

Trefonen CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123507
Local Authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	380675
Inspection dates	10–11 October 2011
Reporting inspector	Alan Dobbins

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	125
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Mills
Headteacher	Cathy Dunleavy
Date of previous school inspection	19 November 2008
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Inspectors observed seven lessons and each of the six class teachers who were teaching over the time of the inspection. They held meetings with the Chair of the Governing Body and another governor, staff, groups of pupils and the school's local authority link adviser. Inspectors looked at policies and reviewed documents and the data the school has on pupils' progress, together with an examination of policy and procedures for safeguarding. They scrutinised 60 questionnaires from parents and carers as well as those submitted by staff and pupils.

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

- How accurate is the school's information on pupils' attainment and progress?
- How well do teachers use information about what pupils know and can do in planning lessons that are right for them?
- How effective is the team of senior leaders and governors in improving the quality of the school?
- How good a start do children get in the Reception class?

Information about the school

Trefonen is a smaller than average-sized village school. Almost all the pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average, while that of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is similar to the national average. Because of the small size of the school, each class is mixed age with pupils' chronological ages extending well over two years. Four of the five classes are each jointly taught by two teachers employed under a job share arrangement. A privately run playgroup is located on the school site. This is subject to separate inspection and reporting. The school received a monitoring visit in December 2009 which found the school had made too little progress in raising standards and satisfactory progress in improving the quality of the leadership team.

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

Trefonen is a satisfactory school that is showing improvement with standards rising more quickly than at the time of the monitoring visit. It continues to be a warm and welcoming place, but with increasingly higher expectations for learning. In a caring, supportive and well-ordered school pupils flourish as growing young people who when they leave are ready to meet the challenges of secondary education. Most parents and carers are committed supporters of the school. One saying 'I know that my child is safe at school and I am very pleased that she is doing well and is so happy here'.

The Reception year provides a good start. Starting with skills and understanding broadly around the levels expected of them nationally in each of the areas of early learning, children make progress over the year. As a consequence, they enter Year 1 with levels just above national averages. Through the school pupils make progress in the core subjects of English and mathematics. In English especially, the standards they attain have steadily improved over the last three years from below to above the national average. Last year girls left the school with standards in English substantially above the national average and boys almost matched their level. Improvement in mathematics has been slower, from substantially below to broadly average, making achievement satisfactory overall. The better performance in Key Stage 2 is also reflected in the improving attainment of pupils in Key Stage 1, with reading and writing being well above average for the last year.

Its small size and strong relationships gives the school a family feel. Pupils say they are comfortable at school and feel safe there, and this is confirmed by their parents and carers. They say they like being there very much because learning is often fun and because school is such a friendly place. Attendance is good. By behaving well in lessons and most often working hard to do their best pupils show that they have fully accepted their role as learners. The strong link with the local church provides valuable opportunities to develop spiritual beliefs, such as the importance of trust, respect and friendship and to learn about right and wrong. These contribute to pupils knowing the right choices, especially when they have to do with staying safe and keeping healthy.

Through their good self evaluation procedures senior leaders and the governing body know the school's strengths and weaknesses well. The senior leadership team has been stable for more than a year. This has allowed leaders to have an increasing impact on improving the school. The trend for rising attainment in the core subjects

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reflects this. Their good programme for monitoring, evaluating and improving teaching is resulting in more good lessons being taught. Nevertheless, at this time not all lessons promote good enough progress and this is why teaching is satisfactory overall. In these lessons the wide range of pupils' learning needs seen in the mixed age classes is not dealt with well enough. Planning does not take a precise enough account of what pupils know and can do, and for some their tasks can be either too hard or too easy. Both act to limit learning. Also, the current system for recognising how well pupils are doing in their learning does not flag up those who are falling behind in their learning quickly enough. This means that their progress is slowed more than it should be because they do not gain a speedy access to the interventions available to provide additional support for their learning. The capacity of senior leaders for sustaining this improving picture is satisfactory.

