

Preston Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121061
Local Authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	358917
Inspection dates	17–18 January 2011
Reporting inspector	John Mason

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	100
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Hughes
Headteacher	Lesley Payne
Date of previous school inspection	20 May 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Seven lessons were seen, including lessons taught by all four full-time teachers. Meetings were held with governors, groups of pupils and staff, as well as some informal discussion with parents. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at minutes of governing body meetings, school development planning and reports from the school improvement partner of the local authority. A range of documentation pertaining to safeguarding and child protection was scrutinised, as well as responses from 70 parental questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The extent to which pupils, especially the most able, are meeting challenging targets in writing and science.
- The extent to which the school has been successful in improving provision, especially in relation to issues identified from pupils' tracking.
- The extent to which pupils' personal development is a strength of the school.

Information about the school

Preston Church of England V.C. School is smaller than most primary schools. It has very few pupils eligible for free school meals and almost all pupils are of white British heritage. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average, but the proportion of pupils with statements of special needs is above average. The Reception class follows the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The school holds the Healthy Schools, Activemark, Food for Life (bronze) and International School (bronze) awards.

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

Preston Primary School is a good school. It has significant strengths in its pastoral care and its engaging curriculum. As a result, pupils enjoy all aspects of school in an environment in which they feel exceptionally safe. All pupils are known very well by staff and if they or their parents have concerns, the school listens and acts on these promptly and openly. In the words of one parent: 'Preston Primary is a happy school which helps children grow into responsible, independent young people'.

A large majority of pupils make good progress in their learning. Results in 2010 national tests for Year 6 pupils improved on 2009 and were above average, with almost all pupils attaining Level 4 or higher in reading, writing and mathematics tests. Optional tests for science scored equally well. The higher-attaining pupils all reached the Level 5 grades expected of them. The school's much improved procedures for tracking pupils' progress have particularly identified slower progress in writing than in other areas. As a result, teachers have implemented, in the younger classes, a successful programme of linking the sounds that letters make. This has much improved the quality of writing through Years 1 to 4 and ensures that pupils in these classes make good and sometimes better progress in all core subjects. Years 5 and 6 have not been able to benefit from the advantages of this programme and, by contrast, exhibit marked inconsistencies in the quality of their spelling, punctuation and grammar. The concentration of staff in addressing these shortcomings also means that some pupils are not sufficiently stretched to develop their confidence in writing extended pieces often enough. As a result, despite good progress in reading and mathematics, pupils in the current Year 6 are making satisfactory progress in their writing.

Pupils' enjoyment of school is palpable. Their attendance is high and their behaviour is outstanding. They collaborate very well, contributing enthusiastically to the positive learning environment and show patience and tenacity if sometimes tasks in lessons are not varied frequently enough. Pupils enjoy the very wide range of extra activities which enhance and extend the good curriculum. Older pupils are very considerate towards younger ones, often guiding them in their play, and the school council takes an active role in decision making in the school, for example in developing the 'wild area'.

Teaching is good. Lessons are well planned and work for pupils in the three mixed-age classes is well tailored to age and ability. The virtual learning environment is well developed to complement learning in class, so that pupils gain greater independence in their learning. Marking is good and consistently gives pointers for improvement. However, the ability of pupils to understand and articulate the next steps they need to take to improve varies between classes, as does the effectiveness of teachers in promoting these skills. While teachers' assessment and tracking of pupils' progress in English and mathematics has developed greater purpose and accuracy since the last inspection, the

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school has not been entirely satisfied with its endeavours to find a school-wide approach to assessment to inform planning in science.

