

Glebe Infants' School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115741
Local Authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	312049
Inspection date	27 March 2008
Reporting inspector	Julia Coop

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	4-7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	129
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Martin Draper
Headteacher	Lin Griffiths
Date of previous school inspection	14 October 2002
School address	Glebe Way Newent GL18 1BL
Telephone number	01531 820700
Fax number	01531 821439

Age group	4-7
Inspection date	27 March 2008
Inspection number	312049

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector. This inspection evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: the success of the initiatives to improve performance in reading and writing, particularly for boys and more able pupils; the extent to which pupils know what they need to do to improve their work; the success of the school's strategies to promote consistently good or better teaching with a focus on the challenge provided for the more able; and the effectiveness of monitoring and use of assessment information to set challenging targets and maximise learning for all pupils. Evidence was gathered from visits to lessons, sampling pupils' work, discussions with pupils, parents, staff and governors, and from the school's documentation and assessment information. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspection found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

The school is smaller than most. Recently, the number of pupils has declined due to local circumstances. Staff numbers have reduced and the headteacher currently has a considerable teaching commitment. Pupils in Year 1 and 2 are now taught in mixed age classes. Part of the school was damaged in the 2007 flooding, resulting in a loss of school documents and resources. The vast majority of pupils are from White British families. A very small proportion of pupils from Eastern European backgrounds have recently joined the school and are new to speaking English. Attainment on entry to Reception has fallen in recent years. As a result, the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is increasing and is above average in some year groups.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school. The pupils are happy and say that they love coming to this friendly, caring school. The only problem they have is that they 'don't want to leave'. Parents echo their children's positive comments and they are overwhelming in their praise and support for the school. They particularly value the 'truly family atmosphere'. They are correct when they comment that the school provides a 'good level of care' and that 'the school goes out of its way to welcome and support each child individually'. Parents also appreciate the commitment and hard work of the staff, particularly the headteacher, who many comment 'makes this school what it is'. Effective leadership and management ensure that the school has continued to develop and improve since its last inspection. The headteacher is fully committed to the school and, despite a very heavy teaching commitment, has worked tirelessly to develop an improved and effective curriculum by extending learning opportunities, harnessing community links and developing staff expertise. She is supported well by her small team of staff. It is therefore not surprising that, despite recent changes caused by a decline in the number of pupils and the difficulties caused by the flooding, the staff have rallied together to ensure that the pupils continue to have every opportunity to do well.

Good progress in Reception marks a positive start to the children's education. This is maintained in Years 1 and 2. Standards at the end of Year 2 have varied each year because of small numbers and differences in the proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Although current standards are average, in relation to the pupils' different capabilities and starting points, this represents good achievement. Standards in mathematics are stronger than English; this is generally because many pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have language and communication problems. The school is quickly alert to these issues and works closely with specialist outside agencies and the speech therapy service to help learners build their language skills. This ensures that effective individualised and small group support is provided swiftly to enable these pupils to catch up. Boys tend to do less well than girls in reading and writing. However, the school has created more stimulating and meaningful opportunities to write for different purposes, together with more interesting reading activities and resources. As a result, the boys are now fully engaged and working successfully to make up lost ground. The boys talked animatedly to the inspector, for example, about the visit by the firemen as part of their 'Fire of London' topic. They were also enthusiastic about making plasticine models to plan the stories and characters for their own books. Their writing is interesting and carefully planned, marking a vast improvement on their previous work.

Pupils make good progress because of effective teaching. Teachers have very good relationships with the pupils, who like their teachers and so try hard to do well. Pupils respond well to lots of praise and encouragement and are clear about what they are expected to learn. Teaching assistants provide invaluable support and male staff provide very good role models for the boys. Activities are frequently good fun, such as when pupils used different hats to help them understand place value. Pupils showed clearly that they had understood and drew on this as a starting point for new work.

