

Church Vale Primary School and Foundation Unit

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122731
Local Authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	373132
Inspection dates	22–23 June 2011
Reporting inspector	Usha Devi HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 under pilot arrangements; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	194
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Garry Hall
Headteacher	Olwen Hawkes
Date of previous school inspection	20 May 2008
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out by one Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. The inspectors observed 13 lessons taught by eight teachers and heard groups of pupils read. In addition to the observations, inspectors looked at samples of pupils' work from across the school. The inspectors met with pupils, the Chair and vice-chair of the Governing Body, senior leaders and a representative from the local authority. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documents provided by the school. This included the school improvement plan and pupils' assessment information. Questionnaires from 64 parents and carers were also analysed.

Information about the school

Church Vale is smaller than the average sized primary school. Most of the pupils are of White British heritage. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above the national average. Early Years Foundation Stage provision is provided for children in a part-time Nursery and a Reception class. The school has achieved a number of awards, including the Gold Healthy Schools award, Basic Skills Quality Mark, Eco-Schools award, the Activemark and the East Midlands Schools in Bloom award. A breakfast club which is managed by the governing body is based at the local community centre. The school has met the government's floor targets for the past three years.

Since the last inspection half of the class teachers are new in post. The governing body appointed a class teacher in September 2009. In September 2010, they appointed a deputy headteacher and two class teachers.

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	3
Achievement	3
Teaching	3
Leadership and management	3
Behaviour and safety	2
Does the school adequately promote the pupils' well-being?	Yes
Does the school adequately promote community cohesion?	Yes
Does the school provide value for money?	Yes

Key findings

Church Vale is a satisfactory school. Some aspects are good, including the following.

- Pupils' good behaviour and their positive attitudes to learning.
- The school works well with a range of external agencies to ensure the pastoral needs of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities are fully met.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage Unit make good progress.
- Pupils' enjoy school and levels of attendance are above average.

Pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 make satisfactory progress overall. Some pupils make good progress. Attainment by the end of Year 6 is broadly average. There are variations between the standards reached by boys and girls in reading, writing and mathematics.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory. This is because teachers do not always meet the learning needs of pupils of different abilities, and especially the more able. On occasions, teaching is good. 'Teachers make us think hard' and 'activities are fun,' were just some of the comments made by pupils when describing the best lessons.

A small minority of parents expressed concerns about behaviour. Inspectors investigated this thoroughly and found that the introduction of lunch-time activities has reduced incidents of poor behaviour. Behaviour is good during break times.

The headteacher works well with staff and the governing body to ensure pupils receive a good level of care and feel safe. Senior leaders are increasingly using assessment information to identify the pupils who would benefit from additional support. This is helping to accelerate progress for some pupils. Nevertheless, the

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way the school monitors and evaluates its performance lacks rigour. For instance, there is not always enough focus on how well different groups of pupils are learning when checking the quality of teaching.

Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory, and where leadership and management is no better than satisfactory, may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate progress in Key Stage 1 and 2 by:
 - ensuring all teachers use assessment information to match activities to the learning needs of pupils of different abilities, and especially the more able
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to use and apply their writing and mathematical skills across different subjects.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better by making sure:
 - teachers use a range of strategies to check how well pupils are progressing in order to move pupils on to their next steps in learning or to clarify misconceptions
 - pupils play a more active role in evaluating and improving their work during lessons
 - written feedback to pupils provides them with the precise guidance they need to improve their work.
- Ensure leaders and managers at all levels promote good achievement for all groups of pupils by:
 - rigorously monitoring and evaluating pupils' outcomes and the quality of teaching
 - focusing on how well different groups of pupils are learning when providing feedback to teachers and reporting to the governing body.

Main report

At Church Vale, staff successfully help pupils to become confident, considerate and respectful individuals because of the strong emphasis given to pupils' spiritual, social and moral development. Pupils' understanding of other cultures is developing satisfactorily. Pupils who attend the breakfast club are well supervised. They enjoy a healthy breakfast and participate in a good range of activities.