The school is well led and managed, and knows its strengths and weaknesses well. All staff take responsibility for evaluating provision and for leading initiatives to raise opportunities and standards. One such priority is to extend and cover the small area adjoining the Reception classroom, so that much greater use of the outdoor environment can be made by children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Overall, the staff and governors evaluate the school effectively and are clear about the steps needed to be taken to further improve provision. As a result, the school has a good capacity for sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that pupils' skills in writing, especially in Years 5 and 6, are improved by focusing particularly on:
 - correcting misconceptions in spelling , punctuation and grammar
 - developing pupils' confidence in writing coherent pieces of more substantial length.
 - Improve assessment practice by:
 - ensuring all pupils clearly understand and articulate the next steps they need to take to improve their learning
 - establishing a more robust tracking system for science.
 - Facilitate better opportunities to improve outdoor learning for the Reception class by promptly implementing plans to develop the provision outdoors.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils' attainment on entry to the school has improved in recent years and is now above average, although relative weaknesses in writing, especially of boys, are evident from their assessments. Pupils make good progress from their starting points in reading and mathematics in all classes, but attainment in English has been held back by the lack of accuracy in pupils' writing. The introduction of phonics (the sounds that letters make) and other strategies in the lower classes have addressed this effectively and, in classes up to Year 4, progress in writing is now good. Pupils write accurate and interesting accounts of art-work they have seen at the local centre for modern and ethnic art. These pupils understand well the inter-relationship of speaking, listening, reading and writing. Many pupils in Years 5 and 6 are not making better than satisfactory progress in their writing because they are still making too many errors writing high frequency words and their phonic awareness and structuring of sentences is not secure. While they read well, they are inhibited in expressing themselves in writing. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. In 2010 they gained nationally expected levels or higher in all tests, overcoming potential barriers to their learning. The smaller steps made by pupils with more profound needs nonetheless represent good progress. Most higher attaining pupils are on course to meet their appropriately challenging targets.

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Good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development underpins the positive ethos of the school. Pupils show a high degree of responsibility around the school and are at all times polite and respectful to peers, adults and visitors. They have a well developed sense of right and wrong and know to report any problems to adults to facilitate their quick resolution. They enjoy exercise and make healthy choices of food at breaks, reflecting sincerely on their good fortune in being fit and healthy when they say grace at table. Pupils with significant barriers to their learning are well integrated into the life of the school. Pupils engage well with difficult issues, such as how difficult it is to show moral courage; their reflection in prayer consolidates this. They engage well with the local community, for example, with the police about traffic calming in the area of the school. Pupils show a keen interest in music and the arts and enjoy the sense of discovery in practical science activities. They take a keen interest in other cultures and faiths through religious education and in their enthusiastic involvement in projects such as: how St Nicholas' Day is celebrated in Germany, in singing songs from Baltic countries, working with a visiting Zimbabwean theatre group as well as engagement with schools in Malawi and France. They involve themselves well in charitable causes. They are less able to empathise with the wider diversity of communities across the United Kingdom and the school is seeking to build more robust links to address this.

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	1
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	1
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

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How effective is the provision?

Teachers have good subject knowledge and plan lessons which engage children well. Behaviour is well managed and pupils are keen to please their teachers. Teaching assistants make a particularly effective contribution to the learning of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. However, when teachers are addressing the whole class, sometimes for protracted periods, assistants are not always given constructive roles. Teachers mark work effectively with developmental comments, although where the accuracy of writing is still an issue, there is not enough rigour in ensuring that misconceptions in basic spellings, punctuation and structures are promptly and securely corrected. Good use of assessment and tracking data in English and mathematics ensures lessons are well tailored to the different ages and abilities of pupils in each class. A new system for assessing and tracking pupils' progress in science is at an early stage of implementation.

The curriculum makes good links between different subjects. By applying and reinforcing learning through different disciplines, supplemented by motivating visitors and trips to places of interest, pupils are thoroughly engaged in their learning. Pupils enjoy the breadth offered by good regular provision in music, art and modern languages. ICT is integrated well into all subject areas and the virtual learning environment provides opportunities for pupils to follow up learning with greater independence outside of formal lesson time. A focus on enquiry skills in mathematics and science has raised pupils' engagement and their standards of work. However, initiatives to make pupils more aware of good writing skills have met with qualified success, as have the school's endeavours to develop partnerships with schools in different socio-economic circumstances.

Very careful attention is given to all aspect of pupils' care. All pupils are known as individuals and their differences are celebrated. Pupils and parents are confident in the pastoral advice they receive and are generally happy about the feedback on pupils' learning. Pupils requiring additional support are promptly identified and the quality of this support, especially for speech and communication issues is of high quality. The school has outstanding links with external agencies to provide additional support for the most vulnerable pupils. Good links with other schools help pupils to make a smooth transition to secondary education.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
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	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

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How effective are leadership and management?

