

Chalford Hill Primary School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 115509 |
| Local Authority | Gloucestershire |
| Inspection number | 311957 |
| Inspection date | 18 March 2008 |
| Reporting inspector | Alison Grainger |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School | 209 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Ann Parrott |
| Headteacher | Jim Boccock |
| Date of previous school inspection | 13 October 2003 |
| School address | Chalford Hill Stroud GL6 8LG |
| Telephone number | 01453 883123 |
| Fax number | 01453 885820 |

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|--------------------------|---------------|
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: the quality of provision for children in the Reception Year, particularly in promoting early reading, writing and mathematics skills; how well teaching and academic guidance support progress in Years 1 to 6, particularly in mathematics; and the quality of pupils' personal development and well-being, including the extent to which they are prepared for life in modern multi-ethnic society. Evidence was gathered from: the school's data on pupils' progress; visits to lessons and scrutiny of pupils' work; discussions with staff, the chair of governors, parents and pupils; and analysis of responses to the parents' questionnaire. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail but inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments of these areas, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This popular and oversubscribed school draws its pupils not only from the village of Chalford Hill but also from surrounding villages, in particular, from Bussage and France Lynch. Although the school has a wide social mix, many pupils are from relatively advantaged social backgrounds. The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. Attainment on entry varies from year to year. Taking the intake as a whole, it is a little above the level expected and the school has a good proportion of more able pupils.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school. It gives a high priority to pupils' academic achievement and to their personal development. Pupils say that they are expected to do their best and point out that they have signed the home-school agreement to say that this is what they will do. Almost all pupils enjoy school a lot. They really like the adults in school because 'they help you'. One parent who has had several children go through the school commented that, 'All have skipped to school daily in anticipation of enjoying their education.' Another observed that their children 'are enthusiastic about attending and bound into school each day'. The vast majority of parents are extremely pleased with the school and say, for example, that it 'has a happy and friendly atmosphere' in which their children 'flourish'.

Pupils make consistently good progress at each stage in the school, which adds up to exceptional achievement by the end of Year 6. They get a good start in the Reception Year, where provision has improved since the last inspection. Almost all children in Reception now are on course to reach the expected end of year goals and a good proportion are likely to exceed these goals. In 2007, pupils' standards at the end of Years 2 and Year 6 were exceptionally high in reading and writing and significantly above average in mathematics. Pupils' progress in mathematics has not been quite as strong as in reading and writing in recent years. The school is taking effective action to ensure that progress and standards in mathematics match those in reading and writing.

Teaching is highly effective in meeting pupils' needs, including those of the many more able pupils and also those of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Almost all teaching is good and much is excellent, making it outstanding overall. In the words of one parent, 'expectations of children are high, but realistic'. Teaching is focused and accurate, providing pupils with the right balance of support and challenge. Questioning is used skilfully to help pupils to articulate their thinking. In mathematics lessons, teachers draw successfully on pupils' well developed social and language skills to get them to explain the methods used for a calculation or to solve a problem. Pupils respond very well to teachers' confidence in their abilities. This was evident in a science lesson in Year 4, for example, when pupils worked intensively and very well together while carrying out an investigation.

The excellent curriculum provides many opportunities for pupils to excel in subjects other than English, mathematics and science. Pupils are given the chance to do well, for example, in modern foreign languages or in sports. French and German are taught from Year 2 upwards. Pupils have many opportunities not normally found in a primary school, such as the chance to learn Mandarin during lunchtimes and to go on a French exchange visit. An extensive range of activities is available in addition to daily lessons, some open to pupils as young as those in Year 1. These opportunities contribute substantially to pupils' personal development and well-being as well as building skills and understanding in a wide range of areas.

Pupils develop exceptional personal qualities. Together with high academic achievement, these personal attributes prepare pupils exceptionally well for the next stage of their education and for their future lives. Pupils know a good deal about how to stay fit and healthy through diet and exercise, and many make a healthy choice to walk or scooter to school. They make a significant contribution to the school community. The school council is proud of the new bike and scooter racks it helped to choose and pupils are keen to make the school more environmentally friendly.

Relationships, behaviour and attitudes are all excellent. A few parents are concerned that there is some bullying that is not dealt with firmly enough. The school council told the inspector that the school does not put up with bullying and that it 'resolves it really quickly'. Discussion with the headteacher indicates that incidents of unkindness among pupils are not tolerated. Pupils say that they feel very safe at school and that they would have no hesitation in approaching adults in school with any worries. As one parent commented, 'The fundamentals about respect and care for one another are excellent.' An aspect of personal development that is less secure is pupils' understanding of the diversity of modern multi-ethnic society in Britain.