Since the last inspection there have been a number of changes in staffing. In some year groups, such as in Year 2, half of pupils joining the school part way through the key stage disrupted their progress. These factors resulted in uneven rates of progress, and as shown by the school's own assessment information, not all pupils in Years 1 to 6 made enough progress. In response to this, senior leaders introduced a more formal process of identifying pupils who were underachieving and the actions

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that needed to be taken to accelerate progress. This process is having a beneficial impact. Achievement is now satisfactory overall. By Year 6 attainment is broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics. Work in pupils' books, lesson observations and school assessments show that in the Nursery and Reception classes, children make good progress. Pupils in Years 1 to 6, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, make satisfactory, and sometimes good progress. More pupils are making good progress in writing than in mathematics, because this has been a focus for the school. These improvements demonstrate that the school has a satisfactory capacity for sustained improvement.

Observations of pupils in lessons shows that across the school, more-able pupils do not always make the progress of which they are capable. Suitable targeted support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and for pupils whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable enables them to make similar progress to their peers. Small group reading interventions are particularly successful, and enabling an increasing proportion of pupils who need additional support to make good progress.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, staff effectively encourage children to be independent and inquisitive. When children start in the Nursery, their skills and knowledge vary from year to year. They fluctuate from well-below to below age-related expectations. Taking this fully into account, inspectors looked at children's current work and the school's assessment information. The evidence shows that, from below-expected levels of entry, children in the Reception class are on track to reach expectations that are broadly similar to their age by the time they start Year 1. Children achieve well because staff plan activities which encourage children to learn from first-hand experiences. For instance, during a project linked to the story, *'Jack and the Beanstalk,'* children planted beans. As they grew, the children wrote down what they could see and measured the height of the beans.

Children in the Year 1 class joined Nursery with well-below expected skills and knowledge in communication, language and literacy. Attainment in reading for these pupils is currently below average. Pupils told inspectors that they enjoy reading and that, 'the books in school are exciting.' Pupils use an effective range of strategies to read unfamiliar words, but do not always fully understand what the text conveys. Through 'book club' activities, staff are increasingly providing opportunities to extend pupils' comprehension skills. In one effective example, pupils in Year 4 took it in turns to 'present' their book to an audience. They outlined the story plot and responded to questions by making reference to details in the text.

Equality is promoted satisfactorily but there is more to do to raise achievement for all groups. Although the school is steadily closing the gap between boys and girls and pupils nationally, inconsistencies remain. For instance, in Year 6, boys are working at the standards expected for their age whereas girls are working below national expectations.

Despite the steps being taken to accelerate progress, leaders and managers are not

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yet robustly promoting good achievement across the school. This is because pupils' outcomes and the quality of teaching are not monitored or evaluated with sufficient rigour. For instance, evaluations of teaching do not concentrate sharply enough on its impact on different groups of pupils. As a result, feedback to teachers does not always provide them with the specific guidance they need to accelerate progress for all pupils in their class. Similarly, reports to the governing body tend to focus on the descriptions of the school's actions that have been taken rather than evidence of the impact of these upon pupils' outcomes. This leads to a generous view of the school's performance and inhibits the governing body's ability to hold the school to account.

In lesson, pupils cooperate, listen carefully and respond with enthusiasm when they are given opportunities to discuss their work with others. In many lessons, teachers make effective use of electronic whiteboards to introduce activities and ask open-ended questions which extend pupils' thinking. In one effective example, pupils in a Year 5 class were given a budget and they had to 'purchase' items for a fairground. During the lesson, the teacher successfully challenged pupils by asking them a range of questions which encouraged them to extend the range of calculations they were using. The most effective lessons are characterised by brisk and clear explanations and activities which provide a suitable level of challenge for all pupils. Pupils are also encouraged to play an active role in evaluating and improving their work. This effective practice is not widespread.