The school is well led and managed. All members of the enthusiastic, cohesive staff have roles in coordination of different areas of the school and contribute to the school's own accurate evaluation of its provision. The headteacher has a very clear grasp of strengths in provision through routine visits to different classes and through regular analysis of work with subject leaders. Key areas of weakness are systematically tackled and areas of strength are celebrated and consolidated. Staff professional development is closely linked to extending opportunities for pupils. The governing body is committed, conscientious and well informed, supporting and challenging the school well. Link governors are in place, but their role at subject and year-group level is not fully exploited in holding the school to account. The school works closely with parents and neighbouring schools, especially in development of the virtual learning environment. Partnerships are a strength of the school and in particular with those external agencies that support pupils with statements of special educational needs. The school adopts recommended good practice in safeguarding children, with a robust cycle of risk assessments and training for all staff and governors. Concerted action is taken to counter discrimination and to ensure equality of opportunity. For example, prompt identification of weaknesses in boys' writing at an early age has led to the adoption of teaching strategies to remedy this. The school audits its community cohesion provision and is aiming to address short-comings in developing pupils' wider awareness of different communities within the United Kingdom.

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

Most children enter the Reception class with skills which are a little above age-related expectations. From their various starting points children make good progress in all of the early learning goals and securely score above average in all areas of learning by the time

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they enter Year 1. They make particularly good progress in personal, social and emotional development, but with some degree of inconsistency in writing, especially boys' writing. This teaching is skilfully organised to ensure the full requirements for child-initiated learning of the Early Years Foundation Stage are linked with adult-led learning to the advantage of all children's development, including those pupils in year 1. Teachers and assistants are thorough in ensuring welfare requirements are fully met and children with profound learning difficulties are very well supported. The uncovered space for outdoor learning is small, constraining the range of resources which can be used at any one time for children to move freely between indoor and outdoor activities. The good leadership of the Reception class ensures that these constraints are minimised by effective use of the adjacent hall and the wider school grounds. Assessment practice is very thorough, involving all adults, and regular moderation meetings ensure its accuracy. Liaison with parents is very strong. They express high levels of satisfaction and note: 'the transitional arrangements from playgroup to school were excellent, meaning that my child settled in straight away without worries'.

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

Parents and carers who returned inspection questionnaires express an overwhelmingly positive picture of the education their children receive at Preston Primary. Many questions have been ranked with full approval, especially those relating to children's happiness and safety, and quality of staff at the school. They raised no significant areas of concern

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Preston Church of England Voluntary Controlled 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 70 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 100 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	54	77	16	23	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	59	84	11	16	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	18	26	49	70	3	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	30	43	36	51	4	6	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	44	63	26	37	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	32	46	36	51	2	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	49	70	20	29	1	1	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)	33	47	35	50	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	35	50	33	47	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	34	49	30	43	5	7	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	28	40	37	53	3	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	49	70	21	30	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	55	79	15	21	0	0	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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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.



19 January 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Preston Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School, Norwich, NR15 1NU

Thank you for the open and friendly welcome you gave the inspectors when they visited your school. We enjoyed seeing how much you love being at school and how well you learn in all your lessons. Thank you too, and your parents, for completing the questionnaires which were very helpful to us.

We agree with your headteacher, that Preston Primary is a good school and that you are making good progress. Your teachers plan interesting work and lessons which help you learn. They are very caring and make sure that you all get on very well with one another. We found your behaviour excellent, both in class and around the school. We were particularly impressed by the way pupils of all different ages mix so well in activities. You concentrate well and pay attention to your teachers. You told us clearly how safe and secure you feel at school.

We think your school is well run by Mrs Payne and her team. They quickly identify where improvements are needed and adapt what they teach you to help you do better. In particular, with phonics and other activities in English they have improved the quality of writing for most of you. However, there are still some of you who are struggling to write accurate English to the level expected of you.

We have asked your teachers to concentrate very carefully on the following things:

- help you to improve your spelling, punctuation and the way you structure sentences
- give you more opportunity to become confident writers, so that you can write at length better
- make sure that older pupils in particular know better what to do to improve the quality of their work
- keep better records of how well you are progressing in science
- enable children in reception to play and learn outside more often by carrying out the plans to develop the outdoor learning area.

You can certainly help your teachers by practising your writing more carefully. Perhaps you can think how to contribute to the other points, too. Wishing you well,

Yours sincerely

John Mason

Lead inspector

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