

Minety Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 126379 |
| Local Authority | Wiltshire |
| Inspection number | 328488 |
| Inspection date | 10 March 2009 |
| Reporting inspector | Christine Pollitt |

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Voluntary controlled |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School (total) | 107 |
| Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS | 0 |
| Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years | 0 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Annie Nelson |
| Headteacher | Dale Burr |
| Date of previous school inspection | 1 December 2005 |
| Date of previous funded early education inspection | Not previously inspected |
| Date of previous childcare inspection | Not previously inspected |
| School address | Sawyers Hill Minety Malmesbury SN16 9QL |

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|--------------------------|---------------|
| Age group | 4–11 |
| Inspection date | 10 March 2009 |
| Inspection number | 328488 |

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a small village primary school serving the village and surrounding area. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. A very small minority of Gypsy/Roma children who live on a fixed site nearby attend the school. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. There have been many changes to staff over the last three years, including a new headteacher, who joined the school in April 2006. Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage into the Reception class. There is an onsite community-run pre-school, which also has clubs that take place before and after school.

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: 2

This is a good school, which has shown much improvement over recent years. It has a number of outstanding features. Parents have a high regard for the school. Their comments include considerable praise of its work, referring to its 'exciting and stimulating' atmosphere and to its strong sense of community, with 'all working together for the benefit of the children'. Indeed, the school has successfully built on its strengths of promoting positive attitudes and caring relationships among its pupils, and behaviour is exemplary. The school's good curriculum is developing breadth and relevance. Increasingly, the learning of basic skills is linked to topics, and this approach motivates the pupils. All these factors contribute to pupils' good achievement. Pupils really enjoy school and attendance is excellent. Having entered the Reception Year with broadly as expected attainment, pupils make good progress overall to reach standards which are above the national average by Year 6. In particular, the school has been successful in moving forward its higher attaining pupils. Increased academic achievement is linked closely to improvements in the effectiveness of the leadership and management throughout the school, which are now good. Teamwork is a strength. The school and governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and there are coherent plans to continue to move the school forward. The school is aware that the next stage of development is to involve middle managers more fully in monitoring and evaluating their subject areas.

Teaching and learning are good as a whole, and strongest in Years 1 to 6. Teachers do much to promote pupils' positive attitudes by managing their classes well and celebrating everyone's efforts through stimulating displays of children's work. Pupils' work is marked regularly, with valuable information about how they can do better. Increasingly better use of information about pupils' progress enables staff to set challenging individual targets and to give additional support to pupils who are at risk of underachieving. This additional support allows those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to make similar rates of progress to other pupils. Many excellent improvements have been made to the school's accommodation over the past twelve months. Although some of these improvements have been in relation to the Early Years Foundation Stage, the quality of teaching and learning in Reception is satisfactory. Assessment is not always used effectively to plan the curriculum, so there are too few opportunities for young children to explore and learn through independent play activities.

It is not surprising that pupils across all years feel extremely safe and secure in a school that promotes successfully the importance of values such as inclusion, tolerance, understanding and mutual respect. Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. They are confident and mature, and keen to take on responsibilities, such as the role of school councillors, and to contribute their views and those of their classmates to school developments. The school's excellent partnership with parents and good links with the local community and support services contribute much to its high quality pastoral care. An example of this is the way in which the school works with the pre-school onsite to secure effective transition of children to the Reception class, and to provide childcare in clubs held before and after school. The significant sustained improvement in pupils' progress, the strong team, and the inspirational leadership of the school underline its good capacity to improve.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children's skills on entry to the Reception class are broadly in line with age-related expectations. They go on to make satisfactory progress, so that their skills are average when they enter Year 1. Children have good relationships with adults and are confident to work with other children or on their own. However, there is not yet enough balance between play activities and more structured adult-led work. As a result, children do not receive all the opportunities they should to be independent and spontaneous and develop their personal and social skills to the full through play and making choices for themselves. Improvements to the outside area have provided a well-resourced, bright and welcoming space. However, this currently does not offer activities with a sufficiently high level of challenge. Nevertheless, children enjoy their activities and behave extremely well. These qualities are enhanced by excellent pastoral welfare and care, as elsewhere in the school. Arrangements for when children start school are robust. Extremely strong links with parents enable children to settle easily and rapidly into school routines and to feel safe in the secure environment. Leadership is satisfactory. All the adults know the children well and regularly assess their progress, although assessment information is not used as sharply as it should be to adjust provision so that it fully encourages children's independent learning skills and habits.

