

# The British School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	115739
<b>Local Authority</b>	Gloucestershire
<b>Inspection number</b>	312047
<b>Inspection dates</b>	18–19 June 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Grahame Sherfield HMI

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>	Foundation
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	155
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Phil Butcher
<b>Headteacher</b>	Paul Hiatt
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	15 March 2004
<b>School address</b>	Wortley Road Wotton-under-Edge GL12 7JU
<b>Telephone number</b>	01453 843371
<b>Fax number</b>	01453 842882

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

## Description of the school

The British School is smaller than average and serves an area of mixed housing in the southern part of the town. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average. The proportions with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and with a statement of special educational needs are average, with a range of additional needs represented. Most pupils are White British and very few speak English as an additional language.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

There has been significant improvement since the last inspection and this is now a good school. One parent correctly observed that 'the school not only educates but nurtures', while another rightly identified that it is 'a happy, well motivated place'. The large majority of parents strongly support the school and are fully justified in their view that their children are safe and cared for very well.

There is some variation from year to year in the skills and knowledge of those entering the Reception class, but they are generally below the levels expected. Excellent provision in the Foundation Stage means that children make very rapid gains. Almost all attain the expected goals by the end of the Reception Year and some exceed them. Pupils' progress in Key Stage 1 is satisfactory overall as improvements in teaching have been slower than for the older pupils, but they reach above average standards by the end of Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics. Although in the last three years progress has been generally satisfactory in Key Stage 2, with pupils attaining broadly average standards, school data show that progress has accelerated across the key stage and those currently in Year 6 are likely to reach above average standards in English and mathematics in the tests this summer.

Pupils are rightly proud of their school and thoroughly enjoy their learning. When asked to list their favourite things about the school, they found it hard to choose one as they had so many. They behave exceptionally well and work hard. Their attendance has improved and is now good. The curriculum is well planned and ensures that pupils develop the skills they need. Teachers make good use of links between subjects and, as a result, pupils find learning interesting. Most use their literacy and numeracy skills well in other subjects.

Teaching and learning are good overall. Teachers know their pupils well and have established very good relationships in the classrooms so that pupils get down to work quickly and participate with interest. Activities are generally well planned and designed to build carefully on what the pupils have done before, supported by good resources, including high quality classroom displays. There is some outstanding teaching in Key Stage 2 but there is some inconsistency in the quality of teaching across the school and, at times, pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding are not consolidated effectively enough. Marking of work is good but pupils are not consistently involved in assessing their own work or in reviewing it with their peers. They do not have enough time to discuss how to make improvements with their teachers.

The headteacher provides good leadership and a clear direction for the future development of the school. Maintaining a strong sense of community which includes and values all pupils is central to this, and is reflected well in the day-to-day life of the school. He is supported effectively by a governing body that fulfils its role and provides good challenge and support. There has been a strong emphasis on improving the quality of teaching and on monitoring pupils' progress carefully so that additional support is provided where there is any risk of falling behind. This is now bearing fruit in the good progress pupils make by the end of Key Stage 2. Consequently, the capacity to improve further is good.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 1

The Foundation Stage leader is very effective in promoting children's rapid progress and identifying what they need to learn next. The curriculum is exceptionally good and creates

enthusiasm for learning. There are excellent opportunities for children to improve their speaking and listening skills through play. Progress in reading is exceptional due to the blend of the well established phonic approach and techniques like guided reading. Children are supported well when selecting materials so that books match their skill levels. Staff hear children read frequently and are exceptionally good at building children's confidence in both reading and writing. Parents are effective partners in the process and support many of the exciting curriculum activities. Good levels of adult supervision allow children to take risks and accept challenges. For example, they cut up the onions themselves to use in their meatballs. Each child's achievement is closely monitored, with the headteacher taking an active interest, resulting in anyone needing a little extra help being identified before they move to Year 1. Personal development is excellent, with good learning habits and exceptional concentration due to the well judged mix of activities that children select for themselves and those that are directed by staff. The outdoor environment is used effectively but the range of permanent equipment is restricted due to some vandalism. There are plans to address this issue.

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

- Improve the quality of all teaching to the level of the best to ensure that the pace of improvement in pupils' progress is maintained.
- Provide pupils with greater opportunities to assess their own work and to discuss with teachers how best to improve it.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Progress in Key Stage 1 is satisfactory and standards by the end of Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics are above average. It is best in writing, where teachers give considerable support to pupils in gathering their ideas and developing them into an appropriate piece of work. Developing reading has been given high priority and as a result is a particular strength in Key Stages 1 and 2. The school is working effectively to improve progress in writing in Key Stage 2, using a good range of ways of helping pupils to generate ideas and plan their work, but there has not been time for this to have its full impact on standards in Year 6. In mathematics, staff have been working successfully to improve pupils' number skills. Science is an established strength. The school is firmly committed to developing pupils' investigative skills and, as a result, all reached the level expected for Year 6 in 2007 and similar results are anticipated this year.

Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those for whom English is an additional language make similar progress to that of their peers. Their needs are clearly identified and targets are appropriate to their particular difficulties.

