

Miserden Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115692
Local Authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	331601
Inspection dates	7–8 October 2009
Reporting inspector	Mo Roberts HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	52
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Jessop
Headteacher	Caroline Holcombe
Date of previous school inspection	8 June 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an additional inspector. They observed the school's work, and evaluated the development plan and new draft self-evaluation. Nine lessons were observed as well as two acts of worship, lunchtime break and home-time routines. The school council also met an inspector. Approximately half the parents returned questionnaires and these were analysed together with staff and pupil returns.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following issues:

- how far teachers, leaders and managers had improved pupils' standards
- the level of involvement of the governors in monitoring the school
- the degree of parental confidence in the school
- if the notice to improve could be removed or if the school required special measures to ensure it improved further.

Information about the school

The school is much smaller than average. Pupils come from the village and other local small rural communities. Almost all are White British and all speak English as their first language. The number of pupils fluctuates and the school roll is down as a larger than average group recently left for secondary school. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average. Pupils are taught in three classes, each containing more than one year group. The school currently has an acting headteacher.

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

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2006, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement. The acting headteacher, governors and teaching staff have worked effectively together to deal with all the issues raised at the last inspection. The local authority and the diocese have also offered the school strong support. Relationships are better throughout the school. The governing body is functioning correctly and is increasingly able to challenge the school to ensure pupils make sufficient progress and standards rise. School data show that standards improved substantially in the 2009 national tests for Year 6.

Pupils reach above average standards and their progress is at least satisfactory. All age groups and abilities are appropriately challenged in most respects; although there are still a few pupils making up for past underachievement in mathematics. Teaching and learning have improved right across the school, pupils now have individual targets and most work appropriately matches their ability level. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress and like their peers none left without reaching the national standard in English, mathematics and science in 2009. The curriculum has been substantially developed and is well adapted to meet pupils' varied needs. The provision of a holiday club and a wider range of extra activities also assist parents. They are satisfied with the school and appreciate the happy 'family feel' which it offers. Pupils' spiritual development continues to be a strength of the school. Parents are less satisfied with the information given about pupils' progress as they do not feel it is clear. Pupils are also not always sure how to improve their work because the next steps in learning are not consistently explained in the teacher's marking.

Effective leadership and management by the acting headteacher, well supported by local authority advisers, ensure staff now work as a team and that all systems for monitoring the school's work are fit for purpose. The school's self-evaluation is accurate and shows a clear awareness of where things need to develop further. Consequently the new headteacher will have a solid base to build on and the school's capacity to improve is therefore satisfactory. There are suitable plans to ensure appropriate ongoing support when the new headteacher is appointed, to sustain the improvements recently made. The lack of direct access to the outside for the Early Years Foundation Stage children undermines the quality of provision for their independent learning. The governors are currently working to address this problem with the planning authorities.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

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- Monitor the planning and the pupils' work to ensure that the tasks set in mathematics are sufficiently challenging for those capable of the highest attainment.
- Ensure the support programme planned by the local authority to help the new headteacher is effectively implemented so improvements are sustained.
- Develop the way pupils and parents know about how well pupils are making progress so that they always know what the next steps towards improvement are.
- Extend the opportunities for active outdoor learning for the youngest pupils.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

The apparent decline in standards which was largely caused by a group of pupils with learning difficulties, who had progressed well but lowered the average score, has been reversed. The group leaving in 2009 was more typical and their results were good. Although pupils typically reach or exceed the national standards by the end of Year 6 the concern was previously that too few of those who could, achieved the higher levels. Proportionately, more pupils reached the higher Level 5 in English and science and a few, but still not enough, also did so in mathematics. Those who find learning especially difficult are well supported so that in 2009 all reached the nationally expected Level 4. Year 2 pupils solidly attained the level expected for their age nationally but none reached the higher Level 3 in 2009. The current work in Year 3 demonstrates good potential for these pupils to make rapid progress as they mature. This was especially noticeable in a mathematics lesson observed.

Pupils behave well. They are motivated and respond well to all staff. They collaborate effectively in groups and most get on well independently. Older pupils benefit especially from the good teaching in information and communication technology, such as the work seen on evaluating the persuasive nature of a film trailer. The steady, well-planned steps observed in their literacy and mathematics lessons are also helping them to catch up rapidly. Their future economic well-being is strongly supported by the skills and confidence that they gain. Pupils demonstrate a good knowledge of how to keep healthy and safe. They make a positive contribution within the school and are proud of the school council's impact. They show a developing awareness of wider world issues and are keen to help those less fortunate than themselves. Their spiritual, moral and social development is good and they know about cultures other than their own as the school often hosts visiting families from overseas.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is generally satisfactory and elements are increasingly good. Teaching in Year 1 ensures pupils enjoy their lessons because it challenges their thinking skills through appropriate practical activities. Teaching is being adjusted appropriately to meet the wide diversity of needs in Years 2 and 3, for example these pupils are attentive during their well-planned and briskly paced mathematics activities. All teachers use the interactive whiteboards and other modern technology to good effect. They demonstrate versatility, teaching all subjects securely including French. The oldest pupils enjoy their teacher's lively approach to literacy and mathematics and show maturity in getting on while teaching is carefully and effectively focused on different groups within the class. More regular assessment helps staff to pitch most work appropriately for groups within their classes. Those requiring extra help get good support. Teaching assistants play a vital role in ensuring all pupils have full access to the curriculum.

