

# Slimbridge Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	115536
<b>Local Authority</b>	Gloucestershire
<b>Inspection number</b>	338601
<b>Inspection dates</b>	13–14 October 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Joyce Cox

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	95
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Catherine Cox
<b>Headteacher</b>	Anthony Mitchell
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	5 October 2006
<b>School address</b>	St John's Road Slimbridge Gloucestershire GL2 7DD
<b>Telephone number</b>	01453 890216
<b>Fax number</b>	01453 899085
<b>Email address</b>	head@slimbridge.gloucs.sch.uk

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Royal Exchange Buildings  
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited eight lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, looked at pupil-tracking data, school improvement planning documents, safeguarding documentation, pupils' work and analysed 34 questionnaires from parents.

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

- the reasons for the decline in attainment at Key Stage 2 over the last two years and the success of the school's actions to remedy this
- the progress made by pupils in writing to determine whether any actions taken to improve teaching and learning in order to raise standards have been sufficiently robust
- the impact of the curriculum and assessment on the learning and progress of different groups of pupils
- the effectiveness of the monitoring by the headteacher, senior leaders and governors to address perceived weaknesses.

## Information about the school

This smaller than average-sized primary school serves the village of Slimbridge and the surrounding area. The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage and all pupils have English as their home language. An average proportion of the pupils have special educational needs which are mainly related to moderate learning difficulties. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught alongside pupils in Year 1.

At the start of September 2009, the substantive headteacher took up a two-year secondment working with the local authority. The school is being led by the deputy headteacher for the duration of this absence. This is the second time that the deputy has been acting since 2006. A newly qualified teacher joined the school in September 2009 to fill the vacancy created by this temporary arrangement. The Early Years Foundation Stage is now staffed with a job share partnership, and two teachers have recently moved from teaching a Year 2/3 class and are now teaching Year 6 pupils.

**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

The acting headteacher has an accurate knowledge and understanding of the school's strengths and has correctly identified major priorities for improvement. He is setting a clear direction to address these issues including improving teachers' use of assessment information to plan pupils' learning. In recent times, there has been significant improvement in key areas, such as the way pupils' achievement is assessed and tracked. These improvements have not yet had time to have their full impact in raising pupils' achievement beyond current satisfactory levels. In some lessons, insufficient use is made of assessment information to plan work to meet pupils' widely differing ages and abilities or to cater for some pupils' specific learning needs. This is one of the main reasons why pupils make satisfactory rather than good progress in all subjects.

The school has improved the provision for outdoor learning for Reception children. However, there are shortcomings in the learning environment, planning and provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage. Children make satisfactory progress in acquiring basic skills but they do not always have enough opportunities to select their own learning, to investigate and explore or to engage in purposeful play.

The school is a happy, friendly place where pupils behave well and form good relationships with their peers and adults. Pupils feel safe and the school takes all the necessary steps to ensure this. They enjoy a broad curriculum in which good use is made of local facilities such as Slimbridge Wildfowl Centre and the Sharpness Canal to enrich pupils' learning. However, the organisation, pace and challenge within some lessons is not as good as it might be. In addition, some pupils miss valuable curriculum and learning opportunities when they leave the class to participate in other tasks such as music tuition or computing.

The acting headteacher is well respected by parents, pupils and staff. He is dynamic and approachable and leads by example. As a result, staff are motivated to examine their practice and identify areas in need of improvement. However, while there is now an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses within teaching, historically some aspects of school self-evaluation and monitoring have lacked the necessary rigour to promote rapid improvement and raise standards. Governors are very supportive and keen to improve the school. However, they have not played a sufficiently robust role in calling the school to account and in ensuring all policies and procedures are up to date.

There is now a renewed vigour and determination within the school. The acting headteacher is quickly implementing a number of improvements such as examining ways of organising the curriculum, reviewing the setting arrangements and speedily revising some out of date policies and procedures. Standards at the end of Year 6

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improved in 2009, especially in the number of pupils attaining the higher Level 5 in English and mathematics. All of these factors indicate that the school's capacity for sustained improvement is satisfactory.