Teaching has a satisfactory, rather than good, impact on pupils' learning over time for a number of reasons. In too many lessons teachers do not make the best use of assessment information to match activities to meet the learning needs of pupils of different abilities. This is particularly the case for the more able whose activities often lack challenge. In some lessons, there are insufficient checks on how well pupils are learning. Consequently, pupils who are finding the activities easy are not always moved on to their next step in their learning quickly enough. Equally, those who are struggling are not always given timely support. Teachers' marking varies considerably. It does not always provide pupils with the precise guidance they need to improve their work. Currently, the overuse of worksheets in other subjects provides limited opportunities for pupils to use and apply their writing and mathematical skills in different contexts. This is because pupils are restricted to giving brief responses.

Pupils told inspectors they feel safe and that behaviour in school has improved. Discrimination is not tolerated. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe. For instance, pupils spoke confidently about e-safety. They particularly like the organisational changes that have been made to lunch times and the introduction of different activity areas. The impact of these changes can be seen in the marked reduction of incidents of poor behaviour. While the very large majority of parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire think that behaviour is good, a very small minority raised concerns about bullying and the way it is managed. When occasional instances of bullying do occur, school records show they are handled well. The school is working with a range of agencies to encourage the very small number of pupils with challenging behaviour to behave appropriately.

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The governing body ensures that safeguarding procedures are regularly reviewed and staff are well trained.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Church Vale Primary School and Foundation Unit 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 12 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 64 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 194 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
Q1 My child is happy at school	51	80	12	19	1	2	0	0
Q2 My child feels safe at school	48	75	13	20	2	3	0	0
Q3 The school helps my child to achieve as well as they can	50	78	14	22	0	0	0	0
Q4 The school meets my child’s particular needs	49	77	13	20	2	3	0	0
Q5 The school ensures my child is well looked after	48	75	15	23	1	2	0	0
Q6 Teaching at this school is good	47	73	17	27	0	0	0	0
Q7 There is a good standard of behaviour at this school	40	63	20	31	3	5	1	2
Q8 Lessons are not disrupted by bad behaviour	29	45	28	44	6	9	0	0
Q9 The school deals with any cases of bullying well	33	52	21	33	4	6	3	5
Q10 The school helps me to support my child’s learning	42	66	20	31	2	3	0	0
Q11 The school responds to my concerns and keeps me well informed	44	69	15	23	4	6	1	2
Q12 The school is well led and managed	48	75	13	20	2	3	1	2

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	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 2010 to 31 December 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 2010/11 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 achievement of all pupils. ■ Behaviour and safety. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The effectiveness of leadership and management. <p>and taking into consideration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ how well the school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
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 June 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Church Vale Primary School and Foundation Unit, Mansfield, NG20 0TE

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school. We enjoyed visiting your lessons, looking at your work and talking to you about your school. I would also like to thank the pupils who completed the inspection questionnaire.

Your school provides you with a satisfactory education. You make satisfactory progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Some of you make good progress. Here are some of the things we found.

- In lessons you are keen to learn and listen carefully.
- You told us that behaviour has improved and is good.
- The youngest children in the Nursery and Reception classes make good progress.
- You told us that the staff take good care of you and help you to feel safe. We found that these aspects are strengths of the school.
- You have good levels of attendance.

We have asked school leaders and managers to carefully check how well you are all doing so that you make even faster progress. We have asked your teachers to give you work that is not too easy or too difficult and to make sure they give you helpful advice when they mark your work.

When we were in lessons, we saw a few of your teachers checking how well you were learning and giving you support or providing you with more challenging work. This helped some of you to make good progress. We have asked all your teachers to help you make as much progress as you can during lessons. You can all help by continuing to attend regularly, behaving well and working hard in lessons. We would like to wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Usha Devi
Her Majesty's Inspector

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