

# Churcham Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	115510
<b>Local Authority</b>	Gloucestershire
<b>Inspection number</b>	326210
<b>Inspection dates</b>	10–11 June 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Linda McGill HMI

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.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	56
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
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Philippa Dancey
<b>Headteacher</b>	Heather Ingram
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	20 June 2006
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Churcham Gloucester GL2 8BD
<b>Telephone number</b>	01452 750467
<b>Fax number</b>	01452 750467

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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
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## Introduction

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

## Description of the school

Churcham is a small, rural school where pupils are organised into two classes. One class caters for pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, and the other is for older pupils; classes are sometimes split further into smaller groups. Most of the pupils are of White British heritage and there is a small number of Traveller pupils. This reflects the local population. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is below average. The proportion identified as have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average. In the main, pupils' difficulties relate to their learning or their behaviour. A small but significant number of pupils join and leave the school part-way through the year, or in different year groups. For example, one third of the current Year 6 pupils were not at Churcham at the beginning of Year 3. Attainment on entry varies widely from year to year.

Acorns, a small parent-run playgroup, uses one of the school's rooms in the mornings and the children generally transfer from here into class 1 at the age of four. The school works closely with three other small primary schools in a federation called GlosMaTCH.

The school has numerous awards and accreditations. It has the Active Mark, the Healthy Schools Award and Artsmark Gold. It also has the International School Award and has been recognised by Unicef as a Rights Respecting School. The school has close links with other schools in several European countries.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

Pupils, parents, staff and the local community are rightly proud of this outstanding school. During the inspection, many people spanning the ages of four to 90 sought out the inspector to make sure that this message came across loud and clear. Many aspects of the school's work, including sport, the arts and success in a wide range of competitions were mentioned as particular strengths. What came across most strongly, however, was the high value that everyone places on the warm, supportive family ethos and the fact that every child is known and nurtured as an individual. One parent summed up the views of many, saying, 'As a parent, I think of the school as an extended family and we are all working together with the children at the core of everything.'

Under the excellent leadership of the headteacher, the school has built well on the many strengths noted at the last inspection. Standards have risen and, taken overall, are well above average at both key stages. Those pupils who have attended Churcham for the whole of their primary school career have made excellent progress. Those who joined at different times during the year have also made excellent progress from their starting points. The carefully targeted support for pupils who find learning difficult helps them make progress just as swiftly as their classmates. No pupil is falling behind.

The school places a very high priority on developing the pupils as well-rounded young people. The attention that is given to meeting individual needs and to finding every opportunity for pupils to excel, in whatever way, is exceptional. The pupils' personal development is outstanding. Their behaviour is excellent. Pupils work hard in lessons and make the most of every opportunity for physical activity. They are lively, enthusiastic learners who enjoy everything that the school has to offer. The pupils' understanding of local, national and international issues is particularly strong. The pupils make an exceptional contribution to school life – 'We run a lot of the school,' said one – and also to the locality and the wider world. The school's good efforts have brought about an improvement in attendance, which is broadly average.

The pupils' excellent personal development stands them in very good stead as learners. They are also helped by good teaching. Teaching has many strengths, including the outstanding relationships between pupils, teachers and learning support assistants and the close attention given to meeting individual needs. Pupils say that lessons are often interesting and fun, and that the teachers and other staff are one of the best things about the school. Weaknesses in teaching are relatively minor. Marking is not always sharp enough to ensure that the pupils are given specific feedback about what to do next, and day-to-day assessments of how well the pupils are learning are not regularly used to fine-tune lesson plans to ensure outstanding progress at every opportunity. The school is taking part in a pilot of the 'assessing pupil progress' national strategy, and so is already working to tackle these aspects of teaching.

The school's vibrant curriculum makes a strong contribution to the pupils' learning. Pupils' horizons are widened by an extensive range of visits and visitors and they participate readily in clubs and activities before and after school. The school works very closely with a wide range of agencies to make sure that the pupils' pastoral and welfare needs are met. The care, guidance and support for pupils are outstanding.

