

Prees CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123494
Local Authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	359450
Inspection dates	5–6 October 2010
Reporting inspector	Doris Bell

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	160
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Hopwood
Headteacher	Yvette McDaniel
Date of previous school inspection	21 January 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed twelve lessons taught by seven different teachers. They also met with parents and carers, groups of pupils, members of the governing body and staff. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation including teachers' planning, the school improvement plan, assessment data and safeguarding policies and procedures. The responses from the pupil and staff questionnaires were analysed, as were the responses from the 37 parents' and carers' questionnaires.

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

Progress in writing and mathematics, and the effectiveness of what is in place to improve them.

- How well the school ensures that teaching, assessment systems and the curriculum are securely aimed at improving pupils' progress in basic skills.
- The quality of leadership and management in determining what the school needs to do to improve, and what is in place to ensure that it does.

Information about the school

This school is smaller than the average size primary school. An above average proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average. Very few pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds. The school runs its own breakfast club. This year, it brought the Nursery and Reception classes together to form an Early Years Foundation Stage unit, which Nursery children attend in the mornings. A privately run Nursery operates on the same site in the afternoons. Each afternoon, the five children currently in Reception join pupils in Year 1. There have been several disruptions in staffing recently, largely due to periods of maternity leave. The school has a new headteacher, who took up her post at the start of this term.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

This satisfactory school ensures that all pupils, from the least to the most able, achieve satisfactorily. However, a sea change is under way. Galvanised by the enthusiasm and commitment of the new headteacher, staff are becoming very aware of their individual and collective responsibility for what happens in Year 6, and of the need to accelerate pupils' progress throughout the school. New assessment procedures have been established which, although not yet fully embedded, are providing vital information about pupils' progress so that it can be systematically tracked and improved. While overall satisfactory, teaching does not always take enough account of pupils' individual learning needs by using assessment information to plan the next stages in their learning. This is because planning arises from a curriculum that relies heavily on national or published schemes that are not adjusted sufficiently to ensure that pupils' learning needs are always met.

The headteacher quickly identified and prioritised what the school needed to do to improve and got it onto an intensive support programme (ISP) to help raise attainment. Good teamwork is developing across the school. This was evident in the well attended 'visioning' evening that took place during the inspection where staff and governors met to establish a clear vision for the future. This school knows what it needs to do, its self-evaluation is accurate, and it is taking measured but determined steps to improve. Taken together, all of the above demonstrates that it has come a long way in a very short time and has satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

Nursery and Reception children make satisfactory progress. However, while children's learning is assessed, the information is not collated into a manageable form that enables children's progress to be tracked and, if necessary, improved, across the two years. Activities are almost always adult-directed and children have few opportunities to develop independence, learn for themselves, or choose what they want to do, indoors or out. The outdoor area is under-used as an extension of the classroom.

Attainment is broadly average in Year 6, although slightly below in mathematics. Lesson observations show that in most subjects, pupils, especially the more able, are not encouraged enough to be independent, think for themselves or pursue their own learning. In mathematics, for example, this means they have too few opportunities to use and apply the skills they learn through completing mathematical exercises.

Pupils become animated when they talk about their school and are proud to do so. They enjoy school, as their good attendance shows. They are mannerly and polite, they behave well and they show good levels of respect for themselves and for others. The good care, guidance and support they receive ensure that they feel safe and know how to keep themselves safe. They are confident that if anything untoward should occur, 'in this

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school, it would get sorted'. All pupils, and almost all of their parents and carers who replied to the questionnaires, say the school keeps them safe.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate pupils' progress in mathematics and writing by:
 - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can do, and focusing teaching securely and consistently on improving learning
 - in mathematics, moving pupils on more quickly to investigative work that requires them to use and apply their mathematical skills
 - using the information gained from the new assessment systems to track and improve pupils' progress and to plan challenging work for them
 - improving teachers' marking and involving pupils more in assessing and improving their own learning.
- Complete the work on establishing the Early Years Foundation Stage unit and improve provision and progress there by:
 - rigorously assessing and tracking children's learning throughout the key stage and ensuring that the curriculum meets their different learning needs
 - achieving a better balance between adult-led and child-initiated activities and between learning in and out of doors
 - ensuring that all adults understand how to facilitate and support early learning without over-directing it.
- In all age groups, develop in pupils the skills needed to become more independent and to take a more active part in determining their own learning.
- Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next Section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Children start school with the levels of attainment expected for their age. They make satisfactory progress and their attainment is broadly in line with the national average when they leave. The work seen in their books and during lessons shows that they are often capable of more than they are being asked to do. For example, pupils in different year groups were observed repeating mathematics work they had done in earlier years. While some pupils need this to consolidate their skills, other pupils are engaged in tasks below their level of capability, and learn little that is new.