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

- Raise the quality of teaching in the school from satisfactory to good by:
  - ensuring that teachers make consistently good use of assessment data to plan pupils' learning
  - providing challenging learning tasks to accelerate pupils' progress
  - ensuring pupils' learning is not disrupted by unnecessary absence from literacy and numeracy lessons.
- Accelerate children's progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
  - improving planning and assessment in all the areas of learning
  - developing a more challenging, stimulating and exciting curriculum so that
  - children can select their own activities, investigate, explore and enjoy purposeful structured play indoors and outdoors.
- Ensure that the acting headteacher, subject leaders and governors play a full part in monitoring the school's work, identifying improvement priorities and evaluating the impact of their actions to raise attainment and achievement.

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

Pupils clearly enjoy school, attend regularly and say their teachers help them to learn in 'an interesting and fun way'. Older pupils diligently undertake duties around the school and show high levels of care for the younger children. Pupils have a good knowledge of healthy eating and say they enjoy the wide range of sporting activities on offer. Many pupils and staff participate enthusiastically and energetically in the successful early morning outdoor 'Wake and Shake' sessions. The strong sense of school community, uplifting assemblies and close links with the local church contribute well to pupils' good behaviour and spiritual, moral and social development.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress in their learning and good progress in their personal and social development because of sensitive support by teachers and support staff. The school's recently improved systems for tracking pupils' progress, coupled with improved use of data by staff to identify those who are falling behind, is increasingly ensuring early interventions to help pupils catch up. Boys and girls achieve equally as the school monitors progress by gender carefully and takes effective action when differences are identified.

Standards are above average in science and broadly average in English and mathematics, representing satisfactory and sometimes good progress from pupils' starting points. Many older pupils are keen communicators and are confident and articulate. For example, pupils talk about their 'pleasant learning environment' and

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accurately describe their teachers' marking as 'constructive criticism'. Among younger pupils, the recent emphasis on the teaching of letters and sounds is beginning to have a positive impact on standards of both writing and reading. Pupils work well together and their sound academic and good personal skills means they are satisfactorily prepared for later life and learning.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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

### How effective is the provision?

All teaching is at least satisfactory and some is good, especially in Year 6. Features of the best teaching include high expectations of what pupils can achieve, good pace and interesting resources that challenge and engage pupils. In a minority of lessons, teaching does not challenge pupils sufficiently enough and progress slows. Some teachers do not use assessment information effectively enough to match work to pupils' various needs and capabilities. Most pupils have appropriate targets for literacy and numeracy which they are beginning to use to improve their work. Some teachers are encouraging pupils to assess their own learning and each other's work. However, this good practice is not yet consistent throughout the school.

<sup>1</sup> 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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The curriculum provides a broad range of learning opportunities. The acting headteacher has introduced a number of changes so that pupils can practise their key skills during investigations and topics. For example, the current whole-school topic on ancient Egypt has excited and inspired many pupils who confidently describe the process of mummification. However, the organisation of some lessons does not always promote sustained learning. For example, the complex setting arrangements in Key Stage 2 means pupils miss valuable learning time moving from one class to another.

Pastoral care is effective and is consistent across the school, so that pupils are confident to ask for help when it is needed. Those who need extra support with personal and emotional difficulties are given good support so that problems can be resolved or 'nipped in the bud'. This enables these pupils to learn effectively.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

**How effective are leadership and management?**

The acting headteacher has a clear vision for the school and is starting to drive forward school improvement with determination and vigour. However, he has only been in post for a few weeks and these actions have yet to have a full impact on pupils' achievements. In addition, some of the school self-evaluation systems and policies are out of date and require urgent revision. Until recently the impact of monitoring to improve teaching and learning has been limited as it has not been done with sufficient regularity. However, the acting headteacher has made a good start at reviewing and updating policies and systems. Analysis of data and the tracking of pupils' progress are helping to identify slow progress or underachievement. For example, effective action has been taken to improve standards in writing as a result of this. Staff and governors succeed in ensuring the school provides equality of opportunity and is free from discrimination. Consequently, all pupils learn at least satisfactorily and feel fully involved in all activities. A good team spirit has been quickly established among staff and all are ambitious to improve. Good use is made of governors' knowledge and expertise to support the school but there is insufficient rigour in their monitoring of school self-evaluation, standards and pupils' achievement.

