

Glory Farm Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123012
Local Authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	314455
Inspection dates	17–18 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Trevor Davies

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	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	386
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr John Pengelly
Headteacher	Mr Paul Ducker
Date of previous school inspection	29 November 2004
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Hendon Place Sunderland Drive Bicester OX26 4YJ
Telephone number	01869 244050
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Glory Farm is a larger than average primary school serving an area of north-east Bicester. It shares a site with a special school and a secondary school. The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds, but one tenth are from other ethnic origins. The school has an Early Years Foundation Stage, based in newly developed accommodation, which children enter at the beginning of the year in which they are four. The school has strong partnerships with other local schools and has a reputation for sporting success. It has achieved Activemark and the Healthy School Award.

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. The headteacher provides outstanding leadership. He describes the school as led by 'a strong leadership team through a journey of innovation and improvement'. This is an accurate assessment. It reflects the way in which this team, well supported by the governors, have successfully raised expectations of behaviour, improved the quality of teaching, and introduced the rigorous tracking of pupils' progress. These improvements have resulted in rising standards and good achievement, particularly in English and science. Standards are average, which represents good progress for pupils from their below-average starting points. The proportion of pupils exceeding the levels expected by Year 6 is not as high as it should be. This is because challenge for the more able pupils in lessons is inconsistent and, as a result, they do not make as much progress as they should.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding aspects of the school. Pupils' attitudes to their work and to each other are excellent and they comment that the school is a safe place to learn and play. One parent rightly described the school as having 'a great atmosphere for learning'. There is no doubt that pupils thrive because all are valued and supported to achieve their best. Care, guidance and support for pupils are good overall with strengths in the support for their personal development. The school has good assessment procedures and systems for tracking pupil progress. These provide consistently clear guidance to pupils in what they need to do next in order to improve. Good teaching enables the pupils to achieve well. The caring staff and the positive attitudes of pupils have helped develop a strong and supportive learning atmosphere. This has had a big impact on behaviour, which is good throughout the school, as well as on attendance, which is outstanding. Teachers deal well with the needs of pupils with moderate learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The pupils find the curriculum exciting, enriched by many additional visits, clubs and activities. The sporting activities offered by the school provide excellent healthy experiences for pupils, who respond exceptionally well to these opportunities. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are very well fostered throughout all aspects of school life. The teaching of basic skills in English, mathematics, and information and communication technology (ICT) is good, but opportunities for pupils to apply these skills in other subject areas are too infrequent. This means that pupils are not able to apply and practise English, mathematical and research skills in other subjects as often they could. The parent who wrote that their child is 'happy and confident and involved in all decision-making in the school' illustrates the success of the school council and the opportunities that pupils have to express their views. Pupils make an outstandingly positive contribution within the community, both through charity fundraising and through extensive participation in local and regional activities. The promotion of community cohesion is excellent because the school contributes significantly to local and civic events, through both pupil and family activities. Through its international links the school also reaches out into the global community. The school has good capacity to improve further. While it celebrates its strengths, it acknowledges and accurately identifies how it needs to improve and, through strong leadership, the school's successful track record shows it has the capability to succeed.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children start school with a wide range of abilities but generally below the standards expected for their age, especially in aspects of personal, social and mathematical development. Children make good progress so that by the time they enter Year 1 most reach the expected goals and some exceed them. Exceptionally good progress is made in personal and social development because a strong emphasis is placed upon this by teaching staff. As a result, the colourful and well-organised indoor and outdoor areas encourage children to explore and experiment. This, together with plenty of opportunities to socialise and exchange ideas with their teachers and each other, leads to growing confidence and maturity. Children enjoy the activities on offer and behave well. Teaching is good and staff work effectively together as a team. A good grounding in early reading and writing prepares children well for the next stage of learning. Well-planned themes, such as 'living things', link children's learning and allow them to develop an understanding of the world around them. For example, during the inspection, some children observed changes in tadpoles while other children planted beans. They have a growing understanding of the need for healthy lifestyles because this is given sufficient emphasis by teachers. Children are well cared for and their individual needs met because these are identified early. Assessment information is used effectively to judge how well children are doing. Managers have made good progress since the development of the new accommodation and are keen to develop systems even further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the progress of the more able pupils.
- Extend opportunities for pupils to apply and practise key skills acquired in literacy, numeracy and ICT, in other subjects.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

'Expectations are high and my son thrives on the challenge' is how one parent describes the school ? a sentiment shared by many other parents and carers. Pupils' achievement is good and improving as they make good progress in their lessons. The school is tracking pupils' progress very carefully and has good systems for supporting those at risk of underachieving with individual help or group sessions. Tests and teacher assessments for Year 2 pupils in 2008 show that their attainment is above the national average and that pupils make good progress overall from a low starting point when entering school at age four. Standards in Year 6 are broadly average, and provisional test results for Year 6 in 2008 suggest that standards and progress in English and science have improved. The decline in standards in mathematics has been arrested and current school data also indicate improving attainment for pupils in this subject. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve well and make good progress. However, pupils of higher ability do not always make as much progress as they should. This is because of inconsistency in the level of challenge they receive in lessons. Ultimately, this has resulted in fewer pupils than expected achieving the higher Level 5 in their Year 6 tests.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development is outstanding because of the skills they acquire in how to relate to others. They respond well to the respectful role models presented by adults in the school. Pupils are polite and always ready to help. They show very good attitudes towards their work so that lessons run smoothly. Pupils form very positive relationships and play is harmonious and friendly. They enjoy their time in school and attendance rates are well above the national average. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe and they feel safe in school, with no concerns about bullying. They adapt very well to guidance on leading healthy lifestyles and understand the importance of fitness. As a result, the school has achieved both the Activemark and Healthy School awards. They can say how they apply this knowledge outside school. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They understand personal values of right and wrong. They learn to empathise with others and are equipped to respond supportively, also showing greater cultural awareness than pupils did at the time of the last inspection. Pupils develop a keen sense of responsibility within the school community, such as through school council activities. The school makes an outstandingly positive contribution to the local community through its extensive participation in events and, for example, through its representation on the Bicester Partnership Student Council. Strong international links, with countries such as Rwanda, give pupils an excellent understanding of the wider global community. They are also acquiring good academic and personal skills in preparation for their future economic well-being. For example, pupils are involved in a 'Junior Citizens' project and, in Years 5 and 6, have the opportunity to take part in business and commercial activities.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

