

FitzHerbert CofE (Aided) Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112883
Local Authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	311038
Inspection date	6 May 2008
Reporting inspector	Alison Cogher

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	55
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Clare Sales
Headteacher	Mrs Joan Foster
Date of previous school inspection	6 June 2005
School address	Ashes Lane Fenny Bentley Ashbourne Derbyshire DE6 1LD
Telephone number	01335 350362
Fax number	01335 350262

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: how well teaching enables pupils of different ages and abilities to learn and, the effectiveness of leadership and management in bringing about school improvement.

Evidence was gathered from lesson observations, scrutiny of school documentation and pupils' work. Parents' questionnaires and discussions with staff, governors and pupils also contributed to the judgements made. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified and these have been included where appropriate in the report.

Description of the school

Almost all pupils attending this very small school are of a White British background and very few are eligible for free school meals. An average proportion of pupils find learning particularly difficult and their needs are varied.

The school holds a number of nationally recognised awards including the FA Charter Standard, Healthy School Status, the Bronze Eco School, Activemark and Artsmark awards and the Intermediate International School award.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school. It is well supported by parents many of whom wrote to say how pleased they are with the standard of education it provides. Parents and pupils recognise and appreciate the friendly family atmosphere created in the school. Pupils say they enjoy school and feel valued as individuals. They say too, that they feel safe and secure at school because, if they need to, they can always turn to understanding adults for help. Within this supportive and welcoming environment that reflects the school's underpinning Christian values, pupils thrive personally and academically.

Standards vary from year to year and reflect the individual abilities of the often very small numbers of pupils in each year group. Pupils of all ages and backgrounds and those who find learning particularly difficult achieve well. Typically, children start in Reception with standards that are generally as expected for their age. They make good progress and most reach or exceed the expected goals by the end of their Reception year. Pupils continue to make good progress to reach what are often above average standards by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils' progress is thoroughly monitored to check how well they are doing and to provide teachers with information about what pupils need to learn next. Good use of this information has for example led to improvements in science teaching that is raising the standard of pupils' investigative work. Action such as this, which is sharply focused on improving pupils' achievement and the standard they reach, demonstrates the school's good capacity to improve further.

Teaching is good throughout the school. Teachers make good use of assessment information to guide the planning of lessons so that pupils of all ages and abilities can build successfully on what they have already learned. Teachers set realistic but challenging targets for pupils, who work hard to achieve them. Whilst this process is helping pupils to understand how well they are doing, they have only a limited understanding of what they as individuals need to do next to improve their work. However, relationships are good and pupils have the confidence to seek support from adults if they need help with their work. Teaching assistants provide good quality support for pupils with specific identified additional needs and those who find learning a particular challenge. Although not a consistent feature of lessons, pupils' learn particularly well when teachers plan activities that enable pupils who learn in different ways to do so equally well. For example, when learning about the features of persuasive writing, pupils in Years 3 and 4 worked in pairs to analyse large newspaper advertisements. Their learning was effective as they looked at, discussed, and then selected the key persuasive features of their advertisement.

Pupils of all ages play harmoniously together and take good care of each other. They are polite, courteous and friendly and enjoy being at school. This is reflected in their good attendance and behaviour and the way they concentrate in lessons and develop respectful and trusting relationships with each other and adults. The Christian values promoted by the school, together with the good pastoral support they receive, ensures pupils' personal skills develop well. The school's Church affiliation effectively supports pupils' spirituality and their cultural awareness through, for example, the link they have with a school in India. Child protection and safeguarding procedures are robust and pupils benefit from the school's constructive working partnerships with the community, other schools and outside agencies. Pupils have a good understanding of the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle and of how to keep themselves safe. Lunchtimes are a sociable event where pupils and staff enjoy eating together. Pupils enjoy and appreciate the good range of opportunities provided for them to be active during and after the school

day. Pupils take their responsibilities at school very seriously and work together very well. They make a good contribution to the school, local and wider world communities through their work as school councillors, their performances and fundraising. The standards pupils achieve, together with their good personal development, ensure that they are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

The curriculum is good overall and enriched significantly by a wide range of visits, visitors and after school activities. In addition, opportunities to work with experts in subjects such as music and sport add significantly to pupils' enjoyment of learning and the standards they reach. Residential visits and the themed events such as Arts Fortnight are much enjoyed by pupils who say these activities are fun and motivate them to learn. However, whilst the school makes some links between subjects, most are taught separately. Consequently, pupils are given few opportunities to apply and reinforce their skills in a range of contexts. The school's programme for supporting pupils' personal, social and health education is good and contributes well to pupils' growing confidence and maturity as they move through the school.

The headteacher and other staff lead and manage the school well. Governors are well informed and provide good support for the school. As they formalise their systems for monitoring the work of the school they are gaining confidence in their role as critical friends and increasingly contributing to school improvement. Strong teamwork has secured good improvement since the last inspection. Good systems are in place to enable the school to judge the effectiveness of its work and staff work closely together to agree and implement whole school improvement actions. At the heart of decisions made is the commitment to ensuring that all pupils have an equally good opportunity to achieve as well as they are able to.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The Foundation Stage is well led and managed. Adults work effectively to promote children's personal development and ensure that they are well prepared for learning. As a result, children enjoy school and they work and play very happily and have positive attitudes to learning. Parents are appreciative of the good care that helps children to settle quickly and feel secure and confident as they are integrated into the school. Typical of the comments made was 'The transition from pre-school was managed with great consideration and affection.' Good teaching ensures children make good progress and achieve well, with most reaching or exceeding the expected goals by the end of their Reception year. Good quality assessments of how well children are learning are used effectively to identify what children need to learn next. Although planning for its effective use is still in development, the recently completed secure outdoor area provides a valuable additional learning space for children.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve curriculum planning so links between subjects are identified and pupils have the opportunity to apply and reinforce their skills in a range of contexts.
- Provide individual pupils with specific guidance about how they can improve their work.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

7 May 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of FitzHerbert C of E (Aided) Primary School, Fenny Bentley, Derbyshire, DE6 1LD

Thank you very much for helping me with the inspection of your school. I really enjoyed my day with you and appreciated the way you made me feel welcome and talked to me about your work and the other things you do at school. You and your parents believe you go to a good school and I am pleased to say that I agree with you.

Here are some of the things that I liked best about your school.

- You are friendly, polite and well behaved and take good care of each other.
- The adults in school work hard to make sure you are well cared for and supported so you feel safe.
- Your teachers know what you need to learn next and plan lessons that help you to make good progress. You help yourselves by working hard in your lessons.

There are some things that would make your school even better. I have asked your teachers to link some subjects together so you can practise your skills in different situations. I have also asked your teachers to tell you very clearly what you need to do to improve your work so you can help yourselves to learn. You can help with both these things by keeping on working hard and concentrating on the things you need to make better.

I hope that you continue to enjoy your time at school and thank you again for a very enjoyable day.

Best wishes

Alison Cogher

Lead inspector