

Church Aston Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123358
Local Authority	Telford and Wrekin
Inspection number	363964
Inspection dates	22–23 March 2011
Reporting inspector	Patricia Potheary

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	42
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Catherine Coltman
Headteacher	Anne Garner
Date of previous school inspection	13 November 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one additional inspector who observed seven lessons, taught by two different teachers. Meetings were held with a group of pupils, staff and the Chair of the Governing Body. The inspector observed the school's work, looked at information about pupils' progress, staff and pupil surveys and safeguarding procedures. The inspector also analysed 23 questionnaires returned by parents and carers.

The inspector reviewed many aspects of the school's work and looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How well are all pupils, particularly boys and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, progressing compared to their starting points, especially in literacy and numeracy?
- How well is assessment used to provide pupils with a clear view of the next steps in their learning and how to improve?
- How effective is leadership, including in the Early Years Foundation Stage, at ensuring that academic outcomes continue to improve?

Information about the school

This is a smaller than average infant school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average. Most pupils are of White British ethnic origin, with a few from a variety of other ethnic groups. The school has received several recent awards including the information and communication technology ICT Mark, the Activemark and the International School Award.

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?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

This is an outstanding school. The school is a vibrant, harmonious and deeply caring community, enabling pupils to make outstanding academic and personal progress. Outstanding provision, including teaching and the curriculum, ensures that pupils make rapid progress in reading, writing and mathematics. This is a school that reaches out to the community and further afield to ensure that pupils' experience of the world is very broad, in order to make their learning meaningful and joyful. Parents' and carers' comments reflect this view.

When pupils join Reception, their attainment is in line with that expected for their age. By the time they leave Year 2, their attainment is well above national averages and their achievement is exceptional. In reading, writing and mathematics, pupils make more than one year's progress above that which is usually expected. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, where many no longer need help, or require far less support, as they move through the school.

Lessons are very enjoyable, with varied, fast-paced activities which fully involve pupils in active learning. This is particularly suited to the boys whose learning has increased to become equally rapid. As a result of the highly motivating context of lessons, pupils are exceptionally well behaved, show a keen desire to listen carefully, work hard and do their best. A detailed way of using assessment, which pinpoints what each individual has to do in each lesson, has proved particularly effective. This involves pupils fully in knowing what levels they have reached and what they need to do to reach the next level. The result has been that pupils of all abilities set themselves high aspirations and this is proving particularly effective for those of average ability and below.

The wide range of experiences provided for pupils encompasses sport, performing arts, community projects and international links. Whole terms, as well as dedicated weeks, are given to a particular theme, which provides a highly motivating context for pupils' learning. A recent environmental theme, for example, saw pupils imaginatively using skills in art, writing, and design and technology in real-life situations.

Pupils feel very safe and demonstrate considerable care towards each other. Several commented upon how much they enjoy showing others how to do things in lessons or acting as playground friends to new pupils. The extensive systems to support and guide pupils are very successful in enabling those who have a range of difficulties to access learning and succeed as well as everyone else.

Leadership is characterised by exceptionally strong teamwork and very high quality expectations. Detailed ongoing monitoring of individual pupils' progress means that any weaknesses are quickly addressed and improvements to academic outcomes regularly achieved. Nevertheless, school leaders recognise that they do not use technology

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efficiently to manage information about how well pupils, including children in Reception, are progressing. There is no clear, easy-to-access overview of how well different groups are progressing over time in literacy and numeracy. This has to be worked out laboriously from individual pupils' data. This means that governors, for example, cannot easily find out about any variations in the progress being made, making it harder for them to hold the school to account. Nevertheless, self-evaluation is accurate. The small size of the school and the dedication and shared vision of the staff overcome this shortcoming, so that high attainment has been maintained for many years. The capacity to improve is outstanding.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen the way leaders use technology to manage information about pupils' progress, in order to:
 - provide a clear overview of progress for different groups of pupils over time in literacy and numeracy
 - ensure that governors can easily find out about any variations in the progress being made, to support them in holding the school to account.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

