

Lydney Church of England Primary School (VC)

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115653
Local Authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	326238
Inspection dates	26–27 November 2008
Reporting inspector	Mo Roberts HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 under pilot arrangements: it is deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	216
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Chair	Pauline Vines
Headteacher	Louisa Lawson
Date of previous school inspection	20–21 September 2005
School address	Bream Road Lydney Gloucestershire GL15 5JH
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Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an Additional Inspector. Inspectors visited 11 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff and a group of parents. They observed the school's work and looked at pupils' work and teachers' marking. Documents viewed included the analysis of school's questionnaires to parents, and pupil responses and ideas regarding the topics they would like to study.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work looking in detail at the following:

- the curriculum and the Early Years Foundation Stage provision, to see if the excellence had been maintained since the last inspection despite the various staff changes
- the quality of support to pupils: their understanding of personal targets, support for attendance and their emotional well-being
- the reasons for the lower test results in Key Stage 1 last year and the progress the pupils in this year group are now making in Year 3. Also the progress of the current Year 2 pupils
- the impact of the new management structure and the work of the governors.

Information about the school

The school's roll has remained stable since the last inspection and the overall mix of the pupils remains the same, although there is a waiting list for places in the Early Years Foundation Stage for next year. Pupils often enter with levels of communication and some mathematical skills that are well below those expected for their age. Developments since the last inspection include a close informal partnership with the other schools in the town and adaptations made to the old building to facilitate good disabled access. In addition, the school has received numerous awards, including a Gold Arts Mark and the Healthy Schools Award.

Further information about the school

	School's figures	School's figures compared with other schools
School size	216	Average
Free school meals	10.6%	Below average
Proportions of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities	16.6%	Average
proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups	3.2%	Below average
Proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language	1.1%	Below average
Proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	2.3%	Above average

Inspection judgements

Grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness

1

Capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

The school continues to provide an outstanding education and is well led by its highly effective senior staff team and the governors. The wonderful creative curriculum ensures the school atmosphere buzzes with the pupils' and staff's enthusiasm for learning. Pupils speak of the school and their work with justifiable pride. Most love coming to school and attendance is excellent. Exciting work for all groups and individuals is exceptionally well planned and the quality of teaching is outstanding. This results in exemplary behaviour from the vast majority of pupils. Their learning progresses well from their individual starting points so that by the end of Year 6, their test results are generally well above the national average. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities do extremely well. The school's 'can do' approach to problems is very evident. It has excellent capacity to continue developing and improving as it is always looking at new ways to enrich the learning for pupils and staff.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

The school has no significant weaknesses but could usefully build on its strengths in the following respect:

- Explore ways to develop the library provision and to engage the parents and the community in developing this resource to further enrich learning.

How well does the school meet the needs of individuals and different groups of pupils?

1

Achievement is outstanding right across the school, with all pupils doing exceptionally well. Pupils with learning difficulties sometimes gain the highest level of attainment possible by the time they reach Year 6. This exceptional success is due to meticulous preparation of work by all teachers and the patience shown by the teaching assistants, as well as the diligent supervision and support given by the assistant headteacher. Pupils in Year 1 and 2 build well on their early learning and generally reach close to national levels in the national assessments at the end of Key Stage 1.

The focused look at those in Year 3 showed that the class has a wide spread of abilities so the averaged results in their Year 2 assessments did not reflect their individual attainment. Pupils are actually doing well, especially when their initial starting points are fully considered. High attaining pupils in this class are also appropriately challenged.

Learning accelerates in Years 4 to 6 and pupils show sustained effort in building on the basic skills they gained in the younger classes. The unvalidated test results for Year 6 pupils in 2008 show attainment that is considerably above average, with a very high proportion of pupils achieving the higher levels in science. Super experimental work is undertaken in science. Year 5 pupils thoroughly enjoyed proving that air exists. Their reports were well organised but the use of capital letters and the spelling of technical words could be more accurate. A dip in standards in mathematics in 2006 caused the school to revise its teaching of the subject so that standards once again rose to above the national figure in 2008.

A very strong emphasis is placed on developing all pupils' thinking skills and on helping them to become confident to express their points of view. They rapidly become more successful communicators. Pupils also develop their writing steadily as a result of the focus on linking the spoken and written word. The vibrant displays of pupils' work reflect the imaginative range of topics they study and their very hard work and excellent progress.