'We really enjoy our lessons because they are exciting' was a comment from the school council. This enjoyment results from a positive climate for learning in lessons. The quality of teaching is good. Lesson objectives are clear and shared with pupils so that they know what they are going to learn. Pupils are attentive and apply themselves well to tasks. Teachers plan work carefully and in detail, providing clear objectives that help pupils understand what they need to do to improve their work. Planning is often adapted to ensure that each lesson builds on the work pupils have already covered and learned. However, specific tasks for pupils of higher ability offering the right level of challenge are not always identified and this slows their progress. Teaching assistants are used well to help those who need additional support with reading, writing or mathematics. Talk partners and peer mentors successfully encourage the pupils to share ideas and reflect on their work. The procedures used to assess pupils' progress are good. Pupils also assess their own work and where appropriate review their work and progress with other pupils in their class. Teachers mark pupils' work diligently and provide targets for improvement.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is broad and balanced, with interesting special topics and themed events, such as art, science and cultural weeks. These stimulate pupils' interests and enthusiasm for learning. Music, sport and the creative arts also feature very strongly in the school's curriculum, with an

excellent range of extra activities such as visits, visitors, sport, music, dance and drama. Pupils particularly enjoy and achieve well in competitive sports and special events. The staff are increasingly planning special topics that create links between subjects, such as the Year 4 class that was researching the history and geography of Australia as well as learning about the techniques of aboriginal art, and painting in that style. However, there are too few opportunities for pupils to apply and practise key skills acquired in English, mathematics and ICT lessons in other curriculum areas. As a result, pupils' abilities to research and write about different topics covered in the classroom are not as good as they should be.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides good overall levels of care, guidance and support although the support for pupils' personal development is outstanding. Staff are diligent about the safety and welfare of pupils. An independent audit of health and safety practice reported very positively. Child protection procedures are good and the school conducts appropriate checks on adults who work with the pupils. First aid expertise is very high. Throughout the school, relationships are very good and pupils have confidence in their teachers and other adults. Staff receive suitable training in identifying vulnerable pupils. Comprehensive strategies provide good support for these children and the school is quick to liaise with outside agencies as the need arises. Good care is offered to pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. Behaviour is managed well, with clear expectations and an insistence on good standards both in lessons and during breaktimes.. Attendance is kept very high by close monitoring. Pupils benefit from good levels of support and guidance in their academic development, based on accurate tracking and analysis of their needs. Pupils find personal targets and the marking of work helpful. As one boy said, 'the teachers are keen to help you when you are stuck'.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are strong because of the energy and commitment shown by newly formed management teams and inspirational leadership from the headteacher. School self-evaluation is outstanding. The school has established robust systems in which staff at all levels are involved in reviewing their own and the school's performance. The school accurately identifies its strengths and weaknesses, and implements clear strategies to address development priorities. Tracking of pupil progress is analysed in detail and leads to accurate identification of priority areas for improvement. This is reflected in detailed action planning and early evidence is showing improvements, for example in raising standards in mathematics. The school is very willing to embrace change, such as the way it is extending guided support for pupils in English, mathematics and other subject areas. This initiative is now part of a government project to which the school contributes. The school has adapted excellently to its responsibility for community cohesion and the sustainable schools programme. The school has a very positive involvement and reputation in the local community through initiatives such as 'Family Learning' parent workshops. The school also has strong international links. Staff development is equipping members of staff well in their changing roles. Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and where improvements are needed. They fulfil their responsibilities well and have met the Financial Management Standard in Schools.

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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 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?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
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	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
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 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

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	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
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**

31 March 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Glory Farm Primary School, Bicester, OX26 4YJ

Thank you for being helpful and making us welcome when we came to visit your school. We really enjoyed talking to you and looking at your work. You told us that you enjoy coming to school and we agree with you that this is a good school.

Here are some of the things we think the school does well.

- You are making good progress in your work.
- You make excellent friendships. You play well together, behave well and have good attitudes to your work in lessons.
- You have excellent sporting opportunities in the school.
- Your school is very successful at helping to create very good relationships within the local community and the wider world.

There are two things we have asked the school to do to help you improve further.

- Provide you with more opportunities to use and practise your English, mathematics and ICT skills in other subject areas.
- We have asked your teachers to ensure that, in all lessons, pupils of higher ability are challenged in their work.

You can help by trying to do your best and continue to enjoy your time at school. Remember to ask teachers if you need help.

Yours faithfully

Trevor Davies

Lead Inspector