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

### **Grade: 1**

The school council is very well organised and all views, including those of the youngest children, are heard. Older pupils have a wide range of responsibilities and enjoy being buddies to Reception children, whom they support well in their reading and social development. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They gain from opportunities to learn the recorder and other musical instruments. Pupils raise funds for charities and participate well in community events such as dance displays. They understand and celebrate customs and cultures other than their own, particularly through their interest in art and music.

Pupils say they feel safe and are confident that adults will help them if they report any concerns. Relationships and behaviour are outstanding and pupils report that there is little, if any, bullying. Teaching assistants are highly valued as they help pupils think through issues and what to do about them. Pupils are exceptionally well aware of the importance of a healthy diet and exercise, both during and after school. They walk to swimming lessons and enjoyed the walk to school week, arranged to highlight local traffic congestion. Pupils' good basic skills and very positive attitudes mean they are well prepared for their future economic well-being. They have an astute understanding of how to make a profit while meeting customer demands through preparing items for a school fundraising event. Their care for the environment and recycling efforts are outstanding. School council members were surprised to learn at a regional meeting that not all schools compost their organic waste.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

When teaching in Key Stage 2 is outstanding, a key feature is the great care taken to discuss with pupils what is expected of them and to help them understand the key features of a successful piece of work. Teachers' explanations are very good and the pace of learning is lively. As a result, pupils' concentration and interest in their work is excellent. Questions are used very effectively to check pupils' understanding and to press them to think further and more deeply. Levels of challenge are adjusted sensitively to match pupils' learning needs, sometimes through different tasks and sometimes through the level of support from teachers and other adults. Where teaching is less effective, opportunities to consolidate and extend pupils' knowledge and understanding are sometimes not fully exploited as the time allowed for this is too brief. On very rare occasions, explanations of what is required of pupils are not clear enough and their concentration falters.

Pupils' work is marked conscientiously, with clear written comments on how they might improve their work. Teaching assistants and other adults are deployed well and give good support, for example when working with groups of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to help to ensure that these pupils make good progress.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is well designed to make learning interesting for pupils. Exciting work was done in the fortnight focusing on distant countries with art, music and cooking enhancing pupils' understanding of other cultures. Information and communication technology (ICT) has developed well since the last inspection and pupils are increasingly confident users. New resources have been purchased, including some sophisticated control technology which intrigues pupils and sparks their interest in new areas of learning such as engineering. The school has a good range of visits, visitors and after-school opportunities, including a wide variety of music and sports activities which pupils thoroughly enjoy. The residential visits made by Years 4 and 6 build pupils' self-esteem and increase their knowledge of the world around them as well as developing their teamworking skills. Pupils benefit from good quality provision for both geography and history. Recent work on local traffic encouraged them to pose questions and to look for potential solutions. Good links with the secondary school support the learning of modern foreign languages, including Mandarin.

## Care, guidance and support

### Grade: 2

Outstanding pastoral support and effective academic support help pupils to make good progress. Support for vulnerable pupils is excellent and as much as possible is done to help families and pupils who are experiencing difficulties. Provision for pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and for the very small number for whom English is an additional language is good. Individual education plans are well focused and structured to help to give pupils the support they need, and there are very good links with health and welfare agencies. Child protection procedures are rigorous and effective.

Academic support and guidance are good. The school issues clear reports that avoid jargon and enable parents to see how their children are progressing. Pupils benefit from the targets set for them, although they do not always have enough time to consider fully how well they have done in their work and how they might respond to teachers' marking. Very well established links help pupils to make a smooth transition to secondary school.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

Senior staff and governors have an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, based on effective systems for monitoring and evaluating its work. Staff at all levels have been deployed with considerable skill to make the most of their talents for the benefit of the pupils. Subject leaders play an increasing role in self-evaluation in their areas of responsibility. Following an extensive process of consulting staff, pupils and parents, the governors have a clear vision for the development of the school over the next five years. The school development plan sets out an appropriate agenda for the improvement of the school for 2007–08, though it does not yet include activities to underpin this for the next two to three years.

The school works well with external agencies to extend the opportunities for pupils both academically and in their personal development. Good examples of these are the effective partnerships with the local specialist language school, the learning network and the private organisation providing care before and after school, as well as the kindergarten on the school site.

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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 effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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?	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	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	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?	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?	2

<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>	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	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

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

20 June 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The British School, Wotton-under-Edge, GL12 7JU

I would like to thank you for your involvement in the recent inspection of your school, particularly for the friendly and open way in which you talked to us in discussions, in lessons and around the school.

You are rightly proud of your school. It has improved significantly and it is now a good school. It has some important strengths, including:

- your outstanding personal development and behaviour
- the excellent start children make in the Reception class
- the good curriculum which helps to make the work you do interesting and exciting
- the good leadership of the governors, headteacher and other staff.

We have asked the school to improve two areas of its work:

- The teaching is good overall but the quality can be inconsistent and so we have asked the school to make sure that teaching is always good or better.
- You do not have enough opportunities to consider for yourself how well you have done in your work and to talk to your teacher about how it could be improved. You can help by thinking carefully and being keen to take part in discussions.

Well done for improving your attendance and thank you again for your help during the inspection. We wish you every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

Grahame Sherfield Her Majesty's Inspector