In all lessons, pupils listen very attentively, ask thoughtful questions and are confident to share their ideas. Their attainment is not only well above national averages in reading, writing and mathematics but also in science. In one science lesson, pupils worked extremely well together in teams, investigating how to make vehicles go slower along an incline. Gradually, they discovered the different ways to do this and were most insightful in discussing their findings. The outstanding progress they make in reading, writing and mathematics has been consistent for at least two years. This progress was evident in another lesson where pupils demonstrated a rapid increase in understanding how to analyse text, as they contributed their views on an article about Italy. There are no significant differences in the progress being made by pupils of different abilities or from different ethnic groups, and achievement is equally outstanding for all groups. Parents and carers are very appreciative, of how much their children achieve and that they really enjoy school. Several commented upon the significant progress their children with very specific additional needs had made, due to the exceptional planning and ongoing attention paid to those needs.

Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to lead healthy lives and this is demonstrated by the high uptake of healthy school meals, high attendance at sporting clubs and the very active games they play during break. The school day contains many spiritual experiences, which strongly enhance pupils' appreciation of the wonders around them. One example was the extraordinarily uplifting African drumming session in which all pupils learned to drum and sing in the Kenyan language. Pupils contribute well to many aspects of school life, and in the community, although the school recognises that the contribution of all groups is not as substantial as it could be. Pupils' exceptionally good preparation for the next stage in their education includes above average attendance, a very wide range of information and communication technology skills, and the ability to

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work productively together. These skills, for example, are evident when they decide together how to raise money for charity and follow through projects for the school council.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

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?

It is the exceptional care taken of each individual pupil, which ensures provision is outstanding. High-quality practice in a wide range of areas typifies teaching. For example, technology is used extensively and very successfully to aid pupils' understanding in lessons. In addition, activities are often practical, based in real-life experiences that engage pupils in their learning. The outstanding, innovative curriculum, commented upon by parents and carers, means that lessons are very enjoyable and so pupils are highly motivated to learn. Teachers' accurate understanding of each pupil's levels enables them to set clear, personalised learning steps in each lesson for every pupil. This has contributed significantly to pupils' confidence in their ability to succeed. Apart from leading locally in the teaching of science, the school is recognised nationally as a leader in information and communication technology. One result is that pupils are enabled to use a web-based learning platform to continue learning outside school. A creative approach to linking subjects ensures that literacy, numeracy and especially the use of computers and other technology are well embedded in all subjects. Very strong links with other agencies and providers and highly skilled support in lessons ensure that the curriculum is very well adapted to meet a wide range of different and often quite specific needs.

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These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	1
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	1
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The school is very well led by the headteacher. School leaders and all staff are very keen to embrace new initiatives and they undertake extensive professional development to keep their skills fresh and sustain the high levels of attainment being achieved. The school's accurate self-evaluation is based upon a wealth of paper-based information and very regular monitoring of how well each pupil is progressing. This has enabled good identification of what could be better, securing continuous improvement. Consequently, the rate of pupils' progress has increased since the previous inspection, and, more recently, boys' writing has improved. However, school leaders are not making as effective use of technology as they could be to analyse data and to provide an easy-to-access overview of pupils' progress. Nonetheless, this has not reduced the excellent outcomes for pupils so far.

The governing body ensures that all statutory requirements are met and brings a wide range of skills to its work in strongly influencing the direction of the school. Governors do provide challenge regarding outcomes, but, without access to sufficiently clear information about pupils' progress, they are unable to seek higher levels of professional accountability, to support further improvement.

