

Ampney Crucis Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115673
Local Authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	338636
Inspection dates	1–2 October 2009
Reporting inspector	Angela Kirk

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	72
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Andrew Lazenby
Headteacher	Mrs Anne Marie Wilkie
Date of previous school inspection	5 December 2006
School address	School Lane Ampney Crucis Cirencester GL7 5SD
Telephone number	01285 851440
Fax number	01285 851440
Email address	admin@ampneycrucis.gloucs.sch.uk

Age group	4-11
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited six lessons, held meetings with governors, staff and pupils, and spoke with parents. They observed the school's work, the children in lessons and at play and looked at policies and plans for improvement, governors' minutes, monitoring and evaluation records, performance data, tracking information on pupils' progress and pupils' work. The inspectors looked at the information from 39 parental, 11 staff and 46 pupils' questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the attainment and achievement of pupils and whether the published statistics gave an accurate picture given the school's very small and varied year groups
- the achievement of pupils in mathematics and writing in Years 3 to 6
- the extent to which the school has improved the monitoring and evaluation of subject leaders to raise standards in their subject.
- the effectiveness of planning in mixed-age classes.

Information about the school

Ampney Crucis is a very small primary school situated in a village outside Cirencester. It has Early Years Foundation Stage provision, with the Reception Year children taught alongside Year 1 and 2 pupils in one class. There are two further mixed-age classes in Years 3 to 6. Two of the three classes have teachers who job share and the headteacher has a significant teaching commitment. The number of pupils in each year group varies considerably. At the time of the inspection, the largest year group was of 14 pupils and the smallest of five. The school has an above average proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The majority of these have speech and language difficulties. The proportion of pupils from a minority ethnic background or who speak English as an additional language is very low.

The school achieved the Activemark and the Healthy Schools Award in 2007.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Ampney Crucis is a good school. Pupils make good progress in their learning, particularly in writing. Most join the school with knowledge, skills and understanding that are typical for four- and five-year-olds. They make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and this continues in Years 1 and 2, where standards are above average. By the time pupils leave the school, they maintain above average standards in all subjects. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve well due to strong adult support and effective individual programmes for their learning. Behaviour is excellent and pupils say that they enjoy school. They have excellent attitudes to learning and the quality of work for all subjects in exercise books is impressive. Parents' comments are very favourable. In the parental questionnaire returns, all felt that the school was well led and managed.

Positive relationships, good classroom management and careful planning for mixed-age classes ensure that work is usually matched carefully to the needs of individuals and groups. Currently, in a small number of lessons, the learning experiences for the Reception Year children are not given sufficient consideration because the teacher does not always match work appropriately to their needs. Teachers make effective use of assessment data in English and mathematics to identify any individuals who are not doing well enough. Individual pupil targets are used effectively to support and involve pupils' in their learning. There is a creative and stimulating curriculum that meets pupils' interests and needs well, supported by a good range of school clubs. Pupils are very well cared for and staff know individuals well.

