

# Winchcombe Abbey Church of England Primary School

Back Lane, Winchcombe, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire GL54 5PZ

## Inspection dates

7–8 March 2017

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
Early years provision	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an outstanding school

- The exceptional leadership of the executive headteacher, ably supported by her highly effective senior team, has been pivotal to the success of the school.
- Leaders, including governors, have the highest expectations of both teachers and pupils. Teachers are encouraged to try new initiatives and adapt their teaching styles to meet the differing needs of their pupils.
- The curriculum is exciting and stimulating. This encourages the pupils to be constantly challenged and motivated in their learning.
- The needs of disadvantaged pupils, including those who are most able, are extremely well catered for. This ensures that they make accelerated progress.
- The provision for those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is exceptionally well planned. Pupils receive carefully tailored support that enables them to progress at a faster rate than their peers.
- The most able pupils are relentlessly challenged to ensure that they are working at greater depth in their learning.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent. Staff take the utmost care of the pupils. Pupils say that they feel safe and are well looked after in school.
- Pupils have extremely positive attitudes to their work and are eager learners. They behave exceptionally well in class and around school. Pupils are kind and caring towards each other.
- The early years provision is outstanding and children are extremely well prepared for the next stage of their education. Staff have an excellent understanding of how young children learn.
- Governors are very well informed and provide extensive support and challenge. They are justifiably proud of the outstanding reputation the executive headteacher and senior leaders have within the multi-academy trust and further afield.
- Nearly all parents who responded to the online inspection questionnaire are pleased with the school and would recommend it to others.
- Pupils do not always check their spelling mistakes when editing their writing.

## **Full report**

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

- Ensure that pupils carefully check for spelling mistakes when they are editing their written work.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Outstanding

- The key to the success of this school is the executive headteacher's steadfast approach to providing the best possible education for all of her pupils. She is extremely well supported in achieving this by her highly effective head of school, senior leadership team and governors.
- The executive headteacher has the very highest expectations of her staff and is justifiably proud of the way in which she nurtures talented teachers and 'grows' her own leaders. Parents are pleased that there is 'great leadership and succession'. The impressive reputation of the school's leadership team goes well beyond the local community. This is evidenced by the widespread support they provide to other schools, both within the multi-academy trust and further afield.
- Successful investment in high-quality training enables teaching staff to regularly reflect and review their ways of working. Encouraged by leaders to be aspirational, teachers are never afraid to try new initiatives and adapt their teaching styles to meet the needs of their pupils. Accountability for their effectiveness is tightly woven into the rigorous performance management structure. This is securely based around the school development plan and is focused on ensuring the best possible provision for the pupils. Mediocrity is not an option at this school and the leadership team takes quick, effective action to remedy teaching that is less than the highest quality.
- Leaders and governors evaluate the outstanding effectiveness of the school accurately but are never complacent about its achievements. They willingly accept challenge from key members of the trust and other local school leaders.
- The leadership team is relentless in its continual drive to further improve pupil outcomes. Any anomalies in pupils' progress are immediately analysed, and swift actions are taken to rectify any weaknesses.
- Pupils who are vulnerable and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported very well so that they have full access to all curriculum opportunities. Extra support is also available for those families who find it hard to engage with learning. As a consequence of all the additional support, disadvantaged pupils, including those who are most able and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, are progressing at a faster rate than their peers.
- The sport premium funding is used very effectively to motivate the pupils and keep them active and healthy. Pupils thoroughly enjoy taking part in a wide range of sports and after-schools clubs. By working alongside specialist coaches, staff have improved their skills and developed greater confidence in teaching physical education.
- The extremely rich and exciting curriculum fully engages the pupils in their learning and provides effective ways for them to extend their skills across a range of different subjects. For example, the topic 'What on earth?', which involves learning about rivers, mountains and volcanoes, also enables the pupils to apply their mathematical and scientific skills when they carry out water-flow experiments.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very sensitively woven

through all aspects of the curriculum. Reception children are spellbound as they watch chicks hatch in their classroom. Older pupils demonstrate an impressive understanding of different ways of life such as in the Victorian times and in Ancient Egypt. They demonstrate an interest in religions other than their own and show the utmost respect and tolerance for them all. The way in which the school parliament democratically makes decisions is a strong example of how the school promotes British values and integrates its principles into school life.

