

Prestbury St Mary's Church of England Junior School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	115696
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	395549
Inspection dates	21–22 June 2012
Lead inspector	Christine Field

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	238
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Daphne Philpot
Headteacher	Nicki Bennett
Date of previous school inspection	April 2009
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Introduction

Inspection team

Christine Field

Additional Inspector

Mark Anderson

Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors observed teaching and learning in twenty four lessons, with nine and a half hours in total spent observing ten teachers and most teaching assistants. The inspectors held meetings with members of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. Informal discussions were held with parents and carers during the inspection. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line Parent View survey in planning the inspection. The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at documentation including school policies, pupils' books, progress data, safeguarding records and evidence of the monitoring of teaching and learning. The inspectors analysed 94 questionnaires from parents and carers, 72 from pupils in Key Stage 2 and 28 from staff.

Information about the school

The school is average-sized and serves the village of Prestbury and the surrounding area. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. There are very few pupils from minority ethnic groups and all pupils have English as their first language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is broadly average. There are no pupils with disabilities currently on roll. The school met the government's current floor standards in 2011 which set the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress.

The school runs an after-school club for up to 24 pupils from 3.30pm to 5.30pm on weekdays. This is managed by the governing body and was therefore included as part of this inspection. The school has been accredited with the Healthy Schools and Bronze Eco awards. The school is a provider for initial teacher training (ITT).

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. The school is not yet outstanding because recent improvements to achievement in reading have not yet been sustained over time and there are some inconsistencies in teaching.
- Pupils' progress is tracked closely. Rigorous analysis of data is used effectively to target those in danger of falling behind. As a result, pupils who are particularly vulnerable, including those who have special educational needs, benefit from timely interventions and achieve well. Attainment is above average at the end of Key Stage 2. However, pupils do not have specific targets to help them aim higher in reading and checks on the levels being reached are not yet as well developed as in writing and mathematics.
- Teaching is good. In the most effective lessons pupils display exemplary attitudes to learning as they complete tasks that captivate their sustained interest, challenge their thinking, and extend their knowledge and skills at a rapid pace. Occasionally, checks on how well different groups are doing in lessons lack focus and not all teachers make the best use of the plenary sessions at the end of lessons to evaluate how well different pupils have achieved.
- Behaviour is good and pupils have good attitudes to learning. Their attendance is above average. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very well fostered by rich and exciting curricular experiences. The rare instances of bullying are dealt with effectively and pupils say they feel safe. Most parents and carers strongly agree that the school looks after their children very well.
- Leadership and management are good. The robust leadership of the school's performance and quality of teaching is bringing clear improvement in the outcomes for pupils. The strong teamwork of school leaders, staff and governors, together with very high expectations and shared ambition to make the school even better, underpins the school's good effectiveness.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Extend pupils' reading skills, particularly at the higher levels by December 2012, by:
 - widening opportunities for independent research and improving opportunities to promote reading skills across the curriculum
 - making sharper and more frequent checks on progress in reading and ensuring that pupils are set individual targets not only in writing and mathematics but also in reading.
- Raise the quality of teaching and its impact on learning by December 2012 so that all pupils maximise their achievement by:
 - teachers making more regular checks on progress during lessons to ensure that all pupils are working quickly enough towards meeting challenging learning objectives and are getting enough work completed
 - ensuring that plenary sessions in lessons are always used to take stock of how well different pupils have progressed and to use evaluations consistently to inform the planning of future lessons.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Pupils make good progress and achieve well in relation to their varying, but typically above average, starting points. Attainment in reading, writing and mathematics improves well during pupils' time at school and is securely above average at the end of Key Stage 2. In the current cohort nearly half of the year group is predicted to reach higher than the national average in mathematics and over a third is predicted to reach a similar level in writing. The very large majority of parents and carers rightly believe that their children are making good progress. One parent's comment reflects those expressed, 'My child has made tremendous progress because he feels valued and the school has a strong ethos where children want to achieve and do well.' Pupils say that the school helps them make good progress because of the 'helpful teachers and teaching assistants who always give us help when we get stuck'. The rigorous analysis of data and close tracking of progress pinpoint those in danger of falling behind. As a result, pupils who are particularly vulnerable, including those eligible for free school meals and those who have special educational needs, benefit from timely interventions and achieve as well as others.