The enriched curriculum is well planned to avoid repetition in the mixed-age classes and pupils enjoy their work both in school and with schools in the cluster. They experience numerous cultural and sporting activities that broaden their experience. Pupils relish the wide range of after-school clubs and help maintain the lovely garden.

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory overall. They have good features, including the strong support given to vulnerable pupils and their families through the school's partnerships with various agencies. There is a very welcoming learning atmosphere across the school, so that pupils settle in happily. Steps have been taken to encourage attendance and ensure that this is above average. Pupils now have individual targets. The weaker areas are that although pupils have appropriate individual targets, they do

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not always understand what they need to do to improve and secondly the way parents are informed about how well pupils are progressing does not always give them the information that they need to help their children.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	3

How effective are leadership and management?

Leadership and management have improved significantly. The acting headteacher is to be commended for the way she has successfully brought everyone together with a common purpose and has quietly driven through substantial improvements. The experienced teachers each have responsibility for a number of subjects and have developed a better overview of the latest expectations and developments in their areas of responsibility. They have had training to begin reviewing the quality of these subjects right across the whole age range. This gives everyone a stronger feeling of working as a team, as well as pinpointing where more attention is needed. Aspirations are higher and staff are clearer about the steps involved in helping pupils to reach their full potential. The school development plan is carefully targeted for the next year. Equality is satisfactorily promoted although the very uneven size of cohorts sometimes makes it hard to balance the needs of the different ages. The school is aware of the need to ensure equal curriculum provision for all age groups. The community is pulling together well and community cohesion is now satisfactory since the headteacher improved the way everyone involved in the school cooperates. Pupils are encouraged to participate in the community and learn about other cultures appropriately. Governors increasingly hold the school to account. They have ensured that recruitment procedures have been improved, so that they are now of good quality and meet all requirements. The headteacher and governors know that the help given to parents to feel welcome in the school was not good enough. A recent improvement is a series of forums, to give parents more input and ability to contribute. These are helping parents to feel more involved and better able to support their children's learning and well-being.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms	
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children usually enter with skills above those expected for their age. They progress satisfactorily and leave with above average standards. Safety is a high priority, with younger children supported well when, for example, they join the whole school at playtime. They learn to keep healthy through routines such as washing their hands before eating. Children settle well into the mixed-age class with Year 1. They participate happily in cooperative group activities as well as whole-school events such as assembly. The lack of immediate access to outdoor learning from their classroom restricts the range of independent choices a child can make. Arrangements are in place to give children opportunities to work outside in supervised groups. Teaching and learning are satisfactory and have good elements. The room is invitingly arranged with a good role-play area but opportunities for children to genuinely develop and follow their own interests are insufficient at present especially because of the lack of direct access outdoors. There is good provision for information and communication technology at an appropriate height that invites children to explore and gain confidence. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Assessment systems are in place that give staff a satisfactory picture of each child's progress. This ensures that any weaker areas that individual children have are identified and dealt with promptly. New support staff work well with children but are waiting for specific training on the Early Years Foundation Stage, which is planned to take place soon.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

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Views of parents and carers

More than 50% of parents had no negative comments about any aspect of the school, showing a good level of satisfaction. The concerns that were raised included a perceived lack of information given about pupils' progress. Parents were not confident that they are adequately informed by the school even though there are reporting systems in place. Inspectors agree and this has been raised as a key issue for the school. A slightly smaller group were concerned about the progress in one class. Inspectors found that pupils' needs are especially diverse in this class, but that the teaching programme is being satisfactorily adapted to support pupils. Overall, those parents responding were pleased with the way the school has developed recently. A typical comment was, 'The school is much improved from this time last year. It has a much more 'child friendly' atmosphere! The kids don't want to leave at the end of the day and still want to run around the playground with their friends!' The inspectors agree with this point of view.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Miserden Church of England Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 28 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 52 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	16	64	9	36	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	16	64	9	36	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	5	20	12	48	7	28	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	6	24	10	40	5	20	1	4
The teaching is good at this school	5	20	12	48	4	16	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	7	28	17	68	1	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	8	32	17	68	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	5	20	18	72	1	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	4	16	17	68	2	8	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	5	20	17	68	2	8	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	9	36	11	44	4	16	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	9	36	12	48	3	12	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	11	44	10	40	2	8	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
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.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
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.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



9 October 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Miserden Church of England Primary School, Stroud, GL6 7JA

Thank you to the members of the school council who came to talk to me as well as to those who filled in the pupils' questionnaire. I enjoyed seeing you at work and play and agree with you that you go to a happy school where pupils are kind to each other. Your school is giving you a satisfactory standard of education and no longer needs to be in a special group that is checked on so often.

Some other good features of your school are that:

- pupils in Year 6 reach the nationally expected standards in English and mathematics and more pupils have begun to reach the higher level
- it really helps those who need extra help to learn
- it helps all of you to try and be healthy and to keep safe
- it listens to your opinions and ideas
- it is more welcoming to your parents than it used to be
- your headteacher, the teaching team and the governors have made a good start to make sure that your school gets even better
- you sing well and have lovely assemblies so you have time to reflect on important ideas.

In order to improve further, I have asked the school to:

- help those who could learn faster reach the higher levels in mathematics by the end of Year 6
- make it clear to you and your parents how well you are doing so you know exactly what to do to improve.
- make sure that the helpful support that the school is getting now continues when you have a new headteacher.

Please help by trying hard in class and not being distracted by anyone else. I wish you a happy healthy term and hope that your presents get safely off on the journey to Russia.

Best wishes

Mo Roberts

Her Majesty's Inspector

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