

# Whitminster Endowed Church of England Primary School

## Inspection report

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Unique Reference Number	115660
Local Authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	326244
Inspection dates	25–26 February 2009
Reporting inspector	Mike Burghart

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

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Type of school	Primary
School category	Endowed
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	97
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Keren Mattfield
Headteacher	Deborah Marklove
Date of previous school inspection	16 November 2005
School address	School Lane Whitminster Gloucestershire GL13 7PJ
Telephone number	01452 740406
Fax number	
Email address	admin@whitminstercofe.gloucs.sch.uk

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## Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector. He visited eight lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff and the school council. He met with parents informally in the playground. The inspector observed the school's work. He looked at the school development plan, individual education plans of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and minutes of governors' meetings. He evaluated records of pupils' progress, outcomes of the school's monitoring of teaching and learning, and local authority reviews of the school. He analysed the 55 responses to the Ofsted parents' questionnaire.

The inspector reviewed many aspects of the school's work. He looked in detail at the following:

- reasons for the decline in English standards in 2008 at the end of Key Stage 2
- the quality and effectiveness of provision for Early Years Foundation Stage children
- the effectiveness of the school's support for pupils from Traveller and Showman backgrounds
- how effectively staff and governors as a whole contribute to the school's self-evaluation.

## Information about the school

The school admits up to 15 children each year into Reception. Traditionally, they have been taught as a separate class but this year, with only six in the age group, they are in a mixed-age class with Year 1 pupils. There are three other classes. Year 2 are taught as one age group, whilst Years 3 and 4 and Years 5 and 6 make up the two Key Stage 2 classes. The headteacher was appointed two years ago. There are four full time classroom teachers, three of whom were appointed in September 2008, and one part time teacher who teaches across the school. All pupils are of White British heritage. About 8% of pupils are from Traveller or Showman families. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average. Attainment on entry to the school is as expected for children of four years of age.

The school holds the Healthy School, ActiveMark, Basic Skills and International School awards.

A privately run playgroup meets in the school two mornings a week.

## Inspection judgements

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

Overall effectiveness

2

Capacity for sustained improvement

2

### Main findings

This is an effective school. One of its outstanding features is the way it cares for pupils and supports children from Traveller and Showman families. The headteacher is the driving force towards raising and maintaining standards and is very effectively supported by staff, governors and parents. Pupils of all abilities make good progress and usually reach standards that are above average at the end of Years 2 and 6. Some inconsistencies in pupils' achievement over the past two years indicate that the school's overall effectiveness is not yet outstanding. However, the future looks bright because teaching is now good and effective procedures for assessing and analysing pupils' performance have been introduced. These procedures are working particularly well in English and are beginning to be embedded in other subjects.

Pupils really enjoy learning and are happy to be in school. Behaviour is outstanding. Lessons are interesting. Pupils do their best and show very positive attitudes. They are motivated by their class and individual targets and eagerly make progress.

Children in Reception are extremely well cared for. They get off to a good start because provision is good. Children respond well, settle in quickly and make good progress. By the time they join Year 1, they reach at least the expected standards. Children develop skills of making choices and independent learning that can be capitalised upon in the future. Teachers make creative use of space but the limitations of the small outdoor learning area restrict some physical and social activities.

The school's self-evaluation is accurate. Senior managers monitor effectively and have a clear view of what works well and what could be improved. Monitoring of teaching and learning successfully evaluates the effectiveness of individual lessons. Taking this further to draw out common elements of strengths and relative weaknesses already features in the school development plan. Standards are rising in writing, especially for boys, and this is a clear indication of the school's potential to improve. School policies, procedures and planning have also improved and there is an excellent team spirit and strong staff commitment much appreciated by parents. The school is well set for future development.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve consistency of outcomes in standards in English, mathematics and science by:
  - embedding the use of assessment procedures already in place
  - refining the way teaching and learning are monitored to focus on specific aspects as opposed to lessons as a whole.
- Improve the dedicated outdoor area for Early Years Foundation Stage children to extend learning opportunities, particularly for physical, social and creative development.

