

Malmesbury Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	126338
Local Authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	315504
Inspection dates	15–16 January 2008
Reporting inspector	Christine Huard

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	391
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tristan Cork
Headteacher	Jeff Staton
Date of previous school inspection	23 February 2004
School address	Tetbury Hill Malmesbury SN16 9JR
Telephone number	01666 823514
Fax number	01666 823227

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This large primary school serves a wide area and the attainment on entry of children into the Nursery and Reception classes is very broad. It varies between well below and well above average and is close to average overall. The school has a specialist learning centre and the proportion of pupils with statements of special educational need is above average. The overall percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average. The school is due to move into a new building at the end of March.

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 with some outstanding features. An exciting and vibrant curriculum inspires and motivates pupils to learn. In addition, actions taken by the new, dynamic leadership team, managed by the strong and experienced headteacher, has led to a significant improvement in standards and pupils' achievement in the last year. Parents wholeheartedly support the school. Recurring themes in their comments are the strong leadership of the headteacher, the approachability of the staff, and their children's enjoyment of school. As one parent wrote, 'Even if I won the lottery, I wouldn't change my children's school.'

Standards at the end of key Stage 2 are above average in English, mathematics and science, and pupils achieve well. Actions to improve standards in mathematics across the school have been particularly effective. Pupils apply their basic skills well in order to solve problems because they have gained a good understanding of the processes necessary to be able to do this. Pupils from the specialist learning centre and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because tasks set are closely matched to their needs. Children in Reception get a good start to school life, and when they enter Year 1, most are working at or beyond the levels expected for their age. The school has identified that the attainment of younger boys is not as high as that of girls, particularly in reading. In Reception, appropriate strategies have already been put in place to remedy this and are having a positive impact. However, although there are many strategies and good ideas to improve reading in Years 1 and 2, these have not yet been fully developed as part of a whole-school strategy for motivating boys and improving their achievement.

Pupils fervently acknowledge that they enjoy school and this is reflected in their good attendance. They eagerly take on responsibilities and playtimes are happy and harmonious because 'play buddies' ensure that everyone who wants to has someone to play with. They have a good knowledge of how to stay safe and enthusiastically extol the advantages of pursuing a healthy lifestyle – and support this by efficiently running a 'smoothie' tuck shop at playtimes. All these qualities, together with good basic skills, mean that pupils are well prepared for their futures lives.

The support pupils receive to help them to achieve their best is outstanding. Their progress is carefully monitored and challenging targets set to help them move on. Pupils feel secure and particular attention has been paid to their safety and welfare during the construction of the new school. Relationships between pupils and adults in school are excellent. Pupils say that lessons are often fun because teachers ensure they are actively involved. Assessment information is used well to plan work that is matched to the varying levels of ability within class. Pupils acknowledge that the setting of targets and careful marking help them to understand what they need to do to make progress in their learning. However, pupils are not consistently involved in assessing their own work and that of their peers in lessons on a day-to-day basis. Consequently, their understanding of what they need to do to improve is not always as clear as it might be.