The strong leadership of the headteacher, who is very well supported by all staff, has ensured that all pupils make good progress, although attainment in the past two years at the end of Year 6 has been lower than usual due to a very high proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Self-evaluation is good. Staff work well together and morale is high. Governors support the school effectively and are aware of the strengths and relative weaknesses of the school. Equal opportunities and community cohesion are promoted effectively, although the school is aware that experiences for pupils to learn about people from a range of religions and cultures different to their own is limited. Since the last inspection, the school has successfully tackled the key issues for improvement. The good progress made by pupils and the current above average standards in the school, together with improvements in subject leadership, demonstrate that the school continues to have good capacity for sustained improvement.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the quality of the learning experiences for the Early Years Foundation Stage children are consistent and not inhibited by the mixed-age class by:
 - using staff effectively to lead a wider and more frequent range of practical learning experiences
 - providing the children with better resources available to them to support their independent learning.
- Raise the profile of community cohesion by extending the United Kingdom dimension, to ensure that pupils have first-hand knowledge and experiences of people from a range of religions and cultures prevalent in the United Kingdom today.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils make good progress in their learning. From average starting points, they attain above average standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Writing is a strength in the school and by the end of Year 2, standards in writing are high. The school is now well placed to continue these high standards into Years 3 to 6 where standards in writing are already significantly higher than in previous years. This is because teachers are clear about the next steps for improvement that pupils need to take. For example, in a literacy lesson, pupils in the mixed Year 5 and Year 6 class were reminded about the impact required in their first sentence in capturing the reader's attention. The more challenging mathematics curriculum was illustrated by the teacher's high expectation in a mathematics lesson where the Year 3 and Year 4 pupils used the definition of a prism to help them identify and sort three-dimensional shapes. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make the same progress as others in their class because of the carefully targeted support they receive. In a humanities lesson, pupils with specific learning difficulties worked effectively alongside their peers to design a new classroom, using a three-dimensional simulation program on the computer. Standards in mathematics throughout Years 3 to 6 are currently above average and there are no differences in the attainment or achievements of any significant groups of pupils in any subject.

Pupils say that they enjoy their lessons and that their teachers explain their work well to them. Cooperation is good in lessons and pupils are courteous. A large number undertake a variety of responsibilities in school and are keen to take an active part in all aspects of school life. However, there appear to be some differing experiences for pupils of how well their opinions are listened to and whether they have an effective 'pupil voice'. They are friendly towards each other and contribute well to their local environment. Pupils know how to keep healthy and speak proudly of the vegetables they have grown in their school garden, which have been used in

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the preparation of their school dinners. Pupils say they feel safe, there is no bullying and they are confident that adults will deal with any problems. They show good development of workplace skills and some pupils have written articles for the local village publication. Spiritual development is good but for some pupils, their understanding and knowledge of other faiths and cultures is less well developed. Attendance is above average.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is typically good, with teachers displaying good subject knowledge and effective questioning techniques. All pupils have individual targets for reading, writing and mathematics. They are linked well to effective marking and pupils know what they need to do to achieve them. Teachers work hard to involve pupils more fully in the assessment of their own work and peer-assessment is used increasingly well in the Year 5 and 6 class. For example, in one lesson, pupils used a 'recipe for success' to help them to assess their peer's writing of a descriptive piece in the style of the author, Michael Morpurgo. Occasionally, pupils' individual targets are insufficiently broken down to structure rapid progress. The school uses a good range of support strategies to help specific pupils make up any lost ground in their learning. Teaching assistants provide good support and are used effectively in most lessons.

Pupils enjoy a broad and varied curriculum. They especially enjoy the outdoor

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

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elements to their education. For example, pupils spoke enthusiastically about a trip to some local woods where they built shelters. The curriculum places a high emphasis on moral and social elements, with good opportunities for working in small groups and discussion work. Although the curriculum includes the study of different cultures and faiths, discussions with pupils indicated that some did not have a clear understanding of common similarities and differences. Writing and mathematics are well embedded into the curriculum and increasingly good use is made of information and communication technology across the curriculum. The curriculum is enriched well by visits to the local area as well as residential visits, which give pupils a wide range of experiences.

Pupils receive very high levels of care because systems and procedures for safeguarding are in place and well adhered to. Staff know individual pupils very well and are vigilant about protecting them. As a result, pupils feel very safe at school. Good support is in place for vulnerable pupils and the school works effectively with outside agencies. Pupils are given good information about their move to secondary school.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account:	
The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The whole staff, led by the dedicated headteacher, are committed to pupils reaching high standards. They have successfully managed to improve the quality of pupils' learning since the last inspection. Staff are enthusiastic and confident in their roles. Monitoring is to a good standard because the headteacher has developed effectively the skills of coordinators to check work and identify necessary improvements. Equal opportunities are promoted and school data show that all groups make similar progress.