- Most parents are very happy with the leadership and management of the school. One parent summed up the views of many by describing the school as 'wonderful', explaining that all the staff 'do such a brilliant job of educating the children, nurturing them and giving them well-balanced and exciting experiences'.

### **Governance of the school**

- Governors share the executive headteacher's determination to provide the highest quality of education and give her their full support to achieve this. They also have very high expectations of all staff and pupils. Governors use their own professional expertise and skills to support the work of the school.
- Governors are exceptionally clear about the way leaders prioritise areas of provision that need improving and systematically challenge the effectiveness of the actions they take.
- Governors diligently check the performance of all staff and pupils. They also ensure that all available resources, including pupil premium funding and extra financial support for those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, are targeted effectively.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. It is of paramount importance to all staff and governors that the school provides an environment where pupils feel safe and secure. Policies and procedures are kept up to date and all staff and governors are fully trained in all aspects of safeguarding, including child sexual exploitation and the risks of extremism.
- Staff take great care of their pupils and their safety is never compromised. For example, detailed risk assessments are completed for the many out-of-school visits in which pupils participate.
- Staff know their pupils very well and are quick to spot problems and notify the designated safeguarding lead of any issues, including unusual patterns of behaviour or absence. Any concerns are swiftly recorded and investigated, and specialist agencies are involved when required.
- Recruitment and vetting procedures are robust. Records are systematically maintained and regularly checked by senior leaders and the governor with responsibility for safeguarding.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

## Outstanding

- The highly skilled and enthusiastic teachers provide pupils with the very best learning experiences. They create vibrant and exciting classrooms which fully engage the pupils in their learning. As a consequence, behaviour is never an issue and all pupils make rapid progress across a wide range of subjects. As one parent explained, 'the school has a great balance of stretching the children academically while ensuring they have fun at the same time.'
- Teachers help pupils to gain confidence in their learning and develop precision in their knowledge and understanding by accurately using the correct technical terminology in their lessons.
- Teachers use an agreed approach to the way that they teach the basic skills such as calculations in mathematics, reading, handwriting and spelling. This ensures that pupils receive a consistency to their learning, and this helps to accelerate their progress. The school's flexible way of working with different groups, as and when they require support, enables teachers to successfully tailor activities to meet pupils' individual needs.
- The highly trained and extremely effective teaching assistants work seamlessly alongside the teachers. They successfully support pupils in the classroom in close partnership with the teachers. They also provide specialist help to small groups of pupils to reinforce key skills that they find difficult.
- Teachers are constantly monitoring pupils' learning and progress and have an accurate knowledge of what pupils know, can do and understand. They provide exceptionally high-quality feedback using the school's agreed marking policy. By assessing pupils at the start of each new unit of work, teachers ensure that pupils do not waste any time repeating what they have already learned. Assessments completed at the end of any units of work effectively check the progress that the pupils have made.
- Phonics is taught extremely effectively and this enables all pupils to make rapid and sustained progress.
- The most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, are rigorously challenged with work that extends their knowledge and deepens their thinking. For example, the most able Year 6 pupils confidently apply their mathematics skills when they are set complex statistical problems.
- Those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are in receipt of pupil premium funding progress at a faster rate than their peers. This because of the outstanding teaching and extra support they receive.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

## Outstanding

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Relationships between adults and pupils are very strong. Pupils report that they feel connected with their teachers and have 'a special bond with them'. Pupils also explain that their teachers are always willing to help them with their learning.

