

Taxal and Fernilee CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	112872
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	378589
Inspection dates	26–27 April 2012
Lead inspector	Krishan Sharma

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	195
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sally Whelan
Headteacher	Victoria Keen
Date of previous school inspection	16 July 2009
School address	Reddish Road Whaley Bridge High Peak SK23 7DL
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Krishan Sharma

Additional inspector

Richard Boswell

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors visited 12 lessons taught by eight teachers. Two groups of pupils from Years 1 and 2 were heard reading. Meetings were held with the Chair of the Governing Body, senior and middle leaders and three groups of pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a wide range of documentation including safeguarding records, school improvement planning, a summary of the school's self-evaluation, pupils' written work and tracking records of pupils' progress in basic skills. One hundred and thirteen questionnaires returned by parents and carers were analysed, as were those completed by pupils and staff.

Information about the school

Taxal and Fernilee Church of England Primary is smaller than the average primary school. Almost all pupils come from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average. The proportion of pupils supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average. The on-site breakfast club is managed by a private provider and did not form part of this inspection. The school holds Healthy Schools status, the bronze Eco-School award and the Activemark in sport.

The school meets the current floor standards, whereby the government sets the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- This is a good school, which has gone from strength to strength since its last inspection when it was judged to be satisfactory. It has acquired a good capacity to improve, which has been a key factor in improving the quality of teaching and pupils’ achievement. The school is not yet outstanding because not all aspects of teaching, monitoring and evaluation are of the highest possible standard.
- Pupils make good progress as they move through the school. As a result, their attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 is above average.
- Teaching is good. Teachers display secure subject knowledge and ask searching questions. The use of sustained discussion to promote pupils’ learning is variable, as are the expectations for the more able. Pupils’ skills in assessing their own performance are not consistently secure. Senior leaders provide a range of opportunities for teachers to develop their classroom practice.
- Behaviour is good in lessons and around the school. Pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to learning and engage with activities in lessons without prompting. They are considerate and care for each other. Attendance remains above average. Pupils feel safe.
- The determined leadership provided by the headteacher, other leaders and the governing body is central to the school’s success. The school’s self-evaluation is accurate and suitably informs priorities for further development and foci for the management of performance of teachers. Even so, benchmarks to assess the success of measures taken are not always clear or verifiable. Monitoring and evaluation are regular features in the life of the school, although the relevant skills of some staff, particularly middle leaders, are not sufficiently fine-tuned to be fully effective.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

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

- Raise the quality of teaching so that as many lessons as possible are outstanding by:
 - ensuring that teachers convey consistently high expectations of the more-able pupils in all lessons
 - using sharply focused discussion to promote pupils' learning during all lessons
 - increasing pupils' understanding of how well they have done and what they need to do next to improve their work.

- Strengthening monitoring and evaluation by:
 - establishing clearer and measurable benchmarks for evaluating the impact of actions taken to implement plans for improvement
 - regularly updating the monitoring and evaluation skills of middle leaders.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Children enter Reception with skills and knowledge that are usually broadly in line with those expected for their age. They make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage across all areas of their learning. From then on, pupils continue to make good progress in their basic skills as they move up through the school. By the time pupils leave the school at the end of Year 6, their attainment is above average in English and mathematics and their progress compares very favourably with all pupils nationally. Boys and girls achieve equally well and perform above their respective national groups. The few disabled pupils and those with special educational needs achieve as well as their peers. The additional support they receive ensures that they are not left behind in their learning of basic literacy, communication and numeracy skills.

In lessons, pupils read and write for various purposes. Their written work indicates that they frequently read to gather information in different subjects. For example, research undertaken into different religions demonstrated their confident skills in locating and summarising relevant information. In a Year 3 lesson, pupils followed up a recent visit to a mosque with lively discussion that led to writing which was rich in detail and full of vivid vocabulary. In numeracy lessons, pupils show mental agility and enjoyment in making quick calculations. The application of mathematical skills in solving problems is increasing as a result of it being a key school focus. In lessons, pupils are keen to communicate with others about their learning, but their conversations do not always show sufficient depth.

Attainment in reading at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 is above average, thanks to the systematic teaching of reading and its use across the curriculum being strong features of the school's provision. The focus in lessons on improving pupils' phonic skills (linking letters and sounds) is also having a positive impact on achievement in

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reading.

Quality of teaching

Teaching is good across the school and a minority of lessons have some outstanding features. Parents and pupils rightly view the quality of teaching and pupils' resulting progress very favourably. Typically, teachers are aware of pupils' prior knowledge and understanding, and plan to build on them. They show good subject knowledge, which is clearly reflected in the quality of the questions they ask and the explanations they give during lessons. In general, teachers have high expectations, but these are not reflected in all lessons. Some of the more-able pupils are occasionally not sufficiently challenged to go beyond what they already know, understand and can do. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are suitably supported. As a result of the personal attention they receive and the planned work that takes into account their precise learning needs, they make good progress.