What the school should do to improve further

- Use assessment to plan stimulating opportunities that allow children to explore and learn through independent play activities indoors and out.
- Ensure middle managers take a full role in monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of their subject areas.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Following a satisfactory start in the Reception Year, pupils enter Year 1 with broadly average skills expected for their age. They make good progress from Year 1 onwards in response to good teaching. Improvements to academic performance at Key Stage 1 mean that higher attaining pupils in particular do well in reading, writing and mathematics. The higher profile of investigative work in science and mathematics is the direct response to the school's own evaluation and intensive efforts to make work enjoyable and raise standards. Year 6 pupils this year are on course to attain above average standards in English, mathematics and science. This continues the marked improvement in standards attained by Year 6 pupils in the summer of 2008, which were already above average in mathematics and science, especially for higher attaining pupils.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' enormous enjoyment of school shows in their excellent attendance and outstanding behaviour. These factors make a significant contribution to their learning. Classrooms are characterised by strong teamwork and much cooperative learning among pupils. Pupils are welcoming and friendly and show great respect for each other and for adults. They are very considerate of people from different faiths and backgrounds. They have a strong sense of spirituality and are able to talk with confidence about important values. Community involvement

is strong, with pupils keen to raise money for charity, especially when they take responsibility for organising events for charities of their choice. Pupils readily take on responsibilities around the school, and would like the opportunity to do more. Pupils feel very safe in school, say there is no bullying, and are confident when talking about internet safety. They have an extremely good understanding of how to stay fit and healthy: they sell healthy snacks at break times and enjoy the many after-school sports activities. Good basic literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology (ICT) skills, as well as a willingness to work with other people and engage in problem solving, mean pupils are well prepared when they leave Minety for the next stage in their learning, and for life in general.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Good teaching and learning as a whole is enhanced by some that is outstanding. Typically, teachers establish strong relationships with their pupils and know them all well. Teaching in mathematics and science is particularly strong because it has an emphasis on investigation, and is much enhanced by the use of ICT. Since the last inspection, teachers have raised expectations, particularly of more able pupils. This has had a positive effect on the progress that pupils make, as seen in the higher 2008 test results at Year 6. In addition, assessment systems have improved. This development has resulted in teachers tracking pupils' progress more accurately and, in most cases, matching lessons closely to the particular needs of individuals or groups of pupils. Where teaching is most effective, teachers use skilful questioning to promote pupils' thinking and extend their knowledge and understanding, and the pace of learning is good. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' progress. Just occasionally, lessons do not fully engage all the pupils and one or two lose attention.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum provides strong opportunities in literacy, numeracy, science and ICT for all pupils to make good progress. A recent emphasis on investigative work has made a significant impact on pupils' attainment in science and mathematics and on their problem solving skills. Additional resources have improved provision for ICT since the last inspection. Links between subjects make learning more interesting and, consequently, pupils are keen to learn. The school provides an extensive range of after-school activities, which are well supported by pupils. Visits, including residential events for all pupils in Key Stage 2, and a good range of visitors add much to the variety of pupils' experiences. These are all enjoyed by pupils. Pupils, report, for example, that when a local art group came into school, they had 'a great time' creating the huge cross montage for the hall. Pupils have benefited from specialist sports coaching, music tuition and French, while local networking with other schools also extends and improves curriculum provision. The links to schools in Cyprus, Denmark and Africa give pupils a good understanding of life in other countries. The school recognises that there is further scope for pupils to learn about the multicultural society of the United Kingdom, and is now set to strengthen existing links with an inner city school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school provides an extremely safe and secure environment that very effectively nurtures pupils' learning, personal development and well-being throughout the school. This strength is very much appreciated by parents and pupils. Requirements for safeguarding pupils' welfare are robust and up to date. The school works well with partner agencies, especially to support the children from Gypsy/Roma backgrounds and pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school uses extended services well. Good arrangements support children when they start school, and help to prepare Year 6 pupils for the next stage of their education. The school has significantly improved academic guidance, so that it is now rigorous and regular. New initiatives have secured a much closer match of work to pupils' needs, particularly within mixed-age classes, and enabled the school to identify those in need of short-term programmes of support to help them catch up. Teachers regularly mark pupils' work, give praise where appropriate and clear guidance matched to the focus of learning in the lesson. These pointers provide invaluable support for pupils' good progress. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on their learning and enjoy being involved in evaluating their own performance. Consequently, they know clearly how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher has been a driving force behind the school's sustained improvement, and this is recognised by parents. He has worked closely and effectively with the governing body to involve them in the strategic direction of the school. Consequently, governors now have robust procedures for finding out about the strengths and weaknesses of the school. This valuable knowledge enables them to hold the school to account for its performance and give strong support to plans for improvement. The inclusion of all learners is central to the leadership's vision and is shared by all. The school mission is 'Enjoy, Enthuse and Excel', and one parent commented, 'This school provides all three of these ideals and most importantly in the correct order.' Challenging targets are set and reviewed regularly, and increased as appropriate. The impact of the use of these targets is reflected in the recent significant rise in the achievement of higher attainers. Governors are closely involved in the school's self-evaluation. This review is thorough and accurate, with a clear focus on improving pupils' achievement and standards across the school. The role of middle managers is developing well, and the school is aware that the next step is for their full involvement in checking provision and outcomes within their curriculum areas. The school has a clear understanding of what it must do next to extend community cohesion further. While it works effectively within its own and local communities, and has expanded its horizons beyond Britain, it is now set to extend awareness of other cultures, faiths and traditions represented within this country.