Governors are committed to the school and use their time effectively. They have a good knowledge of the school, supported not only by informal visits, but by formal and targeted monitoring. Accountability is secured and governors recognise which aspects require a sharper focus. Partnership work is good and links with cluster schools have provided good opportunities for pupils and staff. The school works well with the local community and good links have been made for the global dimension of community cohesion, including a recent visit to the school by a pupil from New Zealand. However, the school recognises the need to extend pupils' knowledge of

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other communities within the United Kingdom.

All requirements for safeguarding pupils’ health, safety and well-being are in place and meet statutory requirements. Appropriate checks have been made on all adults who work within the school and staff ensure new staff have the appropriate clearance. Risk assessments and health and safety checks are carried out for all activities.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school’s engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children start in Reception with skills, knowledge and abilities that are typical for their age, although there are significant differences between individuals and year groups. Induction is good and praised by parents. Children make good progress and most achieve above the national average in all areas of learning by the time they enter Year 1. Children have good access to the outdoor area, which is used at appropriate times in a free flow situation; the covered area enabling its use to be continued all year. The Early Years Foundation Stage is very well led and managed. Children receive a good level of care and support, especially those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school’s introduction of more formal assessments on entry has enabled staff to know children’s abilities more quickly. The school understands the need to combine this with the more informal observations used in previous years for a complete picture. Planning is of a high standard and includes a good balance of adult-led and child-initiated learning. Accurate records of children’s progress are updated regularly and staff collect a wealth of information to support their assessments. However, at times, the learning experiences for the Reception Year children are not given sufficient consideration due to the mixed-age class and the teacher does not use the available adult support to best effect at these times. Although child-initiated activities are well planned for, care is not always taken

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to ensure appropriate equipment is available to support children’s independent learning.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Almost all the completed parental questionnaires were positive. Many parents made positive comments and all believe the school to be well led and managed. The overwhelming majority felt that they were well informed and that their suggestions were listened to. A number of very favourable comments were made about the staff at the school, including the good level of care for pupils. Parents’ views are exemplified by comments such as, ‘The teachers are highly motivated, dedicated and caring’, ‘My children really like school and are motivated to learn’, and ‘The teachers ensured my child transferred into the school really smoothly.’ Very few negative comments were received. These included criticisms of the timing of meetings and information about events. The school agreed that there had been occasions when improvements could have been made.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Ampney Crucis Church of England Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspector received 39 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 72 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	28	72	9	23	2	5	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	31	79	8	21	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	16	41	22	56	1	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	21	54	16	41	2	5	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	29	74	10	26	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	21	54	15	38	3	8	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	20	51	19	49	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	22	56	12	31	0	0	1	3
The school meets my child’s particular needs	19	49	16	41	3	8	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	25	64	10	26	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	16	41	19	49	0	0	1	3
The school is led and managed effectively	31	79	8	21	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	29	74	9	23	1	3	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>the following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.



5 October 2009

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Ampney Crucis Church of England Primary School,
Cirencester, GL7 5SD**

I am writing to say thank you for making us feel so welcome and for sharing your views about your school with us.

Ampney Crucis provides you with a good quality education. All the adults in the school have high expectations of you and you are taught well. The staff take good care of you because adults know you very well. You reach above average standards in your English, mathematics and science. I was particularly impressed with the quality of your writing and the high standard of work in your books, including the work on your individual targets. Throughout the school, you make good progress with your learning.

Your behaviour is excellent. You are polite, friendly and you work very hard. My discussions with older pupils led me to understand that everyone in the school feels safe because you look after each other well. You certainly know how to stay healthy and I was pleased to hear that some of the vegetables that you have grown have been used in your school dinners.

In order to improve the school further, I have asked the headteacher, staff and governors to:

- ensure that the lessons for the Reception Year children include lots of practical activities and that the staff make sure that children have just the right type of equipment when they are learning and investigating on their own.
- make sure that you have first-hand knowledge and experiences of people from a range of religions and cultures prevalent in Britain today.

You can help the school by continuing to do your very best work and involving yourself in all your school has to offer you. We wish you all the best for the future.

Yours faithfully

Angela Kirk
Lead inspector

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