Close work with parents and carers is deeply embedded in the culture of the school, including schemes to provide practical resources to help them support learning at home. The school is a national advocate for maintaining parental engagement electronically, which typifies the high-quality and extensive partnerships in which the school engages as a leader in several fields. Exceptionally successful promotion of equal opportunities is best demonstrated by the high achievement of all pupils and the complete lack of any discrimination. Safeguarding procedures are rigorous, regularly reviewed and are well understood by all staff and visitors. The promotion of community cohesion is very strong locally and internationally and, as a result, pupils demonstrate a deep respect for those who are different to themselves. The school recognises that its national links however are at an early stage of development. The school has achieved the International School's Award and, during the inspection, the school's international Comenius partners were visiting and delighted pupils by teaching them the European anthem.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
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	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
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	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

Strong links with parents and pre-school providers ensure that children have a smooth start to their school life. Children make good progress in all areas of learning, and most enter Year 1 with skills that are securely average and sometimes above. Attainment by this stage is strongest in personal and social skills and number work. Children readily take on responsibility, for example, clearing things away and learning to take turns and share. They are willing to try new and often quite difficult things, such as drumming during the recent workshop, where even the youngest of them patiently learned a variety of different rhythms. Plenty of time is spent outside. In one session, for example, while some children used construction toys to find out how things moved, others were busy finding out which letters to use when looking for sounds. Imaginative games capture their interest and they thoroughly enjoyed being the moving objects in a game to learn about position words. As with the rest of the school, staff do not use technology efficiently enough to focus more sharply on areas for improvement. This means that staff are not at all clear about differences in the rate of progress between the areas of learning and so cannot be sufficiently precise about what most needs to be addressed. This is why progress, although good, is not outstanding. Nevertheless, good leadership and a willingness to embrace new initiatives have ensured that overall outcomes for children are improving, most recently in understanding sounds and letters. Children's individual progress is recorded in 'learning journey' books, which provide a valuable insight into their development. All staff, therefore, have an accurate understanding of each child's different skills and, in all activities, can be seen skilfully and effectively encouraging them to reach the next step in their learning.

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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

A higher than average proportion of parents and carers completed the questionnaire and they were overwhelmingly positive about all aspects of the school. As one typically commented, 'Attention is paid to the small details of school life that enhance the learning experience and ensure that the school remains in high regard among parents and the community.' Parents and carers particularly like the way their children enjoy school, how safe their children feel, the quality of teaching and leadership and how well the school meets children's particular needs. This is in line with the inspection findings. An exceptionally small number of concerns were expressed. These were followed through, but did not have a significant impact on the overall findings of the inspection.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Church Aston Infant 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 23 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 42 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	21	91	2	9	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	22	96	1	4	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	16	70	7	30	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	19	83	4	17	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	20	87	3	13	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	17	74	6	26	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	19	83	4	17	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)	14	61	6	26	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	20	87	3	13	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	17	74	5	22	1	4	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	12	52	9	39	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	20	87	3	13	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	20	87	3	13	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.



24 March 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Church Aston Infant School, Newport, TF10 9JN

Thank you for being so welcoming during my visit to your school. I very much enjoyed meeting you, joining you for lunch and seeing some of your lessons. Yours is an outstanding school with many interesting things going on, just as you described. School leaders work very hard to keep developing the school and, for this reason, your work continues to be of very high quality and is improving all the time. Highly skilful teaching helps you to make outstanding progress and do very well in all your subjects. It is heartening to see the way you really enjoy your learning and always try to do your best. You explained that your teachers are very caring and always listen to you. They are especially skilled at helping you to aim high and reach your goals.

To help the school to improve even more, your teachers have been asked to improve the way records of your progress are organised, so that they can be used to show more clearly how well different groups of you are doing. You could all help by sharing your ideas with your teachers about how this could be done.

You show a mature attitude to taking on responsibility and contribute well to school life and the community. You were keen to describe how the school keeps you extremely safe and looks after you very well. It is especially impressive to see just how exceptionally well you behave, particularly in the way you value learning so much and like to share your ideas in lessons. It is also good to see just how very kind you are to one another, especially on the playground. I wish you the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Patricia Potheary

Lead inspector

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