



# Ashchurch Primary School

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 115500  
**Local Authority** Gloucestershire  
**Inspection number** 290242  
**Inspection date** 18 January 2007  
**Reporting inspector** John Carnaghan

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 address</b>	Ashchurch
<b>School category</b>	Community		Tewkesbury
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4-11		GL20 8LA
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01684 292376
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	115	<b>Fax number</b>	01684 292376
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The local authority	<b>Headteacher</b>	Richard Gibson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	24 June 2002		

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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by a team of two Additional Inspectors.

## **Description of the school**

Ashchurch School is a small school serving a village and surrounding rural areas of Gloucestershire. About a quarter of pupils come from a nearby military base and this contributes to the high turnover of pupils. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is above average. There are very few pupils from ethnic minorities and none speak English as an additional language.

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Ashchurch School provides a good education and has some outstanding features. Pupils are delighted with the school and enjoy their education greatly. One Year 6 pupil said, 'I like my school because you get your chance to get your point across.' Children start school with the skills and abilities expected for their age, achieve well and so, by the time they leave, standards are above average. This is because they are well supported by the school, not least through the good teaching they receive. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 have not made such good progress in reading in the last two years. However, recent achievement in science in Years 3 to 6 is outstanding. The staff maximise the benefits of the school's small size by knowing all pupils personally and ensuring each one receives the correct degree of assistance. This means that the disadvantages for pupils of arriving at unusual times are minimised. Whilst most marking is of high quality, there is room for improvement, as some does not give clear enough guidance to pupils.

Pupil's personal development is good and most are confident, courteous and very well behaved. This benefits their achievement. Attendance is average. The curriculum is good, with strengths in the opportunities offered to pupils beyond the usual school day. Pupils feel safe and are well cared for and they appreciate the helpfulness of their teachers in assuring their welfare and academic progress.

The school is well led and managed. The headteacher is dynamic and maintains a positive, cheerful presence around the school. He leads the staff well, delegates responsibility wisely and ensures that the school runs smoothly. The school's self-evaluation is good and all staff are involved in this analysis. The clarity of the information gained is a major factor in helping the school to improve.

### What the school should do to improve further

- raise standards in reading in Year 1 and Year 2
- ensure that pupils' work receives thorough and helpful marking which gives consistently good guidance to pupils.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Children start at school with the standards expected for their age. When they leave Year 6, standards are above average, so their achievement at school is good. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities also achieve well. Good teaching in the Foundation Stage ensures that children make a flying start to their education and by the time they start Year 1, they have reached or exceeded their expected levels. Teaching is consistently good; this ensures that all pupils progress well across Years 1 to 6. This is commendable with more than usual numbers of pupils joining or leaving the school during the school year. There are some variations in achievement. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 do not achieve so well in reading, and 2006 standards in the national

tests were below average. The school has correctly identified reading as an area for improvement, has directed resources to this area and, in consequence, reading standards are now starting to rise. In contrast, Year 6 pupils' achievement in 2006 in science was outstanding, because of the quality of teaching in this subject. Achievement was good in English and mathematics. The school sets challenging targets. The well above average results in 2006 beat these goals handsomely.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils are developing as thoughtful and well-balanced young people. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils get on very well with each other and the staff. They work well together in lessons and play happily at breaktimes. Behaviour is good and the very occasional incidents of bullying are managed well by staff. The caring ethos of the school is reflected in the way that older pupils look after the younger ones. Older pupils also take on responsibility in the school community through the work of the school council. Improving playground equipment is their key priority at the moment. The pupils are involved in the wider community through links with other schools and raising money for charities. Pupils clearly enjoy school, but this is not reflected in the merely satisfactory attendance levels, which are deflated by the number of families that take termtime holidays.