The school works well with a range of partners such as local businesses and other schools. Parents are strongly supportive of the school and are particularly complimentary about the acting headteacher's approachability and positive nature. These strong partnerships are used effectively to enhance pupils' learning and their

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personal and social development. At the time of the inspection, procedures to ensure the appropriateness of all adults who work within the school were rigorous. However because some of the safeguarding policies require updating safeguarding is judged to be satisfactory overall. All other safeguarding regulations are met and the school takes care to ensure the well-being of all pupils. One indication of this is the pupils' clear understanding of how to use the internet safely. The school's commitment to achieving community cohesion within school and with the local community is good. This is reflected in the school's inclusive ethos; visitors are made to feel very welcome and pupils show good tolerance and understanding of each other's differences. However, pupils' knowledge and understanding of being part of the United Kingdom and wider global communities are less well developed.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

**Early Years Foundation Stage**

Children join the school with skills that are in line with expected levels for children of this age. They make satisfactory progress and standards are broadly average in all the areas of learning at the start of Year 1. Recent improvements to the learning environment have enabled children to have access to an outdoor area. However, some of the learning activities, both indoors and outdoors, lack challenge and excitement. For example, activities are normally set out for the children and this restricts their opportunities for selecting their own resources or initiating their own learning. Role-play areas provide satisfactory opportunities for children to develop their understanding of the wider world, but are not sufficiently inviting or interesting to extend the children's social and language skills. There is a good emphasis on the development of basic skills,



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such as phonics, to help children's early reading and writing skills.

Adults have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the learning and welfare requirements and guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage. Children normally behave well, but on some occasions can become boisterous when their work and play activities lack structure and adults do not participate in their play. Adults use a satisfactory range of teaching methods and there are adequate resources. However, the furniture in the classroom does not support effective Early Years practice. For example, most of the furniture has doors, so children cannot see or easily select the resources to develop their independence and self-reliance. Staff are developing satisfactory procedures for observing children and assessing their progress, and are beginning to use this information in their planning to meet children's individual needs. However, in some activities, children receive the same learning and play experiences and these do not challenge older and more able children or consistently meet the additional needs of others. Policies and procedures are adequate as staff become increasingly familiar with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. There are good relationships and partnerships with parents so children have a smooth start to school. The recent addition of an outdoor area is evidence that an awareness of best practice is developing, although staff know that much work remains to be done to improve planning and organisation. The acting headteacher is working in close cooperation with the local authority to secure much needed rapid improvement in provision, leadership and outcomes.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

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

**Views of parents and carers**

Parents were overwhelmingly supportive of the school, which they describe as 'warm', 'welcoming' and 'a very caring and enjoyable place to attend and therefore a good place to learn'. Inspection evidence supports the parents' view that the school provides good care and support to its pupils. A very small minority of parents had concerns about the progress their children were making, pupils' behaviour and the way the school helps them to support their children's learning at home. The findings of the inspection reflect parents' concerns about pupils' rates of progress throughout the school. Behaviour was judged to be good by inspectors and pupils. Concerns, praise and constructive comments raised by parents were shared with the headteacher.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Slimbridge 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 12 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 34 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 95 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	22	65	11	32	1	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	24	71	10	29	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	11	32	23	68	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	15	44	11	32	3	9	1	3
The teaching is good at this school	18	53	16	47	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	17	50	14	41	3	9	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	16	47	16	47	2	6	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)	12	35	19	56	1	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	15	44	15	44	1	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	13	38	15	44	1	3	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	21	62	11	32	2	6	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	19	56	15	44	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	21	62	12	35	1	3	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"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
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.**



15 October 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Slimbridge Primary School, Slimbridge, GL2 7DD.

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school. We enjoyed coming into lessons and talking with you about school life. You told us that you like school and that teachers are helpful and friendly. You also enjoy all the clubs and visits that are organised for you.

These are the things we found out:

- You enjoy school, feel safe and your behaviour is good.
- Teachers help you to make satisfactory progress in your work.
- There are a good number of clubs and visits and visitors.
- You have good relationships with your teachers and you work hard for them.
- You go to a caring school. Everyone has your best interests at heart and wants you to be safe and happy and to do as well as you can.
- The acting headteacher is a good leader and, together with the staff, he is working hard to make sure the school gets better.

We have asked the acting headteacher, staff and governors to do three main things to help the school improve further:

- Help teachers to make sure you always have good lessons and make good progress.
- Make sure that the Reception children have more opportunities to explore and learn through play.
- Make sure that staff and governors know what are the strengths and areas for improvement in the school and act quickly to improve any weaknesses.

You can help by always working hard, attending school regularly and continuing to behave well.

We wish you all the very best for the future.

Joyce Cox

Lead inspector

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