

Clearwell CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115638
Local Authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	338627
Inspection dates	29–30 September 2009
Reporting inspector	David Carrington

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	50
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Teri Chance
Headteacher	Chris El-Shawk
Date of previous school inspection	2 October 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited seven lessons, and held meetings with governors, members of staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at curriculum planning, information from the monitoring of pupils' progress and the quality of provision, a sample of work from the previous school year, assessment and attendance data and school improvement planning. Thirty parental questionnaires were evaluated

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

- attainment and progress in reading and mathematics, including the degree of challenge for higher attainers
- how far leaders and governors challenge weaknesses and bring about improvement
- the effectiveness of work to eliminate persistent absence
- the safeguarding of all children
- the promotion of community cohesion, especially through pupils' links with groups elsewhere in Britain.

Information about the school

Clearwell CofE Primary School is much smaller than most schools for pupils aged 4 to 11. There are significantly more girls than boys. All the pupils speak English as their first language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average, with most having speech, language and communication or behavioural, social and emotional difficulties. Over a quarter of the pupils join or leave the school part way through their primary education. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are included in Class 1 along with pupils from Years 1 and 2.

The school has been awarded Global School and Healthy School status.

Clearwell Nursery is a private nursery and operates from rooms on the site. It is not managed by the governors and was not inspected by the team.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school. Pupils enjoy their time at the school, work hard and make good progress. Standards are rising and the school has made good improvement since its previous inspection. The most important strengths of the school are:

- Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage because their work is well matched to their needs and fires their imaginations. They talk enthusiastically about their activities and have an outstanding understanding of keeping safe.
- Progress is good in Key Stage 1 and 2. Pupils who do not complete all of their primary education at Clearwell share this good progress, as do pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Boys achieve as successfully as the girls, particularly in writing. The chief reason for pupils' good progress is because they have lots of opportunities for hands-on learning.
- Standards vary from year to year. This is because of the small numbers in each year group. At present, attainment is a little above average.
- Attendance rates are rising. There are now fewer persistent absentees than last year. The school has good procedures to improve attendance.
- Pupils behave well, work productively and neatly, and develop into very pleasant children who are polite and sensible.
- Teaching is good in all three classes. It has improved since the last inspection. Teachers and teaching assistants know the needs of the pupils and planning is based on the provision of different tasks for each ability and year group within the class which helps match the work to individual needs.
- The curriculum is good. The writing curriculum is outstanding and has resulted in impressive results in some years in the school. The quality of pupils' writing is very good. There are good opportunities for pupils to extend their skills and knowledge in the many clubs, notably the Gardening Club, and through the visits programme and when visitors share their expertise.
- The school gives outstanding care to the pupils, which parents and carers and their children recognise. Measures to safeguard pupils are good and are reviewed regularly.
- The school is well led and managed. All staff work effectively to improve provision and pupils' progress in all subjects. The headteacher provides firm direction and high expectations. The school sets ambitious targets and priorities for improvement and leaders are determined to eliminate any weakness. Governors are growing in expertise and provide satisfactory challenge to ensure the school is as successful as possible. They make sure all statutory requirements are met.

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- The promotion of community cohesion is good, with some very effective links with people overseas, especially the Carteret Islands, that help pupils increase their understanding of different societies and cultures.
- There is good capacity to continue the school's improvement because procedures to check and evaluate the quality of provision and pupils' progress are rigorous and reliable. The school's priorities are well chosen.

School leaders agree that there are two key areas for improvement.

- The challenge for the higher attainers is not always as sharp as it might be. While planning is based on the needs of different abilities, it focuses more on the tasks to be completed than on the skills and knowledge the pupils are expected to learn. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels in national tests and assessments has not been consistently high enough and sometimes pupils have missed the higher grade by a single mark.
- The quality of marking is good because it indicates what has been learned and how to improve the work, but this is not capitalised upon enough. There are not enough opportunities for pupils to self-evaluate their work through written comments, respond to teachers' marking of their work or to talk with others and their teacher about the progress made in each lesson.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the challenge for higher attaining pupils to ensure that results reflect their potential
- making sure that planning includes identification of the skills and knowledge to be learned
- using the progress-tracking information to maintain a close watch on the consistency of their achievement.
- In order to ensure that improvements are sustainable, a sensible timetable for the full completion of this improvement would be Easter 2011.
- Provide more opportunities for pupils to reflect on their learning and to make judgements about their own progress and what they must do next to improve
- giving pupils regular opportunities to make written evaluations of their own progress in English, mathematics and science
- from time to time, encouraging them to write a response to the teacher's comments in their books
- using some of the time in lessons to ask pupils whether they think they are making good progress and to identify easy and more difficult steps.
- A realistic timetable for the completion of this priority would be the end of summer term 2010.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Children start Reception with below the expected levels of skills and knowledge. Their work is a well-chosen blend of adult-led and child-chosen activities which arouse their