## How good is the overall outcome for individuals and groups of pupils?

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In nearly all the lessons observed, pupils were seen to make at least good progress. This is also borne out by the school's records of pupils' performance. Pupils of all abilities and backgrounds achieve well, with the school adding value to their performance through its good provision. Excellent behaviour, an enthusiasm for learning and the confidence to work independently when required are common to all classes. A particularly good example was in a Years 5 and 6 English lesson where pupils were using visual clues to determine and then describe pirates' characters. The principles of pupils self-assessing and evaluating their own and others' work were applied extremely well. The resulting lively writing, especially from the boys, was well above the average standard. The teacher's orchestration of the whole process was outstanding and the session was immense fun.

Standards have been consistently well above average at the end of Year 2 over the last three years. Standards at the end of Year 6 were well above average for several years until they slipped to average last year. The school's concerted effort to address this issue means that results are set to rise in English and mathematics. In some ways, this has had a negative effect on science where standards, although slightly above average, are lower than last year. Overcoming these inconsistencies is already central to the school's developmental planning and there are positive signs of improvement.

Other key features of pupils' outcomes which contribute to the overall outstanding judgement include:

- high levels of enjoyment of all aspects of school life confirmed by discussions with pupils and the responses of parents to the Ofsted questionnaire
- pupils make a strong contribution to the school as a community through the school council, their roles as monitors and fundraising for charity
- pupils feel safe in school and care about other people
- excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, with pupils acutely aware of right and wrong; good links with the church have a positive impact on pupils' personal development
- attendance is improving and is now broadly average.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and their progress	2
How well do pupils achieve and enjoy their learning?	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
Pupils' attendance	3
How well do pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	2
What is the extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development?	1

## The quality of the school's work

There is a culture of high expectations backed up with a growing and successful use of assessment information to monitor progress and set challenging targets for individual pupils and the school as a whole. This is more evident in some classes and subjects than others. Throughout the school, curriculum planning is good. Together with skilled teaching, this ensures that pupils really enjoy learning and are frequently engrossed in what they have to do. Teachers and their assistants are adept at making sure that pupils learn. Strengths include:

- high quality relationships
- questioning which requires pupils to reason, and answer with explanations or opinions
- good use of teaching assistants, especially but not exclusively, to help deliver support for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities
- marking which makes good reference to pupils' targets and indicates how improvements can be made
- good use of information and communication technology (ICT)
- effective management of learning in mixed-age-and-ability classes
- excellent support for pupils from Traveller and Showman families which includes strong relationships and very good communication with parents. There is a very effective system for providing work for pupils when families are travelling. Take-up levels are high.

During the inspection, about three quarters of the lessons observed had excellent features and none was inadequate. Relative weaknesses, which only affect a small minority of lessons, are when:

- the pace is too slow and pupils remain on the carpet for too long

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

- some vocabulary and terms used by the teacher are not appropriate to the age and ability of the pupils.

The curriculum does more than meet requirements. It is enhanced by visits and visitors and a wide range of extra-curricular opportunities including sport, music, ICT, creative arts, gardening and cooking. Theme weeks, such as those focusing on global environments and China, are popular and are well used as vehicles to bring subjects together. Spanish teaching for all pupils in Years 3 to 6 provides an additional dimension.

Whitminster has strong links with other schools locally. For example, there are opportunities for competitive sport and for pupils noted as gifted and talented to take part in science challenge days.

The level of support, guidance and care provided for pupils is outstanding. Staff really know pupils well. There are very good links with parents which make a substantial contribution not only to excellent pastoral and physical care but to the quality of learning.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

High quality teaching and purposeful learning	2
Effective assessment	2
An appropriate curriculum which meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, provision through partnership with other organisations	2
Support, guidance and care	1

## How effective are leadership and management?

Considerable changes in school organisation have been well managed to the point where there is a stable, experienced staff of teachers and teaching assistants. Monitoring of teaching and learning is effective in identifying areas in need of improvement in whole lessons. It is less effective in picking out specific strengths and relative weaknesses common to a variety of lessons. Good governance effectively supports the clear vision and educational direction set by the headteacher together with the subject leaders. There is a very strong ethos of teamwork and accountability. Resources are well deployed and the impact of decisions taken is carefully analysed in terms of the effects on pupils' progress. Procedures to make sure pupils and staff are safe are rigorously enforced. School self-evaluation is securely based on the contributions of staff and governors. Although too modest with regard to the quality of support, guidance and care, it is accurate and is effective in driving improvements. There are notable strengths in the management of pupils' personal development, curriculum planning to bring learning to life, and how standards in English have been improved. However, some inconsistencies in outcomes in standards achieved have resulted from reduced emphasis on some subjects, sometimes at the expense of others. For example, the standards in English in Key Stage 2 have improved but those in science have declined. Provision for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is consistently good. This, coupled with excellent support for pupils from Traveller and Showman

backgrounds, is a fine example of how the school ensures that all pupils are fully included in school life.

