

Cirencester Kingshill School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115770
Local Authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	312062
Inspection dates	7–8 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Peter Limm HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	808
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Maureen Richards
Headteacher	Christine Oates
Date of previous school inspection	29 September 2003
School address	Kingshill Lane Cirencester GL7 1HS
Telephone number	01285 651511
Fax number	01285 885652

Age group	11-16
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is of average size and is over-subscribed. It is situated on the eastern outskirts of Cirencester, and pupils come from more than 30 primary schools serving mainly the surrounding rural villages but also including some wards in which there is a relatively high level of social deprivation. Attainment of pupils on entry to the school is broadly average. The proportion known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The vast majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds and very few speak English as an additional language. The school has Sports College status and additional specialisms in Science and Raising Achievement Transforming Learning. In addition the school has just attained the permanent Eco School Award and has further awards including Healthy Schools, Investor in People, Basic Skills Quality Mark and Sports Mark.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Cirencester Kingshill is an outstanding school. When it was last inspected it was judged to be very good and it has continued to make excellent progress since then, successfully addressing the key points for action. The school's commitment to continuous improvement has ensured that all aspects of its work have been strengthened. The pupils' achievement and standards and their personal development are outstanding. Pupils love being at school and are quick to point out how much the staff do for them. Pupils' behaviour is excellent and relationships between adults and pupils are exemplary. Pupils flourish in the school's secure and very caring environment. They are keen to participate and enjoy their learning. They are increasingly involved in making decisions about how the school runs, and also in appointing staff. Parents' responses were overwhelmingly positive and appreciative of the way that the school has supported their children. One summed up the views of many others in writing, 'We are extremely pleased with the progress our son is making and the environment in which he appears to be thriving.'

Leadership at all levels is outstanding. The headteacher, senior leaders and governors have a clear vision for improvement based on high achievement for all. They have created a climate of high aspiration, mutual support and critical self-evaluation. The school successfully identifies the needs of a wide range of pupils and is quick to identify initiatives that will strengthen its provision and better meet these needs. Self-evaluation is accurate because monitoring is rigorous and systematic. Because of this, the school has already identified that the excellent use of assessment in informing teaching, planning and learning seen in the best lessons is not applied consistently across the school. Nevertheless, teaching and learning are already outstanding overall. The staff provide excellent care, guidance and support for pupils. There is a general outward-looking ethos which seeks to enrich the school's already excellent contribution to the wider community through its many different links and partnerships. The curriculum is excellent and imaginatively promotes and increases pupils' enjoyment and motivation. Extra-curricular provision is exceptional and there is a wealth of trips and visits to local, national and international venues. Sports status has had a very beneficial impact on standards, not just in physical education but across a whole range of school activities. The school's other specialisms are beginning to have a similarly positive impact on achievement and securing a stimulating climate for learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that the excellent use of assessment in informing teaching, planning and learning found in the best lessons is applied consistently across the school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

The school has a comprehensive intake and pupils start secondary school with attainment that is broadly average. All groups of pupils make extremely good progress and by the end of Key Stage 3 they attain outstanding results. At GCSE in 2007, over 75% of the Year 11 pupils achieved 5 or more A* to C grades, and for 63% this included English and mathematics. The school adds excellent value to pupils' progress from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 4. The school's strongly inclusive approach ensures that pupils of all abilities, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, make excellent progress. Target setting for the school and for