Underpinning all of the school's many strengths is strong leadership. One member of staff wrote, 'The positive, joyful spirit that permeates every school activity is actively promoted and led by the head.' The headteacher's high expectations are shared by staff and governors. Strong

teamwork from everyone has led to the improvements since the last inspection, and confirms that the school has an excellent capacity to continue to build on what has been achieved so far.

## **Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 1**

The small number of pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage get off to an excellent start. The close links between class 1 and the Acorns Pre-School ensure that there is a smooth transition, and the pupils quickly settle into life with their older classmates. The children experience a good balance of activities both indoors and out, and have plenty of scope to make choices and use their initiative. They also pursue in depth interesting and exciting events that arise spontaneously, for example spending the day studying newts brought in by one child, examining a dead woodpecker, or exploring a heavy snowfall. The children engage happily with the rest of the class in lessons, for example taking part wholeheartedly in physical education sessions outdoors. Over the year, the children make excellent progress, particularly in their personal, social and emotional development. Systematic teaching of letters and sounds is helping them become confident readers and writers. By the end of the Reception Year, all of the pupils are working securely within the goals that are expected for their age. The children's individual needs and preferences are well known, and the staff work very well to support them. Frequent observations and assessments of progress inform the next steps in their learning.

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

- Raise rates of attendance.
- Give pupils more specific guidance in marking and ensure that lesson plans focus more precisely on pupils' individual needs.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 1**

Taken overall, pupils make excellent progress and reach high standards. There are some variations from one key stage to another, and in different year groups. Progress is never less than good, and it is exceptional in reading in Key Stage 1 and in mathematics at Key Stage 2. Because of the small numbers in each year group, year-on-year comparisons are not helpful. However, the school tracks carefully the attainment and progress of each pupil and takes steps to ensure that everyone makes the progress that they should. Effective support is given at the earliest opportunity. The staff and the pupils involved in piloting a programme of early reading support are pleased at the positive impact it has had. Traveller pupils sometimes receive extra help from the local authority's support service, but this is often not needed because these pupils do just as well as everyone else. The pupils also make excellent progress in other subjects such as physical education and art.

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

### **Grade: 1**

The pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are exceptional. From the youngest children onwards, pupils' voices are heard and they express their ideas and opinions thoughtfully and confidently. The pupils make an outstanding contribution to the community and take their responsibilities as members of one of the four pupil committees very seriously. The pupils work very well in collaboration with

one another and regularly take the initiative. For example, they identified the need for an after-school club for design and technology and then set about organising and running it. Their entrepreneurial skills are also impressive. They worked with post office managers to obtain raised beds for the school's vegetable garden and organise the sale of fruit at break times, budgeting for what is needed, ordering it and accounting for the income. They raise substantial sums of money for a wide range of charities. All of these attributes and skills, together with their very good achievement, mean that the pupils are exceptionally well prepared for life at secondary school and in the wider world.

The pupils have close links with schools in several countries, and enter art competitions jointly with them. Their understanding of different cultures, heritages and lifestyles is strong and their commitment to ecology is deeply held. The pupils embrace wholeheartedly the many opportunities they have for physical activity and sports. They are proud of their sporting prowess, which is nurtured both through physical education lessons and many opportunities to practise their skills and take part in competitions and events.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

The pupils come to lessons predisposed to learn. They are attentive and thoughtful. They are confident to ask questions and seek clarification if they need to. Pupils work steadily through their tasks and enjoy what they are doing. They work very well in pairs and small groups. For example, pupils in Key Stage 1 collaborated to work out how to measure and record the amount of water needed to fill a large bottle. Teachers plan and structure their lessons carefully and make sure that the pupils know what they are going to learn, although they do not always make the best possible use of individual assessment information to ensure that all pupils are consistently challenged in lessons. Groupings are flexible and pupils work with those of similar ability, rather than of the same age. Pupils are involved in assessing, at the end of the lesson, just how much they have learned and understood. The quality of relationships between staff and pupils is excellent. Teachers and support staff work very well together, and learning support assistants made a valuable contribution to pupils' learning.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 1**