Community cohesion is good and reflects the school's success at establishing itself at the heart of the local community. The school leaders ensure that pupils' understanding of faiths and lifestyles in other countries is successfully fostered. Pupils' awareness of cultures within the United Kingdom is not as far advanced, but the school is developing links with schools and communities in other differing areas. Senior leaders appreciate the need to monitor the impact of the school's strategy more closely to identify areas for development.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

Communicating ambition and driving improvement	1
Promoting equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination	1
Ensuring that safeguarding procedures are effective	2
Ensuring that the governing body provides effective challenge and support so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities are met	2
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	2
Ensuring the school contributes to community cohesion	2
Deploying resources to achieve value for money	2

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make good progress in Reception and reach at least the expected standards in all required areas of learning. Children are successfully encouraged to show independence. They are emerging as readers and writers and, through counting, sorting and sequencing, are given a good basis for mathematical development. Teaching and support are good. Children are introduced to school routines and encouraged to learn through an excellent balance of structured play and teacher-directed activities. Children's needs and progress are carefully assessed and this information is used effectively to plan the next steps of learning. The classroom is well organised and presents a stimulating environment. The outside area is well resourced and used to its full potential. However, it is too small to provide sufficient opportunities for some physical, social and creative activities that children can choose freely for themselves and this restricts some aspects of their development.

Provision is well led and managed. As a result, children settle in extremely well and their personal, social and emotional development is outstanding. They quickly learn to share, take turns and be considerate. Relationships on all levels are outstanding and behaviour is excellent. Children are happy and enthusiastic and obviously feel safe and well cared for. Parents are extremely pleased with the way the school cares for their children. 'We couldn't want for a better start. My child can't wait for the holidays to end!' sums up the positive views.



How good are the outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2
What is the quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2
How effectively is the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	2
Overall effectiveness: how well does the setting/school meet the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2

## Views of parents and carers

Over half the parents or carers of pupils at the school responded to the Ofsted questionnaire. Their views are overwhelmingly positive and there was no consensus of negative comments. Parents are particularly pleased with the impact on their children's learning of changes made over the last two years. The quality of teaching, care, support for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, standards reached, and the school's leadership and management are all highly valued. Parents are adamant that their children enjoy school and are confident that they are well provided for. The findings of the inspection support these views.

## 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 2007/8, 15% 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 2007/8, 49% of schools were judged good.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils. In 2007/8, 32% 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 2007/8, 5% 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.

27 February 2009

Dear Pupils



Inspection of Whitminster Endowed Church of England Primary School,  
Whitminster GL13 7PJ

It was a treat to visit your school. Thank you for your warm welcome.

I was very impressed by your excellent behaviour and the way you are so keen to learn. Well done to everyone, especially the school council, for being so helpful and telling me all about the school. It was a pleasure to see how happy you are and to hear how much you enjoy learning.

You can be proud of your school. It is a good one.

Here are some of the highlights:

- Children in Reception get off to a flying start.
- Standards are usually better than in most other schools. You make good progress.
- You are very successfully helped to grow up as caring and sensible young people.
- Teachers and support staff are good at their jobs and are careful to give you work at just the right level.
- Staff make sure you know your targets and show you how to improve your work.
- The school takes excellent care of you and makes sure you are safe.

The school is well run. The headteacher, staff and governors make a very good team. They know what is going well and have worked out what the school needs to do to be even better. I have asked them to concentrate on the following things:

- Make sure that standards are always good and that one subject does not suffer while staff concentrate on another. For example, you are doing better in writing this year but science standards have gone down. Last year, mathematics went up but English went down.
- Give children in Reception more space outside to learn and play in.

Best wishes for the future.

Yours faithfully

Mike Burghart  
Lead inspector

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