupils of all abilities do well but sometimes the pace of learning for the highest attaining pupils dips, resulting in a lack of challenge for those pupils. The good curriculum meets the needs and abilities of most pupils well. Some exciting additional clubs are very well attended and fully enhance learning. Good links with local schools and with the community help to prepare pupils well for their futures.

Management makes effective use of funding to improve provision and raise standards. There has been good improvement since the last inspection. Governors are rigorous in their monitoring and take their statutory role seriously. The school leadership is well placed to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children are happy, settled and self-assured in this welcoming environment. Parents are delighted with the school. They commented on how well prepared for starting 'big school' their children were. Children really enjoy their activities. They are exceptionally well cared for, valued and respected. Consequently, they behave very well and, from the two-year-olds to the five-year-olds, respond enthusiastically to the stimulating and exciting curriculum. A wide variety of activities are carefully planned for the playgroup children and those in the Reception class. There is a good balance of adult-led and child-selected activities. However, independence in learning is currently restricted because children do not have free flow access owing to building work outside. Children make good progress in all six areas of learning. Standards are variable

from year to year and not all children reach the standards expected of them by the end of the EYFS, although some exceed them. Children have a good start to school life. They benefit from good new programmes for the learning of phonics and early literacy and numeracy skills.

The good provision is effectively led and managed. The outdoor area lacks a covered space where children can make independent choices all year round.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing and mathematics to match those in reading and science, by increasing the pace of learning in lessons, especially for the highest attaining pupils.
- Develop provision in EYFS for a covered outdoor play area so that children have more opportunities to explore the environment and develop their independence.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Most groups of learners, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, make good progress during their time at the school. Occasionally, the highest attaining pupils do not achieve as well as they could because the pace of learning dips when questions do not extend or challenge their thinking. Pupils attain average standards by the time they leave Year 6. They attain better in reading and science than they do in writing and mathematics because good new programmes to improve writing skills and develop mental mathematics skills have not had time to impact on standards. Pupils know their targets and work hard to achieve them. They benefit from good support so that they achieve well, making overall good progress from their starting points. The number of pupils in each year group is very small and pupils' attainment varies significantly on entry to the school.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils say, 'It is really good here, like being in a big family I never want to leave.' Attendance is outstanding and reflects pupils' positive enjoyment. Pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is shown in the way they deeply care for and respond sensitively to each other. They have an exceptional awareness of the needs of others. For example, they raise money for many different charities. Their growing awareness of and respect for other cultures and faiths different from their own is good. All pupils know the difference between right and wrong and are polite and considerate to each other and adults. They take responsibilities seriously, such as being a member of the School Council. Pupils glowed with pride when they reported the school was free from bullying. Pupils said the school was a safe place and there was always someone to turn to if they had a problem. Behaviour and attitudes are outstanding. Pupils have an excellent awareness of healthy lifestyles and eagerly take part in sporting activities after school. Their strong contribution to the village, parish church and local theatre group ensures they are well prepared for their futures.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Pupils make good progress as they move through the school because of good teaching and learning in both classes. Teachers know pupils well and relationships in lessons are particularly

strong. Day-to-day assessment is a strength, helping teachers to know what each pupil has learned in the lesson. Good use is made of resources, including computers and interactive whiteboards to support learning. Lessons are well managed, resulting in very positive behaviour by all pupils. Teaching assistants play a valuable role in supporting the learning of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Tasks are linked closely to pupils' abilities and as a result, pupils enjoy their learning and most succeed. Just occasionally the pace of learning dips, particularly in mathematics, because questions do not challenge pupils, particularly those of higher attainment, well enough.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Pupils across the school benefit from a good range of activities that meet the needs of most pupils well. Statutory requirements are met and there are many exciting additional activities to enhance learning. After-school clubs are very well attended and pupils say they enjoy them. Provision for literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology is good, ensuring that pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is a strength, and work and support is closely tailored to their individual needs. Through the close links with the Church pupils have good opportunities to contribute to the community and develop personal skills. Personal, social and health education is a strength, resulting in excellent attitudes to learning. Provision to prepare pupils for life in multicultural Britain is satisfactory but links with schools in other parts of the country or overseas to enhance understanding are limited.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

This is a family school. Parents and carers rightly have confidence in the high quality care provided. It is outstanding and at the heart of the school's work. The school believes that all children matter, as evidenced in their work. Clear guidance for behaviour and zero tolerance of any antisocial behaviour is in place. Safeguarding and child protection arrangements are robust. If needed, adult help is well targeted to support pupils with learning or behavioural difficulties or emotional needs. Effective partnerships exist with a wide range of external agencies that benefit pupils' learning and well-being.

Systematic checking of pupils' progress helps the school plan good levels of support. Staff are confident that they know where the children are on their learning journey at all times. Pupils know their targets and how they are going to improve in their learning. The regular and effective meetings between staff and outside agencies support pupils' progress well. Teacher's marking is good. It gives pupils clear guidance as to how they can improve or what they have to do to reach their personal targets.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher has a clear sense of purpose and is dedicated to raising standards and improving achievement. As a result, good new strategies to improve standards in mathematics, phonics and spelling have been introduced and some good writing walls. These are just beginning to have a positive impact. Leaders strive to ensure equality of opportunity and have made a good

start towards the development of community cohesion. Staff are committed to improvement and the good team approach is recognised by parents, who are extremely supportive of the school's work. Effective self-evaluation, shared by staff and governors, ensures that the whole-school community knows its own strengths and weaknesses. This has led to good improvement since the last inspection. Work to improve the accommodation is almost complete and is having a beneficial effect on most aspects of school life. Plans are in place to develop an outdoor covered area for the youngest children but as yet this has not been completed, resulting in a lack of opportunities for outdoor play for this age group. Leaders are diligent in ensuring that the school is a safe and secure place. Governors are helpful and supportive and regularly hold the school to account for its results and decisions.

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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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

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

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
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	2
The extent to which 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	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 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

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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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	2
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

24 September 2008

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Withington C of E Primary School, Cheltenham GL54 4BQ

Thank you for your help in our recent inspection of your school. We very much enjoyed meeting you and talking to you about your school. You told us that it is a good school and we agree with you. This letter is to tell you some of the things we found out about your school.

You all achieve well in your lessons and by the time you leave the school in Year 6 you have reached standards similar to most other pupils in other schools. This is because you work hard in your lessons and enjoy all the activities that the school offers. You have lots of opportunities to take part in additional clubs and sports, and most of you do so. Your behaviour is excellent and we were very pleased to see how older pupils helped the younger ones, especially in the playground. This helps your school to be just like a big family.

Your teachers plan some exciting lessons and keep you interested. You make good use of computers in your work and other resources. Those of you who find your work difficult are given good support and achieve well. The highest attaining pupils could do even harder work in lessons. Your work is marked well and you know your targets.

Your leaders work hard to keep you safe and secure. They have provided you with lots of new space in your school. The youngest children in the playgroup and Reception classes do not have any outdoor covered area or any opportunity to choose outdoor play during the day. Your leaders are planning to improve this.

We are asking your leaders to do two things to make the school even better.

- To improve standards in mathematics and writing so that they are as good as they are in science and reading. You can help with this by trying even harder in lessons.
- To develop the outdoor space for the youngest children to include a covered area.

Thank you again for your help and good luck for the future.

Best wishes Denise Morris