As a result of their regular outdoor activities in the 'Forest School', pupils learn a sophisticated approach to assessing risks as well as a lot about the natural environment. They know how to keep safe and healthy. Their play is vigorous and they get good exercise through a variety of physical education and the sports clubs.

Pupils are active in the community and their recently created town mathematics trail, will be sited with the help of the local council, exemplifies the strong links that exist. Pupils enjoy working in mixed ability teams and their good personal and basic skills stand them in good stead for their future economic well-being.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

How well do pupils achieve and enjoy their learning?	1
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and their progress	1
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
To what extent do pupils feel safe?	1
How well do pupils behave?	1
To what extent do pupils adopt healthy lifestyles?	1
To what extent do pupils contribute to the school and wider community?	1

¹ Grades for attainment are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; 4 is low

How well do pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	1
Pupils' attendance and punctuality	1
What is the extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development?	1

The quality of the school's work

Lessons are interesting and active. There is usually a balance between sitting and being up and off working on different activities. Teachers have excellent organisational and management skills so no learning time is wasted. They keep an astute eye on those who potentially might misbehave and use effective positive reinforcement to pre-empt or quickly curtail any inappropriate behaviour. Teachers stop the class to give feedback and to keep everyone on track. The class recreating a Caribbean marketplace was able to lower their noise level when asked. They worked well in groups to come up with enticing slogans to get buyers to their stalls. The carefully selected supporting text and the exotic fruit allowed pupils to capture the market atmosphere and to search for appropriate vocabulary for the task. This exemplifies the active approach and the level of engagement that the school expects its teachers to achieve.

Each child is known as an individual and is respected as such, and good specialist provision for those with worries and a 'comfort zone' ensures those who need time to reflect or receive extra support have their needs met. A family support worker backs up staff when home problems threaten to undermine a pupil's learning or attendance. Support, care and guidance are exemplary. Children with disabilities have sensitive and caring assistance so their learning is disrupted as little as possible. Looked-after children and those who speak English as a second language do as well as their peers. Teaching assistants give good support to pupils' learning.

Even younger pupils are encouraged to think about what the success criteria should be for their work. This gives them confidence and makes them want to succeed. Pupils in Year 1 have improved their writing, which was their biggest weakness when they left the Reception class. Work is promptly marked in all classes, and colour coding draws attention to the strengths and weaknesses of their work. Levels of understanding also improve as pupils explain to partners what they know, for example in mathematics lessons.

Each pupil's progress is carefully tracked and any who are in danger of falling behind are promptly identified. Appropriate support is put in place to keep pupils on track. Pupils know how their targets help them to think about what they are trying to do next.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

High quality teaching and purposeful learning	1
Effective assessment and academic guidance	1
An appropriate curriculum which meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, provision through partnership with other organisations	1
Support, guidance and care	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and assistant headteacher provide outstanding leadership and challenge staff to live up to the vision for the school as a learning community. The new senior management team works well and ensures the school continues to develop in all respects. Staff met or exceeded the attainment targets set for the school in 2008. Monitoring of teaching and learning is insightful and supports improvement. The school is already tackling the relative weakness in writing.

The school has maintained an exceptional level of overall performance through a period of staff change. Although the building is less than ideal, being damp in some places, it is used creatively. However, space occupied by the excellent new information and communication technology room has resulted in the library being too restricted. The school makes a strong contribution to community cohesion and works cooperatively with other schools. Staff share their expertise at the local and county level. They acknowledge that community cohesion requires more work, particularly with parents, before it is outstanding. The school tries hard to involve parents and provides good information via a website and/or regular hard copy newsletters. Nevertheless, parents' response rates to surveys are low, suggesting there is more to be done to fully engage all parents in their child's learning and in the further development of the school. Governors have undertaken extensive training since the last inspection and now have an outstanding impact on the school. They challenge ideas and ask for explanations when necessary. The chairperson offers a weekly drop-in session for parents, so all questions can be quickly answered. They have a thorough and accurate understanding of the quality of education through regular monitoring of their individual areas of responsibility.

