

Parton Manor Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115511
Local Authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	326211
Inspection date	29 April 2009
Reporting inspector	Martin Kerly

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	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	101
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	Robert Nightingale
Headteacher	Rosemary Hughes
Date of previous school inspection	2 May 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Craven Drive Churchdown Gloucester GL3 2AG
Telephone number	01452 712214
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Age group	4–7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is smaller than average. The numbers of pupils and classes in which they are taught have decreased significantly in recent years. Most pupils are taught in a class containing pupils from two year groups. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in two parallel classes, each with a few pupils from Year 1. The large majority of pupils are White British. From time to time, children from Traveller and Gypsy Roma families make up a significant minority of the other pupils. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is larger than average. There is provision for pupils to attend a breakfast club and an after school club, but these are not run by this school's governing body and so are not reported on here.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. It has several strengths but also some important areas in need of improvement. Its main strengths are the caring approach adopted by the headteacher and all staff and the effective way the school successfully promotes the pupils' personal development and well-being, which is good throughout the school. These factors are appreciated by parents; all of whom who replied to the inspectors' survey agreed that their children enjoy school. Views such as, 'I chose this school for my son because of the warm, friendly, welcoming atmosphere' and 'The children love their school' are common threads in the comments received. Pupils behave well and learn to become very considerate towards one another. The school has a reasonably accurate view of its performance. It has made steady progress in addressing previously identified weaknesses and is satisfactorily placed to improve further.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make satisfactory progress. This is maintained in Years 1 and 2. Nevertheless, by the end of Year 2, standards are mainly below the national average because a significant proportion of pupils started from a low base when they entered the school and a few experience extensive periods of absence from time to time. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers establish good relationships with the pupils and plan interesting activities but their expectations of what pupils could achieve are not always high enough so at times, relatively few pupils make good progress. The school has established secure systems for assessing pupils' learning in Years 1 and 2. It is aware that in the Early Years Foundation Stage, assessment systems are still being developed and are not being applied consistently. This makes it difficult for teachers when planning new experiences for the children and also difficult for leaders to check overall rates of progress. The curriculum is satisfactory and there is a good range of clubs and special events that enrich the curriculum well.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher successfully promoted a team approach during the recent period of staff reductions. The systems used centrally for recording and tracking pupils' academic progress are not fully efficient and, as a result, the school does not set targets that are sufficiently challenging in order to raise standards. Subject leaders have developed effective procedures to monitor their subjects across the school, for example the progress being made in writing, and they provide useful guidance for colleagues on how to improve. However, some of the school leadership's evaluations and reports do not always focus enough on what the school needs to do to improve.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Careful and sensitive induction arrangements enable the children to settle quickly into the Early Years Foundation Stage classes. The care and welfare for the children is good, for example the clear arrangements for ensuring all children are safely handed over to an adult at the end of the day. Children's personal development is good. They work and play well, often independently and collaboratively. Their attainment on entry to school has varied significantly from year to year. The attainment of those children who started at the beginning of this year is close to that expected nationally but most previous year groups have been below national expectations. Children make satisfactory progress in all six areas of learning. Changes this year in the way children are introduced to letters and sounds has accelerated their progress in early reading and writing skills and they are on track to attain average standards by the end of the year,

higher than in previous years. Some children with good dispositions towards learning and good levels of spoken language are not being fully stretched and could make even faster progress. Teaching and learning are satisfactory and the teachers are developing good links between learning opportunities in and out of doors. The new team in the Early Years Foundation Stage is trialling a range of ways to assess and record the children's progress. This is not yet consistently applied or producing totally valid results. This restricts its use to teachers when planning new experiences and hinders the school's ability to track progress and identify overall performance in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The new leader provides satisfactory leadership and has good ideas for improving the overall satisfactory provision.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that teachers consistently demonstrate high expectations of all pupils and match work to the needs of all abilities in order to promote faster progress.
- Establish efficient whole school systems for recording and tracking pupils' progress and use these effectively to set challenging targets in order to raise standards.
- Improve the assessment arrangements in the Early Years Foundation Stage to provide an accurate view of children's learning.
- Ensure monitoring is always rigorous and information gained is presented clearly and accurately to help inform the key priorities in the school improvement plan.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next Section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement is satisfactory. Standards fluctuate but are below average overall, particularly in reading and mathematics. Standards in writing have improved following a whole-school focus on this area. Pupils make good progress in writing and standards are average. Pupils currently in Year 2 make good progress in writing and satisfactory progress overall, from below average attainment when they entered Year 1. They are on track to attain their relatively modest targets by the end of the year. Pupils in Year 1 started from a higher base and are working at higher levels than those in the previous year, but the school is not making the best use of challenging targets to accelerate their progress further. Most pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve satisfactorily, following careful intervention and additional support. A few pupils whose attendance is poor make limited progress and this impacts on the overall reported standards across the school.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, and social development are good. Their awareness of Britain's cultural diversity and their place within a broader community is satisfactory. Pupils are very friendly and polite and take good care of one another. They feel safe in school and confident about going to an adult or one of the pupil 'pals' if they have a problem. Pupils are very clear about the importance of eating healthily and doing exercise. The school has Activemark and Healthy School awards in recognition of its good work in these aspects. Behaviour is good in lessons and around the school and the pupils believe the behaviour policy is fair. They respond well to the many rewards, stickers and certificates, including those designed to encourage attendance.