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.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards and progress, especially in mathematics, by:
 - sharpening the use of assessment information so that teachers can plan lessons that are always made up of tasks that effectively challenge each pupil
 - monitoring and further improving the quality of teaching and learning to ensure that pupils make better progress and achieve as well as they should.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

In the lessons where planning matches the learning needs of each pupil progress is good. In these lessons individuals and groups, such as boys/girls and the gifted and talented perform equally well against their targets for learning. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make equivalently good progress against their targets because their tasks are right for them and they are supported well by the teaching assistants. This effective learning was seen in a good lesson in mathematics on place value. The wide range of pupils' learning needs was managed well. As a result all pupils made equivalently good gains against their targets. This was possible because the teacher broke the class down into five groups with appropriate tasks that pupils were able to manage. For those in each group the level of challenge was good and all pupils made good progress. The pupils enjoyed the lesson, worked hard and took pride in explaining their new learning.

Pupils are comfortable in school, as learners and especially as youngsters growing up. They gain good benefit from and are proud of the contribution they make to the running of the school; as members of the school council, sports captains, safer school representatives, prayer leaders and as energy busters who help manage the school's energy saving and recycling schemes. The good take up of lunchtime sports

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clubs shows good awareness of the need to maintain a healthy life style. The well established relationships with the local church and with village life have a very positive impact on pupils’ spiritual, moral and social development. Pupils regularly take part in church festivals. They have been involved in discussions about the community playing fields and are currently engaged in helping to redevelop a disused coal mine as part of a local heritage project. The school is good at providing opportunities for pupils to learn about the traditions and beliefs of others.

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

How effective is the provision?

The primary challenge for teachers is to meet pupils’ very wide range of learning needs, a natural result of mixed age grouping. The improving standards seen in English and mathematics throughout the school show that they are getting better at this. Lesson observations over the time of the inspection demonstrated that teachers have the skills and competencies to continue to drive up standards and improve progress. For example, in the good mathematics lesson on place value, good planning around the teacher’s good knowledge of what pupils knew and could do meant that no pupil found their tasks either too hard or too easy. The good deployment of the two teaching assistants meant that pupils quickly gained help when it was needed. As a result each pupil in the lesson made equivalently good gains against their targets for learning. But, teachers’ potential for fully meeting their challenge is limited by the quality of the assessment information on what their pupils know and can do, and on how well they are doing against their target lines for learning. Senior leaders have tried to help, for example by streaming pupils for

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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lessons in mathematics according to their capabilities. But this has not been fully effective because even in these streamed classes the range of learning needs remains considerable. The improving performance of pupils is strong evidence that the job sharing arrangements are not barriers to improvement.

The curriculum provides satisfactory preparation for the challenge of pupils’ next school. They like the range of topics that are becoming increasingly effective in making the curriculum a cohesive package of linked subjects. Last year much of the money regularly donated by The Friends of Trefonen helped fund many of the visits to local and regional places. These were well used in broadening and enriching pupils’ learning experiences and in bringing classroom learning alive. Pupils visited places of worship and museums. A visit to Llandudno promoted learning about the geography and history of a seaside resort and how life there differs from life in the country.

Pupils flourish as developing young people because their personal and social needs are met well. The procedures for care, guidance and support are good, reflected in the friendly advice and encouragement that staff routinely offer to pupils. Provision for the small number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is met in full. Records show that when required specialist help, for example from the community support officer, the education welfare service or the educational psychologist is quickly available and is most often effective. Transition arrangements into the Reception year from the co-located private nursery work very well. Transition through the school and to the local secondary school that most pupils attend also work well and ensure a smooth passage. The prompt check made on pupils’ absence contributes to their overall good attendance. Supporting the personal and social development of pupils is a strength. Pupils leave the school confident that they are capable of meeting the challenges of their next school.

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?

The headteacher gains good support from senior leaders and members of the governing body. They have channelled their efforts to good effect in striving to improve the performance of their pupils. Importantly, the procedures for monitoring and evaluating teaching have been improved. The result of this is seen in pupils’ improving attainment and in the increasing proportion of good lessons. Members of the governing body, and those in the local authority linked with the school, recognise

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the better attainment of pupils over the last three years and see the school as improving.