individual pupils is based on secure procedures and successfully sets challenging goals in order to raise standards.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils feel safe and secure. They have an extremely positive view about how the school cares for them and, in particular, how adults respond to the few incidents of bullying and poor behaviour. Any racist incidents are dealt with robustly and the school provides numerous opportunities to teach pupils about other cultures. There are many opportunities for pupils to think deeply about spiritual and moral issues. For example, during an assembly on Remembrance Day, Year 8 were clearly very moved by the two minutes' silence. Pupils' social skills are very well developed and this is seen in the maturity of their responses to each other and adults. Pupils behave very well, showing respect and support for each other and the school. They take responsibility for themselves and others, for example, by acting as reading buddies and mentors and supporting partner primary schools through the Junior Sports Leadership programme. They also appreciate their opportunity to influence decisions through the School Council. For instance, like some of their parents, pupils have concerns about the impact of the new timings of the school day and the school plans to review these. Pupils say they enjoy school and their parents agree with them. This is evident in their excellent attendance and participation in lessons. Pupils are involved in a wide range of physical and extra-curricular activities that suit all needs. They know that the school is guiding them well in healthy eating choices, despite parental concerns about the short lunchtime. The outstanding achievement in English and mathematics and the excellent provision of vocational courses help to prepare pupils very well for their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Teachers form excellent relationships with pupils and this means the atmosphere in classrooms is exemplary. Teachers plan lessons carefully to take account of the abilities and aptitudes of pupils and assess their work frequently and accurately. Teaching is challenging and conducted with good pace so no time is wasted. Teachers' excellent subject knowledge, effective questioning and clear feedback on performance are all key strengths. Despite the pace, teachers are also careful to ensure that no-one is left behind, and teaching assistants are very well deployed to support those who need extra guidance. Assessment information is effectively used to inform the setting of challenging targets, although the school is aware that the excellent assessment practices found in the best lessons are not consistently adopted across the school. Well-focused professional development for teachers and other staff, derived from the school's sharp self-evaluation, and well-established procedures for monitoring teaching have contributed to the progress made in strengthening the quality of teaching and learning since the last inspection. Pupils have plenty of opportunities to work independently and to take responsibility for their own learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum has improved significantly from the last inspection and it is now rich and varied. Provision for religious education and information and communication technology, criticised in the last report, is now good. The school is part of a successful 14–19 partnership with neighbouring schools and colleges. These links have increased the provision of National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ) and GCSE vocational courses both in school and off site. Pupils are provided with every opportunity to pursue their individual interests with a very free option system for Key Stage 4. Work-related learning in subjects like catering is of exceptional quality. The school has a strong focus on providing courses that have clear progression routes to further and higher education. These wider opportunities do not compromise the school's excellent provision for traditional academic subjects. Awareness of relevant health and safety issues is an important part of pupils' study in many subjects. The school offers many enrichment activities and clubs which are diverse and well attended. The Sports College specialist provision is extremely good and makes a strong contribution to improving standards and achievement. The international programme is ambitious and promotes exciting global links such as 'Dreams and Teams' in Delhi.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Arrangements for safeguarding pupils are excellent. The school provides a safe and supportive environment and is attentive to all aspects of pupils' health and well-being. Staff work hard to integrate all pupils fully into the life of the school. Pupils are confident that the school listens to their views and acts in response to their concerns. All adults who work in the school are committed to providing the learning conditions that allow pupils to flourish. The tracking of all pupils' progress is excellent and intervention is timely. Pupils know what level they are working at, what their targets are and what they need to do in order to improve. Many teachers ensure that the focus of their lessons is making a clear link between the expected level of attainment and the learning activities that will help pupils improve. For example, in a Year 10 science lesson, a booklet of work on energy was skilfully written to aid revision and in a Year 7 technology lesson pupils were introduced to higher-order subject skills swiftly. Marking is regular and comments in books help pupils to know how to improve their work. These approaches contribute to the school's outstanding academic success. Procedures to identify pupils who are at risk or in need of additional support are highly effective. Excellent provision is made for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and records show that they make outstanding progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Excellent leadership at all levels ensures that the school has outstanding capacity to improve. It is constantly seeking ways to increase effectiveness and is careful to engage all staff in this process. Procedures for monitoring the school's performance and evaluating its progress are systematic and rigorous, and increasingly involve pupils. The headteacher gives a very clear sense of direction and purpose to the school and has created an atmosphere where everyone feels valued, cared for and respected. She is very ably supported by a highly effective senior

leadership team which contains a good balance of experience and new appointments. Governance of the school has improved dramatically since it was criticised in the previous inspection. Governors provide an excellent balance of support and challenge, and highly effective use has been made of their skills and expertise to improve key aspects of the life of the school.

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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 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	1
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

9 November 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Cirencester Kingshill School, Cirencester, Gloucestershire GL7 1HS

Thank you for the excellent contribution you made to our recent inspection. We were very impressed by your friendly welcome and the mature and sensible way that you spoke with us. Your views, and those of your parents, were very helpful in confirming what staff told us about the school. We agree that Kingshill is an outstanding school. We were very impressed with the exceptional standards of your work and the excellent progress that you make in lessons and over time. You behave very well and have excellent attitudes to learning. The very high quality of teaching and the way that the school is constantly seeking to improve means that your school is very likely to get even better. You have an excellent range of opportunities to learn, including extra-curricular activities, and we were pleased to see how many of you participate in them. You make very positive contributions to the life of the school and the wider community. You are helped to do so well by the outstanding quality and effectiveness of the school's leadership at all levels.

You and your parents raised some issues that I discussed with the school and it has planned to review the arrangements for the school day. In addition we have asked the school to ensure all teachers make the most of the good assessment information they have about how you are doing to ensure you all continue to make excellent progress. You can help the school to achieve this task by asking teachers to make it absolutely clear how you can improve if you have any doubts.

Yours sincerely

Peter Limm Her Majesty's Inspector