

St Mary's Church of England Primary School

Station Road, Credenhill, Herefordshire HR4 7DW

Inspection dates	21–22 June 2016
Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders, including governors, work well as a team to provide good leadership and sustain an effective drive for improvement.
- Standards are rising throughout the school in response to consistently good teaching. Pupils are stimulated and challenged by the teachers' probing questions and make good progress.
- Pupils' progress has improved year-on-year since the previous inspection so that overall pupils achieve well during their time in this school.
- Strong teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make) underpins the good development of pupils' reading skills.
- Leaders make good use of additional pupil premium and physical education funding to raise pupils' achievements.
- Pupils behave well and show a keen interest in learning and work well in lessons.
- Staff share excellent relationships with the pupils and are diligent in caring for them and keeping them safe. As a result, pupils feel safe, enjoy school and their attendance is above average.
- Children in the early years are taught and supported well and make good progress from their starting points.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The school's new systems for recording pupils' progress are not yet presented or used to best effect to improve pupils' achievements.
- Pupils' handwriting skills are not developed well enough.
- Some lower-attaining pupils do not develop the wide vocabulary needed to write to a good standard, both descriptively and expressively.
- Opportunities for pupils to learn by undertaking responsibilities at break and lunchtimes are not organised consistently enough.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Refine the way that pupils' progress is recorded and analysed so that leaders can address any issues and improve outcomes for pupils more swiftly.
- Further improve pupils' writing by teachers:
 - insisting on high standards of handwriting
 - extending the vocabulary of lower-attaining pupils so they can write more fluently and confidently.
- Ensure that the responsibilities given to pupils at break and lunchtimes are organised more efficiently and help them to learn and play better.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- Leaders' efforts to establish a stronger team approach to leading and managing have been effective in driving the school forward since the previous inspection. The experienced headteacher and relatively new assistant headteachers' united efforts to bring improvement have also been strongly aided by much improved governance.
- An effective team now supports the headteacher in sustaining a culture where good teaching and behaviour flourish with equal success and is quickening pupils' progress. In addition, increased accuracy in identifying priorities and planning their development have quickened the pace of improvement.
- The leaders' success, especially this academic year, in restoring good teaching and pupils' achievement demonstrates their capacity to bring about further improvement. This is evident, for example, in the improved teaching of phonics and reading and its positive influence in advancing pupils' skills and interests in books.
- Leaders have introduced a new system for checking pupils' developing skills and this has ensured that teachers assess pupils' progress accurately. Currently though, information about pupils' progress is not recorded clearly or analysed precisely enough and, at times, this impedes leaders from taking swifter action to bring improvement.
- Leaders, including governors, fully meet their statutory obligations. They diligently promote caring values and supportive relationships, which all staff demonstrate consistently by treating pupils equally and preventing discrimination.
- These values are evident in the effective use of funding to provide additional adult support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The pupils' caring relationships and good behaviour are also seen every day, for example, in the well-organised breakfast club in which pupils joyfully begin their school day.
- The large majority of parents, staff and pupils who spoke with an inspector or responded in questionnaires welcomed the school's caring atmosphere and continuing improvement.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced and includes a strong focus on literacy and numeracy as well as discrete teaching, for example, of French, music and science.
- Learning includes stimulating activities such as studying fossils, baking biscuits and advertising an end of term concert that interests pupils. Pupils become enthusiastic learners and enjoy researching for themselves, for example, by using computers. Teachers also use stimulating texts to capture the pupils' imagination and encourage further reading at home. Leaders ensure that pupils' learning in lessons is enriched through a wide range of well-attended after-school and extra-curricular activities, such as the breakfast and gardening clubs.
- The school's strong promotion of caring values underpins the good development of the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Staff use assemblies, acts of collective worship and informative displays to encourage pupils to raise their achievements and become considerate and helpful young people. Activities such as participating in a singing festival in Birmingham and visiting a gurdwara and a mandir develop pupils' awareness of other people's beliefs and cultures.
- Leaders ensure that pupils develop a good knowledge of British values, such as tolerance and of democracy when, for example, electing pupils to the school council. Staff also take every opportunity in lessons to value and encourage pupils to express their opinions, currently, for example, about the forthcoming European Union referendum. Teachers also make use of the views of pupils coming to the school at different times from other areas to widen other pupils' understanding.
- Leaders, including governors, ensure that the primary school physical education and sports funding is used effectively to secure good teaching of physical education and to widen the range of sporting activities provided for the pupils. For example, the school employs specialist coaches to extend teachers' and pupils' skills in extra sports such as tennis, hockey and tag rugby. In turn, this variety of experience has also raised pupils' interest and participation in sport, with, for example, an increased number of younger pupils now attending sports clubs.
- The school uses the pupil premium funding effectively to support disadvantaged pupils. School records show that these pupils do well in relation to their starting points and particular needs. This additional funding is also used well to ensure that eligible pupils, including those arriving later than the normal times, are included in clubs and play a full part in all aspects of school life.