Staff and governors know how well the school is doing. Their self-evaluation is very accurate. Appropriate areas for improvement have been identified and challenging targets set. As a result, there is a good capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children in Reception make good progress in their learning because teaching is good. The curriculum is exciting and lively and there is a good balance between activities led by the teacher and those which children choose for themselves, thus enabling them to gain independence. Although opportunities for outdoor play have been restricted by the building construction work, good efforts have been made to ensure that an outside secure area is still available for their exclusive use. Parents appreciate the caring attitude of all staff, who ensure children are safe and happy. Children's progress is carefully assessed on a regular basis, which means that activities are planned at the correct level to help pupils grow. Leadership and management are good. The monitoring of teaching, learning and planning ensures consistency of approach across the classes, thus enhancing learning opportunities for the children.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that strategies for raising the attainment of younger boys, particularly in reading, are firmly established and implemented within relevant schemes of work and whole-school planning.
- Consistently provide opportunities for pupils to be more involved in assessing their own work and that of their peers in lessons.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils across the school make good progress. Teachers are working hard to raise the standard of boys' reading in Years 1 and 2 to the same level as that in writing and mathematics. They have devised a range of strategies to motivate boys and sustain their concentration and a new reading scheme with content designed to appeal to boys is on order. However, not all these ideas have yet become part of whole-school strategy and their application is too inconsistent at present. Standards in Years 3 to 6 have risen because assessment systems have improved and information has been used more effectively to identify those pupils requiring additional support or those needing to be challenged further. The school exceeded the targets set in English and mathematics last summer. Targets for the current year are even more challenging, but realistic.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils develop outstanding social and moral attitudes. These are underpinned by the strong Christian ethos of this vibrant community. Assemblies and lessons provide excellent opportunities for pupils to be quiet and reflect. They explore different faiths and links with schools overseas, such as China and Africa, considerably enhance their understanding of the traditions of other cultures. Behaviour in and around the school is exemplary. Pupils make an outstanding contribution to the school, local and international community and the ideas of pupils regarding various aspects of the new building were actively sought through the extremely effective school council.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Pupils learn effectively because teachers show flair and imagination in their planning in order to make learning relevant and fun for the pupils. Good subject knowledge gives them the confidence to be adventurous in the classroom. Pupils tackle tasks with vigour and enthusiasm; they are eager to learn because they find the teaching inspiring and exciting. They respond to questions thoughtfully and are encouraged to explore and share ideas with their talking partners. Marking is good and pupils say comments help them understand what they need to do to improve their work. However, although there are increasing opportunities for pupils to be involved in assessing their own learning, there is not yet a whole-school strategy to ensure this happens. Teaching assistants are deployed effectively and provide good support for pupils, both in class and in small groups.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is vibrant, lively and exciting. There are particular strengths in art and music, which bring learning to life for the pupils and give them opportunities to explore their own creativity to a high level. An excellent programme contributes to pupils' outstanding personal development. Provision for pupils in the specialist learning centre and for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is outstanding and the quality of support they receive enables them to make good progress. The wide range of visits, visitors and extra-curricular activities all serves to enhance pupils' learning opportunities and add to their enjoyment of school. Parents are very appreciative of the school's provision, typified by the comment that, 'Our children are given wonderful opportunities, thanks to the commitment and imagination of the staff.'

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

All staff have a clear commitment to the care and support of every pupil. The support provided for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those in the specialist learning centre is excellent and the school ensures that they are fully integrated into school life. There are excellent links with outside agencies to further support pupils when needed. There are rigorous arrangements for risk assessments and there are secure procedures for safeguarding children. The monitoring of pupils' progress is excellent and pupils know how well they are learning, and targets help them to move forward.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school's good leadership and management are characterised by shared values and a clear vision for further improvement. Data is used well to check performance and a robust monitoring system is in place to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning. Teachers are mutually supportive. They share and discuss good practice and this has a beneficial impact on the learning and progress made by pupils. The senior leadership team works closely with the headteacher

and there is very good delegation of responsibilities. The governors provide good support and have taken a strong role in the development of the new school. They are provided with high quality information regarding standards and acknowledge that they need to raise the level of their challenge to match the quality of the information with which they are provided to ensure progress continues. The school has the confidence of the community it serves and parents are enthusiastic in their support of the school; as one parent, reflecting the views of many, commented, 'We have a fantastic staff and a first class head; a school to be proud of.'

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

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ 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	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
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	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 the learners' needs?	2
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?	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

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

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Malmesbury CE Primary School, Malmesbury SN16 9JR

Thank you for the very warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school. You certainly seem to be very happy and it was good to hear how you enjoy your work and all the extra activities in which you are involved. We think your school gives you a good education and is working hard to make it even better.

- These are the things we liked best:
- Your behaviour is outstanding and you are really keen and enthusiastic about your learning.
- You are doing very well in English, mathematics and science.
- You take very seriously the importance of keeping safe and of eating healthily at school and taking physical exercise.
- Teachers make learning fun for you and mark your work well.
- You have a vibrant curriculum and the special visits arranged to enhance it are excellent.
- You think that your teachers and staff take very good care of you while you are in school and we agree.
- Your headteacher and governors lead the school really well and are very keen to make it even better.
- We think that a few things could be even better:
- You do not have enough opportunities to say how well you think you have done in your lessons and how effective your learning has been.
- Boys in Years 1 and 2 need a little more help with their reading to make it as good as their writing and mathematics.

I am glad you enjoy your school and hope you will continue to work hard.

Very best wishes Yours sincerely

Mrs Christine Huard Lead inspector



17 January 2008

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