- Pupils confidently take on a variety of responsibilities, such as members of the school parliament and as head boy and head girl. They carry out their roles very responsibly and with great pride.
- Pupils are thoughtful and inquisitive young people. They demonstrate an impressive resilience in their learning and are eager to reflect on their work and learn from their mistakes. As they move through the school, pupils develop into exceptionally confident young people.
- Pupils report that they feel safe in school. They explain how to stay safe when they are using the internet to access information and know that they must not share any personal details online. Pupils demonstrate a very sensible awareness of the precautions to take when using a mobile telephone and know that any cyber bullying must be reported. They are very clear about what they are required to do if an incident occurs on their new outdoor trim trail.
- Staff are extremely skilled in tackling pupils' personal and emotional needs. They know all the pupils exceptionally well and respond quickly to any specific needs or concerns. The 'ocean room' provides a safe and secure refuge when pupils feel vulnerable or need nurture and care.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. They are very clear about what constitutes acceptable and unacceptable behaviour.
- Pupils report that no antisocial behaviour, including bullying, is tolerated and school records support this view. Most parents agree that pupils behave well in school and that any inappropriate incidents are dealt with effectively.
- Pupils are polite and courteous in lessons and as they move around the school. They show high levels of respect towards adults and each other. They play together very well at breaktimes and maturely take turns using the outdoor equipment. Teaching staff are full of praise for the impeccable way in which pupils behave.
- Pupils' attitudes to their learning are exceptional. They demonstrate high levels of concentration and always strive to do their very best. As one group of pupils explained, 'We love the feeling of not getting something, then we are over the moon when we do get it.' There are no incidents of low-level disruption in lessons and this enables pupils to focus on their learning and progress without interruption.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and, as one parent explained, 'this is down to the caring and positive environment the school fosters.' Leaders have high expectations of both the parents and the pupils to attend school regularly and on time. This is reflected in pupils' good attendance rates.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Outstanding

- A significant proportion of children start school having had limited opportunities to develop their personal and social skills. This means that they need to learn to follow routines and take turns. Many have underdeveloped speaking and listening skills and lack confidence when communicating with adults. As a result of outstanding provision

and highly skilled staff, children quickly learn to listen to instructions and rapidly build their skills across all areas of learning. They make outstanding progress in their reading, writing and mathematical skills. Children consistently leave Reception with skills above what is expected for their age.

- Exceptionally strong phonics teaching has ensured that over the past three years, the proportion of pupils meeting the expected standard in phonics at the end of Year 1 has been above the national average.
- Pupils in Years 1 to 6 typically make outstanding progress in reading, writing and mathematics. This is confirmed through the information that teachers keep to track and check progress, and the current work in pupils' books. They effectively apply their skills across a wide range of subjects. In the published information for the 2016 national tests at the end of Year 6, leaders noted that not all pupils did as well as they could have done in the spelling tasks. Since then, there has been an emphasis on ensuring that pupils spell accurately. However, although they learn spellings for their weekly tests and achieve well, they do not always spell with accuracy when they are completing their written work.
- Pupils develop a love of reading because teaching staff provide a variety of exciting activities to bring books alive. Visiting authors and special themed book events enthuse the pupils and inspire them to read more widely and more extensively. Pupils are very clear about who their favourite authors are and confidently use information books to help them when researching for their topics. Consequently, pupils' reading ages are above and often well above those expected. In the 2016 national tests, the proportion of Year 6 pupils achieving a high standard in reading was above the national average. In the 2016 national tests for Year 2 pupils, not all the girls achieved the expected standard in the reading tests; some of the girls had joined the school midway through key stage 1 and had missed out on the high-quality phonics teaching in Reception and in Year 1. Nevertheless, these pupils have made rapid progress in their current Year 3 class. Teachers have swiftly tackled the gaps in their knowledge and extended their reading skills with additional support and guidance.
- Progress in mathematics is outstanding across the school. Teachers plan activities which motivate and challenge pupils. There is a clear focus on extending pupils' knowledge and ensuring that they can confidently apply their skills.
- The most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, consistently work at greater depth in reading, writing and mathematics. They are constantly given challenging activities which require them to apply their skills to solve problems and write in a mature and sophisticated style.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are making outstanding progress from their starting points in reading, writing and mathematics. This is because of the exceptional provision they receive, which is tailored to their specific needs.