The school's stimulating curriculum promotes learning very effectively. There is a strong emphasis on broadening pupils' horizons and every opportunity is taken to link learning in different subjects and to include a visit or visitor to bring learning to life. The pupils especially appreciate this. One wrote, 'The trips are very good and I like how teachers connect them to our work.' Joint work with the other schools in the GlosMaTCH group also enhances the pupils' experiences, and helps them learn to interact as a larger group. For example, the Year 6 pupils travel together to the Isle of Wight, and the schools collaborate to form an orchestra and participate in other events such as Language Day. The pupils appreciate the wide range of clubs that they can choose from. If they feel the need for another one, they will organise it for themselves.

## Care, guidance and support

### Grade: 1

The school offers exemplary pastoral care and guidance to its pupils; their welfare is paramount. To this end, it works closely with a range of external agencies. Some of these agencies, for example the local police, have written to say how much they value the school's attention to individual needs and the high priority that is given to keeping children safe. Parents appreciate the lengths that the school goes to in support of their children. No pupil has ever been excluded and every effort is made to help pupils deal with the troubles some of them face in their lives. One pupil said that she had been difficult in the past but since coming to Churcham had learned to manage her temper and to find things that made her feel good about herself. Arrangements for protecting children and keeping them safe are robust and well understood. The pupils themselves say that they are very safe in school and that everyone looks after them. Close links with the local secondary school and partnership working with the GlosMaTCH schools help to ensure a smooth transition to the next stage of education.

The pupils have targets to aim for in their work and generally know how well they are doing. They are routinely involved in assessing their own progress and even write an annual report of what they have achieved in each subject for their parents. However, the pupils are less clear about the precise next steps they should take in order to move on quickly.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 1

There is a strong sense of purpose and direction from the headteacher. Her leadership inspires loyalty and commitment from everyone involved with Churcham. It is clear that the pupils are at the forefront of everything that the school does, and that the school is at the heart of the local community. Staff and governors share in the drive for continuing improvement. Although there is evident pride in the school's successes there is no sense of complacency. Self-evaluation procedures are rigorous and the school is appropriately self-critical. Governors are active and enthusiastic supporters of the school, but also fulfil their role as 'critical friend'. Teamwork is strong and everyone pulls in the same direction. The school eagerly embraces every opportunity that comes its way that will bring some benefit to the pupils. Churcham may be a small school, but it has a big presence in competitions, events and links at local, national and international levels.

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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?	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

### Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
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?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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/or disabilities make progress	1

<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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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	3
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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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 eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

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

12 June 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Churcham Primary School, Churcham, GL2 8BD

It was a great pleasure to meet you when I came to inspect your school recently. Thank you very much for your warm welcome; you made me feel comfortable straight away. I really enjoyed talking with you and watching you at work and play. What you told me was really helpful when I thought about what to write in my report. If you would like to read it, ask your teacher or your parents for a copy.

I was very impressed by the number of people who wanted to speak to me and who wrote to me about your school. They were all saying the same thing, which is what you told me, too. You said your school is outstanding. Obviously, as an inspector I cannot just take your word for it, I had to look for evidence. I am pleased to say that I found plenty and I agree with everyone else – your school is outstanding.

- There are so many excellent things that I cannot list them on one piece of paper. The main points are:
  - you make excellent progress and reach high standards in your work
  - you are thoughtful, kind children and you do a great deal for one another, the school and for people across the world
  - you do many interesting and exciting things at school and on trips and visits
  - the staff all look after you exceptionally well and make sure that each and every one of you has the chance to succeed at something
  - your headteacher and governors lead the school very well indeed and are determined that things will go on to get even better
  - your school plays an important part in the community.

Inspectors look at all their evidence and then decide what schools need to do next, so that they keep improving. I have decided, and your headteacher agrees, that you need to know exactly what to do in your work in order to make fast progress all the time. The teachers have already started to work on different ways to do this.

Yours faithfully

Linda McGill

Her Majesty's Inspector

P.S. One thing that is not outstanding is attendance. I would like you to work hard at this so that the next time Churcham is inspected, attendance is excellent, too.