Safeguarding procedures are thorough. Governors ensure that policies relating to safeguarding are effective in securing the safety and well being of the pupils. Statutory requirements are met. The training of staff is of good quality. The good links established with other relevant agencies are effective in making the school a safe and secure place for pupils. There is no discrimination of any sort. All pupils gain equivalently open access to all the school offers. Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities are looked after well and, mostly, gain the specialist support they require to help them in their learning and in dealing with their other difficulties. Through information on the web site, the handbook, the induction pack, the weekly newsletter and through twice a year formal meetings parents and carers gain considerable information on the workings of the school and the progress of their children. Especially, through the annual questionnaire and the class letterboxes they are able to communicate their feelings for the working of the school.

Due regard has been paid to community cohesion. The school is a central element in village life. Links with the other local schools through the improvement network and the multi lingual awareness programme have benefitted pupils by extending their curricular experiences beyond those achievable by the school alone. International links are well established. The link with a school in Pakistan, which includes the annual visit of teachers from the school, provides an excellent opportunity to learn about the lives of children from a different culture. Links with a school in Poland have just begun and many pupils have awareness of life in France through taking part in the pen pal scheme. Children are proud of their ongoing sponsorship to provide education and medical support for a young child in Tanzania.

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	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
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	3

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Early Years Foundation Stage

The Reception Year provides children with a good start. In part, this is because the recently acquired assessment system is being rolled out first for the youngest children. Already, this is working well. The records of childrens’ developmental levels on entry are detailed and precise and the charts show small step progress in such a way that children who are falling below their target lines are quickly recognised. This helps the teacher and the assistants create learning opportunities that are relevant to each child. The good progress children make reflects the precision with which sessions are planned. Children settle quickly. The Reception class is a purposeful, but fun place. Children confidently go about developing emerging friendships and work hard at their learning, including learning personal skills such as turn taking, sharing and listening. Good leadership and management ensure an appropriate balance of indoor and outdoor activities that are both child initiated and adult led. Parents and carers appreciate the good start their children gain in the Reception year.

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

Most of the parents and carers who talked with inspectors held very positive views on all aspects of the school. About half of the parents and carers answered the questionnaire. Almost all were supportive of the work of the school. They are pleased their children enjoy being at school and with the school overall. They like the progress their children are making and the way they are prepared for the challenges of their next school. A small minority expressed concern about the standards of behaviour. Inspectors looked closely at this and judged that behaviour throughout the school was good. Pupils’ good behaviour and their good attitudes to their learning are contributing to their improving standards. Three parents and carers wrote lengthy letters. Inspectors looked closely at these. Their judgement is that even though the work of the school does not please all parents and carers the headteacher, senior leaders and governors are fully committed to improving the school by providing the best they can for all children.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Trefonen 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 60 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 125 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	26	43	32	53	2	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	32	54	26	44	1	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	19	32	34	57	5	8	1	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	16	28	37	64	4	7	1	2
The teaching is good at this school	20	33	36	60	3	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	14	24	39	67	3	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	20	33	38	63	2	3	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)	15	28	32	59	2	4	1	2
The school meets my child’s particular needs	15	25	39	66	4	7	1	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	8	14	38	66	10	17	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	12	20	40	68	5	8	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	10	17	38	66	4	7	5	9
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	21	35	35	58	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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 08 April 2011 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 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.



12 October 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Trefonen CofE Primary School, Oswestry, SY10 9DY

Thank you for making us feel welcome when we came to your school. We found it to be a satisfactory school that is improving. These are some of the things we especially liked.

- Your good behaviour in lessons and throughout the school, which helps you in your learning and in the good way you are growing up.
- You saying you are safe and secure at school and enjoy being there.
- The improvements we have seen in your work in English, especially, and in mathematics.
- The way in which your headteacher, the governing body and all the staff are working to make the school an even better place for you.

I have asked your governors and the senior leaders to do a few things to make your school a better place for learning. I want the assessment information that teachers keep on you to be more detailed so that they can use this information in planning lessons that are always right for you, not too hard and not too easy. I also want teachers to quickly know who is not doing well enough in their learning. This will help you gain extra help more quickly than you do now. When these are done you should make better progress in your learning.

Of course, you can all help by continuing to behave as well, and working equally as hard in your lessons, as you did over the days of our visit.

Yours sincerely

Alan Dobbins
Lead inspector

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