- The local authority has challenged and supported the school effectively in recent years. Guidance from advisers has proved beneficial, for example, in helping school leaders to strengthen development plans and keep safeguarding procedures and website entries up to date.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governance is effective. Governors have significantly improved the way they fulfil their duties since the previous inspection. Governors have responded well to the recommendations of the previous inspection. They have also acted on advice from the local authority and from outside consultants to strengthen the way they check the work of the school and plan its future development.
 - Governors ask searching questions of school leaders, including, for example, how school leaders develop good teaching and learning and manage staff performance effectively. As a result, governors now have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. For example, this enables them to ensure that additional funds, such as the physical education funding and the pupil premium, are used well to raise pupils' achievements.
 - Governors also use the information they have obtained from school leaders and from their own visits to the school to secure a clear overview of the school's work. This has helped them to play a key role in planning the strategic development of the school. For example, this academic year, governors have supported the headteacher in strengthening team leadership by appointing two assistant headteachers.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The school responds well to advice from the local authority and other outside specialists to ensure that staff are suitably trained. All staff implement agreed safeguarding procedures effectively to keep pupils safe. Staff provide good levels of care and welfare and are particularly sensitive to the needs of pupils with complex needs. Leaders liaise well with parents and outside agencies to ensure that potential risks to pupils' well-being are dealt with effectively.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- The pupils' typically good learning stems from consistently good teaching across the school. Both of these aspects represent significant improvements since the previous inspection. Much of this improvement has come from the collaborative work of existing and new leaders and teachers in sharing and developing their expertise effectively.
- All teachers work closely and effectively with teaching assistants. They cooperate well on a day-to-day basis to check pupils' developing skills and to plan suitably relevant and challenging work for them. Staff manage pupils' behaviour well and are particularly sensitive and effective in supporting pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Leaders' improved checks of provision and pupils' outcomes have been accompanied by more focused training opportunities for staff and have quickened pupils' progress. This is especially evident, for example, in the way strengthened teaching of phonics and reading has raised pupils' interest in books and confidence and skill in reading.
- Teachers have also improved the way they mark pupils' work and give pupils clear guidance about what to do next to improve. Pupils are responding well to teachers' advice and are increasingly showing their deeper thinking and improving skills in their subsequent work. Pupils, including the most able, are keenly responding to the increasing challenges they are given, but these have not yet been sustained long enough in all classes for them to make the best possible progress.
- Pupils are also rapidly improving their progress by responding to teachers' effective questioning. This is evident in all classes where pupils demonstrate and make good use of their speaking and listening skills well to enrich their learning.
- Teachers' raised expectations and good questioning are key elements driving the pupils' improved learning and progress in mathematics. These were seen, for example, during mathematics in Year 6, when pupils confidently and accurately explained how they rotated shapes to make 'pentominos'.
- In recent years, teachers have also strengthened the focus on developing the pupils' ability to write descriptively and expressively by using stimulating texts. This is having an increasingly positive influence by capturing pupils' interest and motivating them to write more extensively.
- The most able pupils, in particular, are extending and making full use of their wide vocabulary to enrich their writing. This was seen, for example, during English in Year 5, where pupils wrote enthusiastically about the characters in the story, 'Goodnight Mr Tom'.
- Pupils also develop their English and mathematics skills well through other subjects and stimulating activities. For example, pupils measure the rate at which water evaporates when heated and write explanations of how friction affects how a toy car travels on different surfaces.