In the very best examples of teaching, teachers adopt strategies that motivate pupils to give their best. In a Year 1 lesson, the teacher expected pupils to show their accurate understanding and application of phonic skills through physical movements, which they did with gusto. In another lesson, in Year 2, the teacher enthused pupils to create a piece of writing for Year 1 pupils. The use of music, artwork and video clips provided timely stimuli and elicited creative responses. The clear brief that specified purpose and the audience for this writing task focused pupils' minds and pupils rose to the occasion. Teachers' comments during lessons and their marking of written work indicate to pupils what they have done well and how they could improve their work. When this is done well, it gives pupils the necessary tools to assess their own work, but this is not a consistent picture across the school.

In most lessons, teachers plan opportunities for pupils to work in pairs and small groups to promote their social skills. Religious education and personal, social and health education activities enable pupils to reflect on their own and others' experiences. As a result, they develop a good understanding of, and respect for, different views and cultural and religious traditions. The high profile given to school rules in classrooms and around the school ensures that pupils remain aware of the right conduct expected of them.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Most parents and carers are very positive about behaviour in school, although a few expressed some concern about bullying. Few pupils expressed concerns about behaviour in lessons and around the school through their response to the inspection questionnaire. In lessons, pupils display positive attitudes towards their learning. They demonstrate a good level of engagement with their work in lessons, which is also evident in their written work over time. They get on well with each other. Around the school, they are considerate and courteous towards each other and adults. During discussions with inspectors, pupils confirmed that disruption in lessons is unusual and behaviour around the school is typically good – a view that matches

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what inspectors found during their observations. Pupils also confirmed that sometimes, away from the classrooms, 'falling out' and disagreements do occur. They assured inspectors that bullying in any form, including that which is prejudice-based, is rare and staff deal with all such cases swiftly and effectively. The school takes pride in reporting that it has never had a reason to exclude a pupil. Extensive discussions with pupils and additional observations of pupils' behaviour led the inspectors to conclude that there are few well-founded concerns.

Pupils say that they feel safe at school and their parents and carers agree with them. Attendance is above average. Pupils are aware of risks, including that of cyber-bullying, and are confident enough to approach an adult if they have any concerns.

Leadership and management

Leaders and managers at all levels, including the governing body, are fully committed to improving pupils' academic achievement and their personal qualities. Much has already been achieved under the resolute leadership of the headteacher. A strong capacity to improve further is now well established. The priorities remain focused on raising attainment and improving the quality of teaching. The systematic tracking of pupils' progress is strong, as is the informal and formal monitoring of teaching. Both measures contribute to the setting of performance management objectives for staff and inform their professional development. This includes opportunities for teachers to observe each other's classroom practice, which they find professionally refreshing. The implementation of plans is regularly reviewed for impact. However, the benchmarks for measuring the impact are not always clear or usable. This means, at times, that leaders at all levels have an incomplete picture of the effectiveness of actions taken. Senior and middle leaders contribute to the school's monitoring and evaluation, although the latter have a limited remit for the monitoring of teaching and their skills are underdeveloped.

The school's curriculum has good breadth and balance. It is well organised to meet the needs and interests of all groups of pupils, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. The strong focus on development and application of basic skills ensures that not only do pupils achieve well by the time they leave school, but they are also well prepared for the next stage of their education. The curriculum provides a range of experiences through educational visits, art, music and drama that promote reflection and creative response. The displays in the school clearly indicate that pupils have been exposed to cultural diversity and their understanding about different cultural traditions is strong. Links with a school in Poland have further advanced pupils' global awareness.

Arrangements for safeguarding meet statutory requirements. The school's policies and procedures ensure pupils' safety. Equal opportunities are promoted through rigorous monitoring of the performance of all groups. Consequently, the school is able to ensure that all pupils are given opportunities to succeed and that no one is at a disadvantage.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data 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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



30 April 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Taxal and Fernilee CofE Primary School, High Peak, SK23 7DL

Thank you for all the help you gave the inspection team when we visited your school recently. Special thanks are due to those pupils who filled in questionnaires or came to talk to us and share their views about the school. It was good to talk to you during lessons and see your work. You will be pleased to know that we judged your school to be good.

- You make good progress as you move up through the school but some of you could do even better.
- The standards you achieve in English and mathematics by the time you leave are above average.
- Teaching is good and this helps you to learn well.
- You behave well in lessons and around the school.
- You say you feel safe at school and your parents and carers agree with you.
- The teachers, headteacher and governors have worked hard to improve your school since its last inspection.

To improve the school further, we have asked those in charge to make sure that:

- all lessons are the best they can be, by getting teachers to demand more of those of you who would benefit from further challenge and by showing you how to assess your own work
- you are given more opportunities to discuss your work in lessons
- all leaders measure more thoroughly how well their plans are working, and those who are responsible for visiting classrooms continue to refine their checking skills.

All of you can also help by checking your own work before you show it to your teachers.

Yours sincerely

Krishan Sharma
Lead inspector

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