Pastoral care is exceptional. Many parents told the inspector how well the school has looked after their children at times when they might be particularly vulnerable. The school works exceptionally well with outside agencies to meet pupils' needs and to increase the opportunities available to them. Academic guidance is not as strong or consistent as pastoral care. There are missed opportunities to use marking to tell pupils how they might improve their performance, including in mathematics. There are examples, however, of pupils being given very good guidance to improve their writing in Years 2 and 5.

At the heart of the school's success are highly effective leadership and management. The headteacher is passionate about making sure that pupils' academic and personal needs are met. Self-evaluation is very secure. Staff and governors are fully involved in improving the school. Since the last inspection, the school has maintained its strengths and improved further. It has an excellent capacity to get even better.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

There has been substantial recent improvement in the provision for Reception children in the accommodation indoors and outside and in teaching and the curriculum. Children settle into school well and their parents really appreciate this. One parent, reflecting the views of many, said that they value 'the flexibility afforded when children first start' and 'the interactive approach that is fostered between parents and the classroom'. Children are making good progress, not only in their early reading, writing and mathematics but also across other areas of learning because their needs are met well. Real strengths are the teaching of sounds and letters and the careful analysis of children's progress to identify the next steps they need to take in their learning. Regular 'wellie walks' make very good use of the local area, and add an extra exciting dimension to the curriculum that children thoroughly enjoy. The Reception teacher has accurately identified the most important areas to work on next, including further improvements to the use of the new outdoor area.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that marking always provides pupils with clear guidance about how to improve their work.
- Increase pupils' understanding of modern multi-ethnic society.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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| Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate | School Overall |
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Overall effectiveness

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|---|-----|
| How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners? | 1 |
| Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection | Yes |
| How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being? | 1 |
| The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage | 2 |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements | 1 |

Achievement and standards

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|--|---|
| How well do learners achieve? | 1 |
| The standards ¹ reached by learners | 1 |
| How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners | 1 |
| How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress | 1 |

Personal development and well-being

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|---|---|
| How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners? | 1 |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 2 |
| The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles | 1 |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices | 1 |
| How well learners enjoy their education | 1 |
| The attendance of learners | 2 |
| The behaviour of learners | 1 |
| The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community | 1 |
| How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being | 1 |

The quality of provision

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|--|---|
| How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs? | 1 |
| How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners? | 1 |
| How well are learners cared for, guided and supported? | 2 |

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

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| How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners? | 1 |
| How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education | 1 |
| How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards | 1 |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation | 1 |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can | 1 |
| How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money | 1 |
| The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities | 1 |
| Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements? | Yes |
| Does this school require special measures? | No |
| Does this school require a notice to improve? | No |

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

19 March 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Chalford Hill Primary School, Stroud, GL6 8LG

Thank you for helping me when I visited your school. I enjoyed finding out about your school, watching your lessons and talking with some of you.

I found out that your school is outstanding. The school council told me that the school expects you to do your best and I saw that you do this. You make excellent progress overall from the start of Reception to the end of Year 6. As a result, many of you reach very high standards.

Your personal development is excellent. Almost all of you enjoy school a lot, behave well and get on well together. You told me that you feel very safe at school, and that the adults help you and are approachable if you have any worries. I agree that the adults look after you very well.

You know a lot about how to keep fit and healthy. It is good that so many of you either walk or scooter to school. I like the new bike and scooter racks that help to make the outdoor areas tidy. You do a lot to help other people and I know that you are trying to make the school more environmentally friendly.

You get on so well at school because the teaching is really good. The curriculum is excellent as well. You have lots of exciting activities such as visits, visitors who talk to you, and many clubs. You do a lot of sports activities and you have really good opportunities to learn other languages. I know that some of you are learning Mandarin in your lunchtimes.

There are two things that I have asked the school to improve. You know a lot about Europe but not so much about the wide and varied backgrounds of people living in Britain today. It would be interesting for you to find out more and this is one of the things that I have asked the school to work on. The other thing is that I have asked the school to make sure that teachers write comments when they mark your work that help you to know how to do better next time.

Keep doing your best!

Yours sincerely

Alison Grainger Lead Inspector