- Pupils' handwriting skills are not developed as effectively through the school and some lower-attaining pupils lack confidence when writing because their vocabulary has not been widened enough.
- Leaders and staff are working productively to embed new systems for assessing pupils' progress without levels. They have responded well to guidance from outside agencies and now assess pupils' progress accurately. Currently, however, information about pupils' progress is not presented clearly enough and, at times, this inhibits staff from modifying their work and quickening pupils' progress earlier.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils share very supportive relationships with adults and with each other in and out of class. They respond very positively to adult support and are eager to share ideas and help each other to learn. For example, pupils collaborate very well and show consistently good attitudes to learning during lessons.
- These qualities have a positive influence and underpin pupils' good progress. Older pupils, in particular, describe how they are 'being challenged' and 'having to think more' and are doing better this year.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe is good. All staff collaborate well to ensure that statutory welfare procedures are implemented consistently. Staff provide high-quality care and support for pupils with complex needs. As a result, pupils say they feel safe at school.
- Pupils know about bullying and its many forms. For example, pupils talk with understanding about cyber bullying and know how to use computers safely. They say that there is very little bullying at school and that if it did happen, 'adults would deal with it and sort it out quickly'.
- Pupils on the school council undertake their roles seriously. They say that they are able to express their views and are proud of how they raise funds for charities, currently, for example, planning their own cake sale. Pupils also say that they have lots of friends and enjoy their breaktimes and value the stimulating facilities and wealth of equipment available.
- When questioned, pupils explained that they like their jobs at break and lunchtimes, 'but would like a rota and have them organised better'. Inspectors agree that opportunities for pupils to become more self-assured and helpful to others by undertaking responsibilities, especially during break and lunchtimes, are not developed consistently enough.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The supportive way pupils and adults relate towards each other is clearly evident in the community atmosphere engendered during whole-school assemblies and acts of collective worship.
- Pupils of all ages understand and obey school rules, for example about how to move considerately around the school. Pupils also diligently follow class rules such as taking turns.
- A pupil typically expressed the views of others in saying, 'We work hard to look after each other and make new friends.'
- The school's records of pupils' behaviour show continuing low levels of inappropriate behaviour and very little need for exclusion. Occasionally, a few pupils compete too robustly and need reminders to be more aware of others when playing games at breaktimes.
- Most parents who responded to the Ofsted questionnaire or spoke with an inspector expressed their full support of the school. Parents also expressed appreciation of the supportive relationships they have with staff and how they help their children to behave well.
- Staff and parents work well together in encouraging pupils' appreciation and enjoyment of school and in sustaining their above-average attendance.

Outcomes for pupils are good

- The pupils' broadly average attainment in national assessments at the end of Years 2 and 6 last year represented a positive improvement since the previous inspection. Those levels of attainment also reflected pupils' improved and increasingly good progress from their varying starting points and skills on entry.
- Current checks of pupils' developing skills and progress across the school show continuing improvement and that all groups of pupils are making more securely good progress.

- The pupils' good progress now reflects the consistently good teaching, which also enables pupils who have arrived from other settings other than at the normal time to achieve well during their time in the school.
- Pupils do particularly well in developing their speaking and listening skills and their reading and mathematical skills. By the end of Year 6, these skills and their good attitudes to learning prepare them well for transition to the next stage of their education.
- The majority of pupils are making good progress in learning how to write descriptively and extensively. Pupils study interesting topics such as comparing the Montague and Capulet families in 'Romeo and Juliet' and writing on display shows their lively expression. Some lower-attaining pupils still lack a sufficiently broad vocabulary and this restricts their ability to write descriptively and more expressively. At times, their weaker handwriting skills, and of some other pupils too, also restrict their ability to write fluently and with even more expression.
- Pupils are developing their basic numeracy and mathematical skills well as they move through the school. Most pupils are also showing greater confidence and ability in using their skills to tackle mathematical problems.
- The year-on-year increase and above average scores in the Year 1 phonics screening checks show that pupils are quickly developing their understanding of phonics. Pupils continue to make good progress and develop an interest in books that helps them to become confident capable readers by the time they leave the school.
- Leaders and staff make sure that additional funding such as the pupil premium is used well to support disadvantaged pupils. These pupils benefit from well-organised additional adult support for their learning.
- Leaders ensure that extra funding and support are also used to boost pupils' self-confidence in learning and enjoyment of school. For example, pupils attend the popular breakfast club, make valued friendships and increase their interest and engagement in learning. As a result, pupils in receipt of this additional support achieve at least as well and often better than their peers in the school and nationally.
- Teachers plan and set suitably demanding work to extend and deepen the learning of the most able pupils and this enables them to make similar progress in relation to their ability as their classmates.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because adults provide close and effective support that is precisely delivered to meet their individual needs.