In writing, the time spent analysing texts in preparation for writing sometimes means that pupils who grasp concepts quickly are being held back by not being moved on to writing freely, and at length, when they are ready to do so. At times, too, the texts are too difficult for less able pupils, and they do not gain as much from them as they should. When they do write at length, pupils' grammar, spelling and punctuation are generally accurate, and their writing engages the reader. Pupils often use their writing skills well in other subjects, for example, religious education, science and history.

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Pupils are keen to learn and help each other. They speak positively about how they resolve the occasional conflict, saying that 'we talk it through, think about what we've done and try to help each other'. They relish responsibility, for example, as school councillors, members of the eco team, and as playground leaders and buddies to other pupils. Through these and the many fundraising activities they engage in, they contribute well to the school and local community. They are becoming increasingly aware of the different faiths, ethnicities and cultures in the United Kingdom and abroad, and of the need to respect them. All of this, together with their satisfactory basic skills, ensures that they leave the school as mature young people, adequately prepared for the future.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
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	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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

How effective is the provision?

The curriculum gives appropriate emphasis to literacy and numeracy, and to promoting literacy and information and communication technology skills, though not numeracy skills, in different subjects. It also promotes pupils' health, safety and well-being effectively. Contributing to this is the good range of visits, visitors and well attended extra-curricular activities which, the pupils say, give them 'lots of choices'. The curriculum does not, however, ensure that pupils' different learning needs are met, and it does not encourage imaginative teaching. Pupils too often have the same work to do, and, depending on their ability, they do more or less of it, instead of having work at the right level of challenge for them. Pupils have targets, and teachers are beginning to help them assess their progress

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towards their targets. Marking does not always help in this, however, because it does not consistently include clear pointers for improvement. Nevertheless, pupils say 'teachers sit with you to help you if you don't know', and this helps them to improve.

More recently, the school has adopted a common framework for lesson planning. This is leading to better continuity of learning, because teachers are evaluating their lessons and annotating their planning to remind them what they need to do next. The focus is more on teaching than learning, however, which is something the school knows and is determined to change. Relationships are good throughout the school. Staff know the pupils well and take good care of them. Pupils and their parents and carers recognise this. Provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, while satisfactory, is improving because systems that have the potential to accelerate progress for these pupils are in place and time has been allocated to evaluate their effectiveness. Good links with external agencies are helping in this. One example is the way support staff continue speech therapy work back in class to achieve continuity of progress.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

In the short time the headteacher has been in the school, she has embedded in the staff the ambition and drive to improve pupils' attainment and progress. The raising achievement plan arising from involvement in the ISP reflects the priorities in the school improvement plan and together, they provide a secure framework for further improvement. This includes setting challenging targets for improvement. The headteacher is empowering other leaders and managers, all of whom share her vision, to carry out their roles well, and they have a good understanding of how to do this. Governance is satisfactory. The governing body supports the school well but it does not hold it to account sufficiently for how well pupils are doing.

Safeguarding procedures, including those for child protection, have recently been updated and they meet current government requirements. There are no clearly defined strategies for evaluating their effectiveness but all relevant staff and governors have received training to enable them to fulfil their roles. The school promotes equality of opportunity satisfactorily. Its ethos is inclusive of all pupils regardless of background, ability or disability. However, once in school, pupils' different learning needs are not always catered for well enough in lessons.