The school monitors and tracks pupils' progress well. As a result, there is a lot of data and assessment information that the headteacher analyses carefully and uses to ensure that additional support is provided where it is needed. Realistic and effectively challenging targets are set to help raise achievement further. However, the recording format of the analysis can be a little difficult to follow and use. As a result, the school knows that there is scope to

streamline and simplify this process to ensure that even more challenging targets can be set to raise standards further, particularly for the more able pupils. Teachers are effectively getting to grips with planning to meet the wider age and ability range in the mixed age classes. Teachers' planning is very detailed and also successfully highlights what different age groups are expected to learn. The more able pupils are also provided with additional challenges, but some pupils comment that 'sometimes the work is too easy'. There is also room, therefore, for teachers to make even better use of assessment information to match activities even more carefully to the pupils' different abilities, particularly to extend learning even further for the most able pupils. Additionally, although teachers help pupils to understand what they have done well or need to improve when in lessons, pupils do not have clear enough learning targets. The end of each lesson is not always focused sufficiently well on enabling pupils to review what they have learned. Consequently, teachers do not consistently make the best use of assessment information to show pupils what they need to work on in order to aim higher and reach an even better standard in their work.

Pastoral care is strong and, through successful strategies such as 'Silver Stars', pupils who lack confidence and have low self-esteem receive sensitive additional support to ensure that they recognise that it is 'good to be me'. Recent arrivals from Poland who are new to speaking English also receive additional, well thought out support. Their own culture and language are celebrated throughout the school. The school vigorously promotes healthy lifestyles. The pupils are therefore very well aware that they need to eat plenty of fruit and vegetables and drink lots of milk and water. The school is a safe place to learn. It promotes good behaviour through high expectations and a consistent approach to encouraging positive attitudes. Pupils say that they 'like to help people' and are proud of their role as class captains. Their suggestion that the school should 'reward children who find it difficult to behave nicely but try hard' demonstrates their developing maturity. The Eco Council and the 'Little Rotters' composting group demonstrates the pupils' good community and environmental awareness. It is not unexpected, therefore, that pupils' personal development and well-being are good.

The governors are knowledgeable about the school because they are kept well informed, and this enables them to be both supportive and challenging. An honest and accurate evaluation of the school's strengths and priorities for improvement means that there is a good plan for future development. The success of the school's strategies to develop the curriculum and improve boys' reading and writing skills shows that it is well placed to continue to improve.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children make a smooth move into Reception because of good links with the playgroup and parents. Effective leadership and management ensure that a strong emphasis is given to promoting children's personal and social development to provide a good platform for learning. Planned activities are imaginative and grab the children's imagination, such as when the children helped 'Leroy the Lion' to pick out numbers on the number line. It is clear from the happy way children concentrate on their chosen activities and respond to questions that they are settled well into school life and are making good progress. Early literacy and numeracy skills are promoted well through well resourced practical activities that are effectively supported by staff. Opportunities for independent learning are wide and varied and plans are well in hand to develop the outside area further to better support learning. However, there is scope to ensure that the children are given more guidance about what they could learn when working on their chosen independent activities.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure teachers make better use of assessment information to match activities to the pupils' different abilities and to provide greater challenge for the more able pupils.
- Streamline and sharpen the use of whole-school assessment data to set even more challenging targets for improvement.
- Extend pupils' knowledge of their own learning so they are clear about what they need to do to improve their work.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

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

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
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?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
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

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
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	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
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

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

28 March 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Glebe Infants' School, Newent, GL18 1BL

Thank you very much for being so nice to me when I visited. I really enjoyed the chance to learn all about the work of the class captains and about all the exciting writing activities that you have done. This letter is to tell you some of the things I found out about your school. The most important thing to say is that you go to a good school and I agree with you that it is a friendly, happy place.

Here are some of the best things about your school:

You behave well and you are friendly and helpful. You are taught well and you work really hard. I was delighted that you eat lots of healthy fruit and vegetables. You all get off to a good start in Reception. The staff make sure that you have lots of fun activities that help you learn. Everyone takes good care of you so you are happy and safe in school. The headteacher and staff are working hard to make your school an even better place to learn.

What I have asked the school to do now to make things even better:

- Make sure that lesson activities are planned just right to help you learn even more and always challenge you to do your best.
- Make it is easier for the school to keep an eye on how well you do so that it can become an even better school.
- Make sure that you know exactly what you need to do to improve your work.

You are very lucky to attend such a caring, happy school and I hope you go on trying hard and enjoying all of the interesting activities which help you learn.

Yours sincerely

Julia Coop Lead inspector