Pupils know how to stay safe at school. Younger pupils, for example, are clear about the best way to carry scissors. All are very conscious of the need to stay healthy by eating 'plenty of fruit and vegetables' and exercising regularly. Pupils are developing good collaborative skills and good basic skills in English and mathematics, which will equip them well for later life.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Pupils are well taught and enjoy their lessons very much. Behaviour is good, pupils show positive attitudes, concentrate hard and work well both individually and in collaboration with their classmates. As a result, they learn well and this helps ensure that achievement is good. Children in the Reception class also move forward well in their learning because of the good quality of the teaching.

Teachers have good subject knowledge and plan lessons carefully to cater for all abilities, directing support to where it is most required. Pupils are encouraged to work, with teachers praising them for their efforts. This results in the atmosphere in classrooms invariably being positive. There are plenty of opportunities for pupils to work independently and this also promotes good learning.

Most marking of pupils' work is good. It is thorough, warmly expressed, informative and offers helpful advice about what pupils should concentrate on to improve. However,

there is some inconsistency and some pupils get too little precise information about their strengths and weaknesses.

The turnover of pupils at the school is high but the quality of the school's assessment procedures ensures that this movement does not unduly hamper progress. Pupils are regularly assessed and this information, accurately recorded, is carefully used to place pupils in the correct teaching groups and to direct extra support, where required. It is also used well to set targets for pupils.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is good. The range of subjects offered meets requirements and the curriculum is flexible enough for pupils to be taught in the best group for them, rather than strictly chronologically, and this benefits their achievement. Good planning ensures that personal, social and health education is well taught and this contributes effectively to pupils' personal development, including their understanding of health and safety. Planning of work in the Reception class is good and helps children to enjoy learning.

Pupils really appreciate the many out-of-school opportunities offered and these activities have a high take up rate. They enjoy the wide range of sports offered as well as clubs for the less sporty, such as chess club and conversational French.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

In the warm family atmosphere of the school, pupils are cared for effectively and consequently are happy and confident learners. Staff know the pupils well and provide them with good personal support and guidance. Children in the Reception class settle quickly into school, not least because of sensitive help from the staff. Pupils are kept safe at school; for example, clear procedures for child protection are in place and good attention is paid to ensuring that the building and grounds are hazard-free.

Pupils receive good academic guidance and report they feel well supported in their learning. To help them achieve well, they have clear targets to focus their efforts. When these are reached, they move on to the next ones, which are well pitched. Targets are set collaboratively by pupils, teachers and parents. The transparency of this method encourages pupils to do their best to improve in a supportive atmosphere.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Good leadership and management at all levels ensure that the provision for pupils is good and that they achieve well. The school team 'constantly strive for excellence'. This is evident in the work of the strong staff team, the positive attitudes and good

achievement of the pupils, the valuable contributions made by the governors, the good links with parents and the very well maintained accommodation.

As a result of the strong and empowering leadership of the headteacher, the school is clear about what it needs to improve. There are good systems for checking and evaluating the work of the school, which involve both staff and governors. These include very careful checks of pupils' progress, which help the staff to provide promptly any support needed. Teaching and learning are also observed and evaluated by senior staff. Sometimes, this evaluation is not as rigorous as it could be because it does not provide staff with sufficiently good pointers for development. This checking of its work feeds into the school's strategic plan. In this document, planning for improvement is comprehensive, although there is some lack of clarity about the key areas for improvement. Nonetheless, the school has made good progress since its previous inspection and clearly has good capacity to move on further.

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## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

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

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

### Personal development and well-being

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

### The quality of provision

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

<sup>1</sup> 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.

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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**

Thank you very much for your kind welcome when the inspectors came to visit the school recently. We thought that you were very grown up and really enjoyed our conversations with you.

We agree with you that Ashchurch is a good school and it has many strengths. The main ones are:

- you make good progress because you are well taught and work hard
- the school is well led and organised and runs smoothly
- you are well looked after and get good advice about how to improve your work
- you behave well and get on well with one another and your teachers
- you have an interesting range of activities to take part in.

Like all schools, there are some things that need to be improved. The two important ones are:

- reading standards in Years 1 and 2 need boosting
- the way some work is marked does not give you enough advice on how to improve it.

Once again, thank you very much for your help; it was really good meeting you.