Since September, reading has received high priority in the light of the dip in achievement seen in 2011. The school's timely actions have already had a good impact, with the vast majority of boys and girls in all year groups reading at least in line with their chronological age. The more-able pupils are being suitably challenged. Attainment in reading is above average in Year 6 with two fifths of pupils on track to reach above the national average. Pupils throughout the school who find reading a challenge benefit from well-planned additional support, including one-to-one

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sessions. Activities such as 'Round the World' reading days inspire enthusiasm for, and pleasure in, reading. High quality guided reading sessions, for example in Years 3 and 4, usefully focus on pupils' specific needs following assessment of their proficiency in recognising words, strategies for decoding text and comprehension. However, the school's new arrangements to assess the National Curriculum level at which pupils are working in reading are not yet in place in all year groups and this results in missed opportunities to promote pupils' wider reading and independent research skills.

Pupils are highly motivated, enjoy their learning and apply themselves diligently to their work. This was well illustrated in an outstanding geography lesson in Year 6 about the Amazonian rainforest. Pupils demonstrated exemplary attitudes as they considered the perspectives of the different interest groups before building cogent arguments for and against the actions being taken which are resulting in deforestation. Pupils' communication skills are well developed with highly respectful relationships enabling personal views to be put forward both orally and in writing without fear of ridicule. Opportunities like this also enable pupils to 'see the world through different eyes' and help to improve their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Quality of teaching

Teaching is good and sometimes outstanding. There is compelling evidence to show that improvements in teaching are reflected in the pupils' good and improving achievement, particularly in reading, but recognises the need for promoting reading skills more rigorously across the curriculum. The teaching staff are totally committed to providing the highest quality education for all pupils. They show a strong desire for improving their practice by engaging in on-going professional development. Parents and carers unanimously recognise the good teaching which is helping their children to achieve successfully. The comment by one member of the school staff reflects the views many shared with inspectors, 'I am very lucky to work with such a fantastic team, such wonderful children and families.'

Lessons are typically lively, interesting and well planned to promote pupils' good progress. An example of this was observed in a Year 5 lesson when pupils applied and shared various strategies to solve challenging problems using grid multiplication. Highly positive relationships underpin the good quality learning environment in all classes and teachers strive to enhance pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through the learning activities provided. Teachers are knowledgeable, enthusiastic and skilled in motivating the pupils, who behave well in lessons and apply themselves to their work diligently. Most lessons proceed at a brisk pace and enable pupils to work successfully and achieve challenging learning objectives. Teaching is rarely less than good because the school's strong performance management systems are focused on making good teaching the baseline standard on which to build for excellence. Occasionally, in otherwise effective lessons, teachers do not make it explicit to pupils what they need to do to complete enough good quality work in the available time, or the session at the end of the lesson is not

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always used to best effect to gauge how much pupils have learned and to help plan future lessons.

Pupils with special educational needs make similar progress to all other pupils because of the highly inclusive ethos of the school. Teachers use monitoring data extremely well to ensure that work meets the needs of all pupils very accurately and supports their good and improving progress. The support of well deployed teaching assistants ensures that all pupils are able to work well whether individually, in small groups or in class, and in the best lessons teachers make effective use of teaching assistants to log any pupils who identify the work is too easy or too hard.

Teachers mark pupils' work assiduously and their comments are consistently developmental and focused on how pupils can improve. Pupils enjoy plenty of opportunities to review their own work and that of their peers. The agreed convention of using 'tickled pink' to identify particularly positive work and 'green for growth' suggestions to help further improvement is a very positive feature. The school has already put in place procedures to ensure that the setting of individual targets for pupils in reading matches the good practice in place for target setting in writing and mathematics.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Although typical behaviour in school is good, a very small number of parents and carers identified concerns about the behaviour of a very few pupils. Despite this, a very large majority of parents and carers strongly agree that their children are looked after very well by the school, that behaviour is good and children are kept safe. This was evident in their responses to the questionnaire and in informal discussions with inspectors, and was also confirmed by the pupils' conversations with inspectors.

