

Mitcheldean Endowed Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115693
Local Authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	326249
Inspection date	6 May 2009
Reporting inspector	Patricia Davies

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	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	206
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	Glenda White-Miller
Headteacher	Julia Dowding
Date of previous school inspection	6 July 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Hawker Hill Mitcheldean GL17 0BS
Telephone number	01594 542240

Age group	4–11
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Fax number

01594 542240

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors, who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues.

- The impact of work to improve pupils' achievement in relation to writing in Years 1 and 2 and mathematics in Years 3 to 6.
- How successfully pupils are encouraged to be active participants in their learning.
- The impact of the work of middle managers to improve teaching and learning and performance in subject areas.

Evidence was gathered from visits to lessons, assessment information, pupils' work, school documentation, questionnaires returned by parents and discussion with staff, pupils and governor representatives, including the acting chair of the governing body. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspection found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Most pupils attending Mitcheldean Endowed Primary School are from White British families. A very small number come from minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage into the Reception class. A pre-school group runs two half-day sessions a week from the school site during the summer term. This group is called Mitcheldean Early Learners and is not run by the school's governing body. A new headteacher joined the school in January 2009. The vice chair of the governing body has recently taken on the role of chair on a temporary basis. A new extension to the school's accommodation has just been completed.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Mitcheldean Endowed is a good school. It is a friendly, caring community where pupils are very well known individually and all members of staff form a strong and committed team. Parents wrote to say how much they appreciate these qualities and recognise the positive outcomes in their children's happiness, self-esteem and good progress. Its church links are acknowledged by the school to provide an invaluable foundation for its work and values. Pupils' enjoyment of lessons is clear in their ready attention and willingness to get down to work, and these positive attitudes reflect their good personal development. They particularly like the school's wide range of clubs and activities, which include many different sports. While one or two parents have concerns about bullying, pupils express the view that this behaviour is not common, and they are confident that the school keeps them safe and secure. A dip in attendance has led the school to take a firm line on holidays taken during term-time.

Pupils prosper academically as they move through the school. Children make satisfactory progress in Reception, and then move on at a good pace so that all pupils achieve well. Consequently, standards are above average at the end of Year 6 in English, mathematics and science, and have been consistently at this level over time. A concerted drive to improve writing, particularly in Years 1 and 2, has proved successful, with higher test results predicted for the current Year 2 pupils in this subject. While the focus on mathematics has been more recent, progress has accelerated in mathematics in Years 3 to 6, and is now good. These improvements have been gained through good teaching, characterised by a sharp focus on basic literacy skills and securing important mathematical knowledge. Pupils in Year 2, for example, very confidently juggle the demands of sentence construction, accurate punctuation and neat joined handwriting, whilst also putting events in the right order and making sure the content is interesting! One-to-one support for those with learning difficulties ensures they keep pace with others. Writing 'blurbs' for the book covers of traditional fairy tales or devising questions to ask the princess about the frog add that extra bit of fun and imagination to the school's strong curriculum.

However, not all teaching contains this added element of excitement. Opportunities for pupils to take a more active role in their learning, by using 'real' information that they have collected themselves, for example, are too few. Limited activity of this kind also constrains the chance for pupils to work together, share ideas and support each other's learning. When practical work and investigation takes place – like programming a computerised 'toy' to perform a series of turns – pupils collaborate effectively to get it right and are extremely enthusiastic.

Several parents wrote to praise the school's leadership. The new headteacher is actively building on the school's many existing strengths to secure even greater effectiveness. Staff are right behind her and full of enthusiasm and ideas. Middle management, including subject leadership, is developing well. Reorganising leadership responsibilities, to manage smaller 'teams' of staff, is enabling the school to focus even more sharply and efficiently on further developments to teaching and sharing good practice across the school. Visits to lessons, checks on pupils' work and careful tracking of progress give senior and subject leaders an accurate view of the school's strengths and where to take action. The impact of recent academic improvements, together with this clear understanding of where to go next, gives the school a good basis for moving on. An already successful curriculum for personal, social and health education has been extended since the school's last inspection, particularly in providing pupils with a greater understanding of keeping safe, healthy and fit. Sessions with local police about internet safety, for example,

provoked a bank of thoughtful and mature responses, and these will be used also for discussion at home. Marking is helpful and supportive in guiding pupils on how to improve their work. Learning targets are now used more widely in everyday tasks, and are increasing the opportunities for pupils to evaluate how well they are doing.

Governors are well informed of the school's academic and other priorities, and offer good support. They ensure the school has the resources it needs, to spur on the development of information and communication technology (ICT) for example. As a result of this initiative, pupils now benefit from a suite of computers and staff use new technology confidently during lessons. Community cohesion is satisfactory. The school is closely linked with its local community. It has a good understanding of the needs of its pupils, and this knowledge has prompted its use of visits and visitors to extend pupils' experience and understanding of other faiths and cultures represented in this country and around the world.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Attainment on entry to Reception varies, but is largely as expected. Satisfactory progress during this first year means that children enter Year 1 with broadly average standards. Welfare arrangements are good. Children in this group benefit from the same thorough procedures and knowledge of individual need that mark out the school's strong levels of care and protection elsewhere in the school. Close links with pre-school groups and induction arrangements through the term before the children start school, enable them to settle in well and create valuable links with parents.

Daily routines and expectations of, for example, lining up, sharing and taking turns, are well established. Children are keen to talk about their activities and ask questions. They respond well to directed group sessions. For example, they listen carefully when learning the sounds of individual letters and those blended together, and recognise many of them. However, opportunities for children to try out things for themselves, and create greater independence of learning, are sometimes missed during lessons. The school is also very aware that its new dedicated outdoor area is not providing all the chances it should to encourage children's initiative and independence. While plans are in place to ensure its full use, children's outdoor education is currently constrained because they do not have direct access from their classroom to its facilities.

What the school should do to improve further

- Give pupils more opportunities to take an active part in their learning, especially through practical and investigative tasks, working together and using information they have collected for themselves.
- Provide more opportunities for reception aged children to develop independence in their learning in and out of the classroom, including making full use of the new outdoor area.

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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?	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?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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?	3
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?	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/or disabilities make progress	2

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	3
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	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
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**

7 May 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Mitcheldean Endowed Primary School, Mitcheldean, Gloucestershire GL17 0BS

Thank you for welcoming us to your school. We enjoyed our visit and seeing you at work in your lessons. All the things we learned while we were with you showed that this is a good school. We were pleased to hear that you like your school, and many of your parents wrote to tell us that too. Your overall good progress means that you do well in English, maths and science at Year 6, which gives you a good start for moving on to secondary school.

Here are some other important things about you and your school.

- You concentrate well in lessons, work hard and particularly enjoy exciting tasks, like programming the 'roamer'.
- Staff know all of you very well and take good care of you.
- Your new learning targets involve you in looking at how well you are doing and how you can improve.
- You have lots of opportunities to keep fit, and to learn about how to keep safe – when you are using the computer, for instance.
- Staff and governors are working hard to improve things even more – including getting everything organised very quickly for you in the new buildings.

This is what your school has been asked to do to make things even better.

- Give you many more opportunities to learn through investigating and finding out for yourselves, and through working with others so you can share ideas and learn together.
- Make sure that children in Reception have plenty of chances to try things out for themselves indoors in the classroom, and in the new outdoor area.

With very best wishes for the future.

Yours faithfully

Patricia Davies

Lead inspector