Most pupils' attendance rates are good. The school works well with families and other professionals to overcome the poor attendance of a very few pupils. Pupils are keen to help around the school, for example as school councillors, buddies or monitors and enthusiastically support local and national charities and events such as the Pocket Park project. By the time they leave the school, they have a satisfactory range of basic skills needed for the next stage of education and adult life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers know the pupils very well and establish a calm and positive atmosphere in classrooms during almost all lessons. They plan purposeful activities and make good links between subjects. In a few lessons, the pace is too slow and, from lessons observed and other plans seen, it is clear that teachers do not always sufficiently plan for the full range of abilities or have high enough expectations of the more able pupils. This tends to slow the learning. Some of the planning is more focused on the activity than on the precise learning intended. Teachers do not always make the best use of the available computers to support teaching and learning. Assessment procedures, whilst developing in the Early Years Foundation Stage, are consistently applied in Years 1 and 2. Teachers use the school's marking policy, regularly mark work and provide pupils with some useful feedback. Despite this, pupils are not always clear about what they need to do to improve but they like the encouraging stickers they receive for good work. Teaching assistants are used effectively to work with small groups and specific pupils, often those with learning difficulties, enabling them to make sound progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory and meets the national requirements. New national guidance for literacy and numeracy is being introduced steadily. Long-term planning is adapted to meet the needs of the mixed-year classes. Teachers skilfully seek to make links between subjects to make learning more relevant to the pupils, but pupils have relatively few opportunities to use computers. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is satisfactory in class and through the special support programmes. Some specific provision for the most able is developing but the curriculum is not always adapted from day to day to fully meet the needs of the most able. There is a strong focus on promoting pupils' personal development, with some innovative materials being developed. The curriculum is enriched well. The school has received the Silver ARTS mark award. There is a good range of clubs, for example gardening and French, and pupils appreciate the frequent special events, visitors, and visits such as visiting the local library, Tewkesbury theatre and working in the Victorian kitchen.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

There are good levels of care and support for pupils. The inspectors' survey of parents found unanimous agreement that the school cares well for the children, with several comments about the headteacher's commitment to this. The school is proactive in working with external professionals and agencies to sensitively meet the needs of pupils with learning difficulties

and/or disabilities. Procedures designed to safeguard pupils are carried out and there is an ongoing staff training programme. The school site is secure and the efficient caretaking team ensure everything is in good order. Academic guidance for pupils is satisfactory. Short-term learning targets have been introduced but not all pupils are clear about them or the next steps in their learning and some find it difficult to talk about what it is they are learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The very experienced headteacher maintains a clear focus on the personal development, care and welfare of all pupils as individuals. Whilst there is a recognition of the need to raise standards, there is less emphasis on this and insufficient drive towards setting realistic but challenging targets for pupils. Routines and ways of working are well established. They suitably involve staff and governors in monitoring the school's performance and identifying priorities for improvement. Monitoring by subject leaders is effective, their clear and well-structured action plans and the effective way they introduce new initiatives strengthen the school's satisfactory capacity to improve. However, some other monitoring, in an effort to encourage and appreciate the work of others, is not always rigorous. Some feedback to individual teachers and aspects of reports, for example the headteacher's reports presented to the governors, focus too much on the successes and not enough on those areas that need to improve. Governance is satisfactory. The chairman has a clear understanding of his role. The work of the standards committee and a programme of governor visits help ensure governors have a satisfactory awareness of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The school works effectively to promote local community cohesion and is seeking to strengthen its work nationally and internationally. As a first step, it has nominated a community coordinator to liaise with the community governor. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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?	3
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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	3

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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	2
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	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	4
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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**

1 May 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Churchdown Parton Manor Infant School, Gloucester GL3 2AG

Thank you for the way you made us feel very welcome when we visited your school. We thoroughly enjoyed talking with some of you and visiting your classrooms. We are pleased you like your school. Yours is a satisfactory school. Here are some of the highlights we found during our visit:

- You behave well when moving around the school and are very polite towards adults and thoughtful towards one another.
- You all know how important it is to stay fit and healthy by taking exercise and eating healthy food such as fruit.
- The headteacher and everyone who works at the school takes good care of you and makes sure you are safe. This pleases your parents.
- You try hard in lessons and make progress with your work.
- Teachers are good at leading their subjects and thinking of ways to improve the school.
- The school is good at providing lots of interesting activities, special events, visits and visitors. You are lucky to have so many clubs after school.

We have asked your headteacher, staff and governors to work together on these things to improve the school.

- Make sure that teachers are always planning activities that will help you do even better in your work.
- Find better ways for the school's leaders to keep records of the progress you are all making and to use them to set targets for you to achieve by the end of each year.
- Improve the way progress by children in Reception is measured.
- Be more careful when checking the performance of the school and reporting to grown-ups about how well the school is doing.

We feel sure you will have your ideas about improving the school which you can share through your school council.

Yours faithfully

Martin Kerly

Lead Inspector