These are the grades for leadership and management

Monitoring, evaluating and planning for improvement to outcomes for pupils	1
Promoting equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination	1
Ensuring that safeguarding procedures are effective	1
Ensuring that the governing body provides effective challenge and support so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities are met	1
Promoting the school's relationship with parents and carers, including their involvement in decision-making about matters relating to learning and well-being	2
Developing partnerships with other providers, organisations and services	1
Ensuring the school contributes to community cohesion	2
Deploying resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

Rich provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage ensures children achieve exceptionally well from their starting points, which on average, are well below those expected for their age. Children have settled very well and all their needs are met. They have learned the daily routines and are increasingly confident and secure, even though they have a distance to go to the toilets and also have to cross a corridor to access the outdoor area.

Children are increasingly confident to make their own choices and to use the abundance of resources available both indoors and outside. Good attention to the aesthetics of the outdoor area result in children using their senses, for example by looking at the reflected light and listening to the sounds from the windchimes. Robust outdoor physical learning reinforces early counting, such as when staff play skittles with the children and get them to solve related mathematics problems asking, for example, 'how many more to knock down?'

Assessment is exemplary, with detailed records showing what each child enjoys and can do and identifying the next steps in their learning. These are then incorporated skilfully into the future plans. These plans are multi-layered and successfully provide for the very wide level of ability in the class so all children can be stretched effectively. Teaching assistants help in recording assessments, noting when a concept has been learned. They help produce the lovely records which capture the good quality learning that goes on each day. Parents are beginning to contribute to these records and home learning is valued through the use of 'wow' vouchers that parents and families award the child for achievements out of school.

The Early Years Foundation Stage is exceptionally well managed. Newly qualified staff are well supported by the school. Very good guidance has been given by the school to ensure the new curriculum, which was introduced nationally in September 2008, is fully in place.

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 the children in the EYFS promoted?*	1
How effectively is the provision in the EYFS led and managed?*	1

* Common judgements made across all inspections of the EYFS

Views of parents and carers

The overall response rate to the survey was quite low. Those who responded were extremely positive about the school, although a minority expressed concerns about the organisation of the waiting time for the bus to go to the externally managed after-school care at the end of the day. Inspectors found that the school is aware of the issue and that the governors are also currently looking into this matter. The hall has been suggested as a secure area where pupils could run and play until the bus, which serves three other schools, arrives. The breakfast club run by the school was seen as helpful by parents. The quality of the school's work and the individual care and attention 'that goes the extra mile' were aspects much commended by parents. A fundraising group of parents meeting in the school felt that parents are supportive of the school but were busy and that this was the most likely reason for the limited response to the survey. They said the school responded very quickly if there were any problems and that the 'open door' policy works in practice.

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. In 2006-7, 14% of schools were judged to be outstanding.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well. In 2006-7, 46% of schools were judged good.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing for its pupils suitably. In 2006-7, 34% of schools were judged satisfactory.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves. In 2006-7, 6% of schools were judged inadequate.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Achievement:	an overall measure of the pupils' success in their academic learning. The term combines attainment and progress. Pupils might make good progress, for example, but if their attainment remains low, inspectors may judge that their achievement is only satisfactory.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.



28 November 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Lydney Church of England Primary School, Lydney GL15 5JH

I am writing on behalf myself and Mr Burghart to tell you what we found out when we came to your school.

We agree with you that your school is outstanding. We really enjoyed talking to you about all the exciting things that you do; I enjoyed the Forest School and seeing Year 3 in their Viking costumes. You told us you like school and that your lessons are interesting. We agree with you because we also enjoyed being in the lessons and experiencing the excellent teaching you receive.

All the adults who work in your school really care about you and they make sure that each of you achieves the best that you can. You have learned about how to keep healthy and safe, even in the forest on a slippery day! You said you know who will help you if you worried. The friendship bench in the playground helps some of you to find playmates. We were especially glad to see how all pupils are included in activities.

We were very pleased to see how polite you are, how well you all get on together and how exceptionally well you behave. You responded sensibly to the emergency fire drill and were out calmly in record time - well done. In lessons, you showed us that you try to do your best and are keen to take part. We would like to thank the pupils who spoke to us for the excellent discussion we had and for telling us their views about the things that happen in school.

You do well in all your subjects but we think the library is a bit too small and that you might do even better in writing if you had more books, then you can see more examples of how others write. We also thought your parents might like to help develop the library so they can be even more involved in what you are learning.

We know that all of you will continue to work hard and make the school, your parents and the community even more proud of you.

Good luck in the future.

Mrs Roberts
Her Majesty's Inspector

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