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curiosity. This was observed in the lesson where the children pursued activities related to the visit of the firefighters. The children had clearly enjoyed the visit and were able to relate confidently that firefighters were their friends who were there to help them. The children were keen to complete, and proud of, their attempts to write about their knowledge. Reception children make rapid progress and their potential is fulfilled so that they have above average attainment when they move to Year 1.

Staff are expert at bringing learning alive in Key Stage 1 and 2. Lesson observations showed that learning is often multi-sensory, such as in the Year 3/4 lesson on the water cycle. Song, drama, scientific investigation and model making all figured in the session and the pupils responded very positively, making good progress as a result. At present, the school has accurately identified the priority to raise achievement in mathematics, which is leading to a rise in attainment. Year 5/6 pupils thoroughly enjoyed the challenge of assembling a number grid using the computer-controlled whiteboard that showed the interrelationships in the multiplication tables.

The school's results in national tests and assessments are often influenced by the addition or loss of a single pupil at the time of the assessment. On paper, therefore, the results can fluctuate from year to year. The vast majority of pupils generally make good progress. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress, largely due to the quiet, well-judged support and encouragement given by the teaching assistants. School leaders recognise that higher attainers do not always make the best progress possible and that sharper challenge is due.

The school has worked effectively to reduce the level of persistent absence by a few pupils. The progress-tracking sheets show the negative impact on their progress of such absence, which affects their preparation for secondary education and future life outside school. However, attendance levels are around the expected level. Pupils' enjoyment of school, their good behaviour and warm relationships are significant factors that enable pupils to benefit from their lessons. The pupils are adamant that the school helps them live healthier, safer lives and talk knowledgeably about potential hazards around the school site and what they can do to reduce risks. The school's Church of England heritage is recognised by parents as a special factor in their children's development as kind, caring and considerate people. It also contributes effectively to their good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

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	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
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	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

There is much fun in learning in all three classes. Teachers have introduced a number of innovative approaches to learning that hold pupils' interests and spur them to hard work. Year 5/6 pupils, for example, were enthused by a huge letter from the BFG to write an additional chapter for one of Roald Dahl's books. They experimented with sounds, unlikely blends of syllables and weird alliteration to produce text that could easily slot into 'The Twits'. Lesson planning is undertaken conscientiously but does not always reflect the specific skills and knowledge to be learned.

The curriculum has kept pace with change and technology. Information and communication technology is well used to bring learning alive. The pupils are avid computer users with good skills. The curriculum for literacy and numeracy is engaging, particularly for writing. There is a rich mix of out of hours activities, often provided by the school's partners, which are among the high-spots for the pupils. They are encouraged to participate in local events such as the 'Helicopter Wow' day, play golf at the local club, tap out rhythms at the Brazilian drumming sessions and to plan and organise the annual Duck Race. At present, the profile of activities that celebrate the richness of different cultures, faiths and societies in Britain today is not as strong as for the local and international links. The school has formal plans to improve this aspect of the curriculum.

Staff provide outstanding care, guidance and support. Vulnerable pupils are counselled well and the welfare needs of children in Reception are met effectively. A very few parents are concerned about the school's approach to bullying, although the pupils do not feel threatened and are convinced the staff deal with it properly. Good links with

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Clearwell Nursery ensure the transfer to Reception is not worrying for the children. All pupils are known as individuals and staff are resolute in their efforts to help the pupils get the best from their time in school.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The leadership and management of subjects and aspects are shared capably amongst the small group of staff. Procedures to check the quality of provision and pupils' progress are well embedded, allowing all staff to build reliable understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement. There is open dialogue between the staff that is focused on making pupils' experiences richer and more motivating. The headteacher leads the school with clear direction and ambition to succeed on all fronts.