### **Early years provision**

### **Outstanding**

- The leader and manager of the early years is an outstanding practitioner who continually strives to ensure that the quality of provision for the youngest children is always exceptional.

- Staff in Reception are extremely well trained and have an excellent understanding of how young children learn. They provide high-quality support which is sensitively balanced between working alongside children and discreetly extending their thinking without interrupting the flow of the activities.
- The vast array of exciting and stimulating activities on offer, both indoors and in the outdoor learning area, provide outstanding opportunities for the children to develop their curiosity and solve problems on their own. This ensures that they leave the early years well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- All members of staff are very effectively deployed, and interesting resources are plentiful. Reading areas are inviting, and material for writing is readily available. All areas of learning are well defined and reflect all cultures. For example, children learned that the Chinese alphabet is very different from their own when they learned about the Chinese New Year.
- Of particular success is the way children's imagination is very successfully ignited through the use of storybooks. A trip to the local mill linked very well when they were reading the 'Little Red Hen' in class. The children took turns to grind the wheat into flour at the mill and then returned to school to make bread. They were not only able to fluently tell the story but also wrote about it in detail. Activities such as searching for missing gingerbread men around the school and finding clues to discover the whereabouts of stars at Christmas extend their vocabulary.
- Staff regularly observe and assess the children's performance in different areas of learning and use this information to build, very effectively, on prior learning
- Behaviour in Reception is outstanding. Staff act as sensible role models and constantly demonstrate high expectations of behaviour. Children happily take turns with each other and cooperate well.
- Staff are very well trained in all aspects of keeping children safe. All areas of the Reception classes are secure, and risk assessments are in place for all outside activities, including trips and visits. Children play safely at all times. They are familiar with all the routines and rules, including working outside in the forest area. For example, children know how to carry sticks safely and are very clear about protecting the natural environment.
- Home visits prior to the children starting school enable parents to be quickly involved in their own child's learning. Regular opportunities to share their children's achievements help parents to keep up to date with their progress. Workshops to learn about the school's approach to teaching phonics and mathematical skills enable them to support their children better at home. Parents report that they are very pleased that their children get such a 'positive start to school life'.

## School details

Unique reference number	140797
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	10024956

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained academy
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	255
Appropriate authority	Diocese of Gloucester Academy Trust
Chair	Dr Doug Cowper
Executive headteacher	Mrs Helen Springett
Telephone number	01242 602447
Website	<a href="http://www.winchcombe-pri.gloucs.sch.uk">www.winchcombe-pri.gloucs.sch.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:head@winchcombe-pri.gloucs.sch.uk">head@winchcombe-pri.gloucs.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- The school has expanded in recent years and is broadly average in size.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is slightly below the national average.
- An average proportion of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- There are nine classes. Reception children are accommodated in one of two classes which together form an early years unit. There are single-aged classes in Years 3 to 6.

As school numbers expand, some pupils in Years 1 and 2 are accommodated in a mixed-age class.

- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspection took place over two days. Inspectors carried out observations of teaching and learning across the school, mostly accompanied by the executive headteacher, head of school and deputy headteacher. In addition, they made visits to the dining hall, the playground and the outdoor forest learning area.
- Meetings were held with school leaders, governors and pupils. The lead inspector also had two telephone calls, one with the chief executive officer of the academy trust and the other with the academy development officer.
- Inspectors took account of the 30 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and 17 written comments that were submitted. They also considered the 15 responses to the Ofsted staff questionnaire and the 76 responses from pupils.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documents, including the school's development plans. They examined information on pupils' current progress, safeguarding procedures and the use of pupil premium and sports premium funding.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read, talked to them in classrooms and evaluated samples of their work.

## Inspection team

Lorna Brackstone, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Dawn Breeze	Ofsted Inspector
David New	Ofsted Inspector

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