Early years provision

is good

- The early years is well led and managed. It is underpinned by relatively new and existing staff sharing their expertise and collaborating well to further improve the learning experiences provided for the children.
- All staff work closely together to keep the children safe and to make sure that welfare procedures fully meet the statutory requirements. They sustain a calm and encouraging atmosphere which strongly promotes children's self-confidence and enjoyment of school.
- The children behave well and feel safe. For example, children sit attentively to listen to storybooks read by the teacher and develop a joyful interest in books that also aids their good progress in learning to read.
- The children's skills on entry vary from year to year and reflect the wide variety of pre-school settings they have experienced. Mostly, children's skills are below those typical for their age, especially in their personal, social and emotional development.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are good. Teachers work closely with teaching assistants to plan work that is built around a specific theme to interest the children. For example, the focus on 'Heroes' is stimulating and engaging boys and girls in learning equally successfully.
- Adults also enrich the children's early reading and writing skills well through good-quality teaching of phonics. All children, across the range of abilities, including the most able, make very good progress as they learn to recognise letters and their sounds. Children also benefit from good opportunities to write their ideas in books, but some do not form letters with sufficient accuracy.
- Teaching is good and enables children to make good progress during their time in Reception. This is evident in the above-average proportion of children reaching a good level of development and being well-prepared for future learning when they enter Year 1.
- Adults make regular observations of children's learning, which they record in children's books and in their 'learning journals'. Parents are also encouraged to record their comments. Staff assess the children's developing skills accurately. They use information effectively to make sure that daily teaching and the work presented to the children are well-matched to the children's needs and sustain their good progress.

- Children enjoy using a variety of learning resources. They work well together and share equipment in a kindly fashion. For example, they collect and group a variety of colourful objects and toys that stimulate their interest and make good progress in understanding number and extending their counting skills.
- Children learn well and undertake a variety of purposefully planned activities both inside and out of doors. For example, children make good use of the seaside role-play area in the classroom to improve their speaking and listening skills by sharing their ideas.
- Children make good progress in developing their social, physical and creative skills in the secure outdoor area. At times, however, children do not extend their writing and number skills enough when undertaking their self-chosen activities outside.

School details

Unique reference number	116799
Local authority	Herefordshire
Inspection number	10012400

This inspection 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	189
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Richard Wydenbach
Headteacher	John Moynihan
Telephone number	01432 760408
Website	www.credenhill.hereford.sch.uk
Email address	admin@credenhill.hereford.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	8–9 July 2014

Information about this school

- This school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The overwhelming majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- A well-below average proportion of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is also well below average.
- An above average proportion of pupils join and leave the school other than at the normal times.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium (additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after by the local authority) is below average.
- Children experience the early years provision in a Reception class. Other pupils across the school are also taught in single-age classes.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school holds a breakfast club each morning.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 15 lessons and saw the work of eight teachers.
- The lead inspector was accompanied by the headteacher during several of these visits to lessons.
- A wide range of documents was scrutinised, including records relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance, safeguarding procedures and the school's self-evaluation.
- Inspectors examined the school's systems for checking progress and records of checks on the quality of teaching.
- The inspectors talked to individual pupils and a representative group of pupils about the school and their work. They listened to individual pupils read, attended two assemblies and visited and discussed the breakfast club facilities. The inspectors also looked at samples of pupils' work across a range of subjects and classes.
- The inspectors held a meeting with members of the governing body and held meetings with school staff, mainly senior and middle leaders. The lead inspector also held telephone conversations with a representative of the local authority and the school's improvement partner.
- Members of the inspection team took account of the views expressed in the 21 online responses to Ofsted's online Parent View questionnaire and in 25 staff questionnaires and 34 pupil questionnaires. Inspectors gathered the views of a substantial number of parents during informal meetings at the school and received a letter from a parent during the inspection.
- The school's use of the primary physical education and sport funding and the pupil premium were also considered.

Inspection team

Alex Baxter, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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Ofsted Inspector

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