The governors have developed an efficient structure to enable them to support and advise the school. Many governors have a heavy involvement in school, including working with pupils in class and making monitoring visits. They are building their expertise in holding the school to account for its strengths and weaknesses. Governors know that their job is not only to ensure statutory requirements are met, which they do, but also to make sure it has aims that focus on high achievement. Their work towards this end is not yet complete.

The school has good procedures to safeguard all children. Procedures to ensure that all pupils have equality of opportunity and that no one is discriminated against are effectively managed and make a strong contribution to the school's positive ethos. The school's promotion of community cohesion is good because there are very strong partnerships with parents, and the local and international communities, and satisfactory ones with communities elsewhere in Britain. The school deserves its Global Schools status. The success of these partnerships in helping pupils prepare for life beyond the village is audited regularly. Good improvement to provision for Reception children demonstrates the effective leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage. The many other positive changes made during the last three years, coupled with the shared determination of all staff and governors, indicate the school's good capacity to maintain future improvement.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
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	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Fun, smiles and laughter pervade Reception children's life in school. The occasional tears soon change to smiles and troubles are quickly forgotten, such is the very good quality of welfare. The children quickly settle to their Reception learning and although in some areas, especially in physical development and writing, their skill level is low at the start of the year, improvement soon takes hold.

The children make good progress in lessons. For example, they were observed to make sensible choices from a range of experiences allied to the firefighters' visit. They wrote and drew pictures that represented their knowledge, built roadways from construction kits for the fire engine to use, made model fire engines from different kits and, using the computer painting program, experimented with shades of red in pattern and picture making. The children recorded their different experiences on the choices chart and talked to the teaching assistant about their discoveries. They left the lesson wanting to do more.

The quality of provision indoors is good. Outdoors, there is a building programme to improve facilities for Reception children. At present, they cannot access outdoor experiences as easily as those indoors. The school has sensibly used the 'welly walks' and other outdoor activities to compensate for this. Staff and children alike are looking forward to improved outdoor work when the builders have finished

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

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

Views of parents and carers

Parents hold positive views of the school. Chief amongst these are the facts that their children enjoy school and the school helps pupils lead healthy lives and prepares them for the future. The inspectors agree with these sentiments, including the way the school helps the pupils get ready for secondary school and take responsibility and work independently. Although attendance is improving, the future for one or two pupils is not yet assured because they are absent from school too many times.

A few parents have particular concerns about the behaviour of pupils and the way the school is led and managed. The inspectors judge that in both cases the school does well. Behaviour is good, and sometimes excellent, and the pupils police this themselves through their buddy system, which works well. Leadership and management are in capable, determined and caring hands that have brought improvements to provision and pupils' progress.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Clearwell CofE 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 30 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 50 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	26	87	4	13	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	25	83	4	13	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	18	60	9	30	2	7	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	18	60	9	30	2	7	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	20	67	8	27	2	7	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	19	63	9	30	1	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	24	80	6	20	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)	19	63	7	23	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	19	63	8	27	2	7	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	21	70	3	10	2	7	2	7
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	19	63	7	23	1	3	1	3
The school is led and managed effectively	21	70	3	10	4	13	1	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	21	70	8	27	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">■ 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 pupils' 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.



Dear Pupils

Inspection of Clearwell CofE Primary School, Coleford, GL16 8LG

We enjoyed our visit to your school and were impressed by your sensible and thoughtful behaviour. Thank you for helping us find out more about your school, especially the Gardening Club and Duck Races that you were so enthusiastic about.

We have written our report and in it your parents and carers will find we have identified a lot of good things:

- You work well, make good progress and reach standards that are a little above average.
- Children in Reception have fun, want to find out more and do well in their work.
- You are becoming pleasant and caring children who work and play together well.
- You have interesting lessons that are well taught.
- There are lots of exciting things in the curriculum, especially for writing.
- The staff look after you carefully.
- Your school is well led and managed and has a bright future.

Two particular things stand out for further improvement:

- The work could be more challenging for those of you who find some things a bit easy.
- We have asked the school to give you more opportunities to talk and write about how well you are learning.

We know you will want to help your teachers make these improvements. You can start by talking to them about things you find easy and those you find hard. Ask them to explain how you can improve what you do and thank them for the help they give you.

We wish you good luck in your education.

Yours faithfully

David Carrington

Lead Inspector

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