The school has a good understanding of its own context and that of the community it serves, and it has very strong links with the church. Its links with a school in Kenya and its work on major world religions introduce pupils to different faiths, ethnicities and cultures

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at home and abroad. However, opportunities are missed to do this within the curriculum. Overall, the school promotes community cohesion satisfactorily. Its partnerships with parents and with external agencies are good, and they contribute to pupils' learning and well-being. Parents welcome the increased information they now receive about what their children are doing at school.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
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	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children are happy and settled, and they enjoy learning. Their health, safety and welfare are attended to well and their behaviour is good. They follow instructions well and readily engage in the various activities set up for them. For example, Reception children enjoyed donning masks to act out a story they had read, and Nursery children proudly showed off their accurate counting skills as they fished for shells in the water tray. However, both Nursery and Reception staff intervene too much in children's learning, leaving them with too few opportunities to develop independent skills, select activities for themselves or decide whether to learn and play indoors or out. The outdoor learning area is well resourced but under-used.

Staff regularly record what children say and do in order to complete the learning journey booklets that ultimately inform the Foundation Stage Profile. However, the information is not used well enough to personalise learning for each pupil during their time in this key stage, and therefore to check whether learning falters and what can be done about it. Overall, staff are committed to moving forward under the new leadership as a cohesive unit with a clear vision of what good early years' provision looks like, but they are not quite there yet.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

The proportion of parents and carers returning the inspection questionnaire was similar to that found in other primary schools. They are mostly positive about the school, commenting, for example, on its 'happy atmosphere' and saying that staff are 'approachable and helpful'. Several also comment positively on recent changes and about the 'enthusiasm and commitment' of the new headteacher. Others feel they do not have enough information about their children's progress and a few raised concerns about the school not developing pupils' independent skills, and not tracking their progress rigorously enough. The inspection team fully investigated these concerns and found that the school is keenly aware of them, and has started to tackle them well. It is too early to assess the full impact of the measures being taken, but early indications are that the whole school is securely focused on improving all aspects of pupils' learning, and on involving parents and carers in the process.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Prees CofE 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 inspection team received 37 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 160 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	19	51	17	46	1	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	25	68	11	30	1	3	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	5	14	24	65	6	16	1	3
My child is making enough progress at this school	8	22	20	54	4	11	1	3
The teaching is good at this school	10	27	23	62	4	11	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	6	16	21	57	7	19	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	15	41	22	59	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)	8	22	23	62	2	5	2	5
The school meets my child's particular needs	11	30	21	57	4	11	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	9	24	20	54	5	14	1	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	8	22	22	59	3	8	1	3
The school is led and managed effectively	9	24	17	46	5	14	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	13	35	19	51	2	5	1	3

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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. 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.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



7 October 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Prees CofE Primary School, Whitchurch, SY13 2ER

Thank you very much for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school. It was good to see how proud you are of it and how much you enjoy being there. The staff care for you and support you well, and you in turn behave well and want to learn. We were particularly impressed with your good manners in and out of class, and the way you respect each other and the adults with whom you work. You and your parents and carers see this as a 'happy school' and it was good to hear you say you are confident that if anything were to go wrong, 'in this school it would get sorted'. From what you told us, you also have a good understanding of how to keep yourselves safe, fit and healthy.

We found that your school is satisfactory. Your new headteacher has made a very good start on getting staff to look more closely at how well you are doing, so that they can plan work to help you do even better. You can help them by trying to find things out for yourselves more, and by showing your teachers what you already know so that they can use the information to plan the next stage in your learning. We have asked the school to help you make faster progress by doing the following.

Planning more challenging work for you to do, ensuring that teachers mark your work well and help you see how to improve it, and, in mathematics, giving you more opportunities to do investigative work that uses the skills you learn from doing mathematical exercises.

Finish the work being done to bring Nursery and Reception together as a unit, giving the children there more opportunities to select what they want to do, and ensuring all adults know how to support them in their learning.

Developing in all of you, from the youngest to the oldest, the skills needed to become more independent, and more involved in improving your own learning.

We hope that as the school does all of these things, you will find learning even more exciting and will want to carry it on throughout your lives.

Yours sincerely

Doris Bell

Lead inspector

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