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

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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? | 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 capacity to make any necessary improvements | 2 |

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

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| How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS? | 3 |
| How well do children in the EYFS achieve? | 3 |
| How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS? | 2 |
| How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop? | 3 |
| How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted? | 1 |
| How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed? | 3 |

Achievement and standards

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|--|---|
| How well do learners achieve? | 2 |
| The standards ¹ 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/or disabilities make progress | 2 |

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

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|---|---|
| How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners? | 1 |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 1 |
| The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles | 1 |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices | 1 |
| The extent to which learners enjoy their education | 1 |
| The attendance of learners | 1 |
| The behaviour of learners | 1 |
| 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 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? | 1 |

Leadership and management

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| 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 | 1 |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation | 2 |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated | 2 |
| How well does the school contribute to community cohesion? | 3 |
| 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 | 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 |

Annex B

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

11 March 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Minety Church of England Primary School, Malmesbury SN16 9QL

Thank you very much for making us feel so welcome when we came to your school. We enjoyed talking to you very much. We thought you were very friendly and polite, and we wish we had been able to see your Bollywood dancing!

Yours is a good school, and your parents think so too. We were pleased to read all the lovely things they said about the school. It provides you with a good education and ensures that you achieve well overall.

Here are some important things we found out:

- Good teaching means that you reach standards that are above average by the end of Year 6.
- You very much enjoy school and behave extremely well.
- You have an extremely good understanding of healthy eating and keeping fit by regular exercise.
- You love the after-school clubs, visits outside school and learning about children in other countries.
- Teachers and adults look after you very well.
- All the staff and governors are working very hard to make your school better.

These are the things we have suggested that the school does now:

- Plan many more activities in the Reception that allow children to explore and learn through play inside the classroom and in the new area outside.
- Ensure that the staff who look after each subject check really carefully what is happening in each one so that do all they can to help the school get even better.

Best wishes for the future.

Yours faithfully

Christine Pollitt

Lead inspector