Pupils' attendance is above the level seen nationally and their punctuality is good. Pupils enjoy coming to school, display positive attitudes to learning, and are polite, courteous and give a friendly welcome to visitors.

Pupils are immensely proud of their school. For example, pupils in Year 6 were observed writing a speech for the headteacher to use at the new parents' evening. They described the school as 'fantastic, exciting and a fun place to be'. One boy wrote impressively, 'The school is wonderful and entitles everyone to a healthy learning environment in which rich experiences provide an amazing education for all pupils.'

Mutually respectful relationships contribute to the pupils' highly developed sense of right and wrong. Pupils say that the school rules are fair and help the school to run as an orderly and happy community. Any form of bullying, for example racism, homophobic or prejudice-based bullying related to size or special needs, is rare. When any instances do occur they are dealt with effectively. This was confirmed by pupils. Pupils have devised a system called 'several times on purpose' which is in place to support anyone who is unhappy with someone else's behaviour. Peer

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mediation has been a focus throughout the school and, as a result, there is a high level of pupils resolving their own playground disagreements amicably. This ensures that playtimes are happy and there is a safe atmosphere for everyone.

Leadership and management

The rigorous analysis of data, together with accurate self-evaluation, has enabled senior leaders to quickly get to grips with why achievement dipped last year and what aspects of provision need to be improved. Well-focused action planning has engaged senior and middle leaders in driving forward the necessary improvements, especially in the quality of teaching and reading, and is a strong indication of the school's capacity for future sustained improvement.

The strong team ethos, shared high expectations and a determined 'can do' culture promoted by the headteacher empower teachers to continually strive to improve their practice. Performance management is linked well to teachers' professional development and is viewed as a positive tool to support best practice.

The school leaders and staff place significant value on ensuring there is no discrimination and that all pupils are provided with equal opportunities to succeed. Pupils from all backgrounds, including those with special educational needs and the small number who demonstrate challenging behaviour, are all very well supported. The rich range of curricular experiences in and out of the classroom, including residential trips, visits to places of interest and the involvement of virtually all pupils in at least one school club, greatly enrich pupils' learning and have a very positive impact on their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

The governing body undertakes its role effectively and gives good support and challenge to the school. It, along with other school leaders, ensures that arrangements to safeguard pupils meet statutory requirements. Together with senior and middle leaders, the governing body undertakes a range of monitoring activities to check the impact of school development planning on raising pupils' attainment. The lively and interesting annual report to parents and carers ensures that everyone in the school community is kept fully informed about the life and development of the school.

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	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	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 2010 to 31 August 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.
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.

25 June 2012

Dear Pupils



**Inspection of Prestbury St Mary's Church of England Junior School,
Cheltenham GL52 5JB**

Thank you for the very friendly welcome you gave us when we came to inspect your school. We very much enjoyed talking with you and listening to your views. You are wonderful ambassadors for your school and the pride you show in your school is super to see. It was really good to hear about all the things you like most about the school. It was equally helpful to find out from parents and carers, governors and staff what they feel about life at St Marys too.

We have judged that your school is providing you with a good education. This means that some things are going well, but there are one or two things required to make it outstanding. These are the main things we found out about your school.

- Attainment is currently above average at the end of Key Stage 2. This reflects the good progress pupils have made since joining the school.
- Teaching is good overall and enables you to learn effectively, although not enough is outstanding and this stops a few of you making even better progress. Your achievement in reading is improving but we think you will make even better progress once you have reading targets to aim for as you do in writing and maths.
- Your behaviour is good and the way you listen and respond in your lessons is a credit to you. Relationships throughout the school are a significant strength.
- Your headteacher, teachers and governors and staff are working very well together to improve your school and have been very successful in finding out why achievement dipped last year and in stopping it happening again.

We have asked the school to make sure that all teachers check on your progress during lessons to ensure that everyone works quickly and gets enough work done. We have also asked them to make sure that all teachers find out at the end of lessons whether you feel you have met the success criteria. We also want teachers to give you more time for reading in other subjects as well as in literacy and for you to have more opportunities to research information for yourselves.

Finally, we would like to wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Christine Field
Lead inspector

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