

The Curzon C of E Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112981
Local Authority	DERBYSHIRE LA
Inspection number	311076
Inspection date	14 January 2008
Reporting inspector	Keith Edwards

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	121
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Sally Hadden
Headteacher	Mrs Geraldine Lowden
Date of previous school inspection	12 January 2004
School address	Church Road Quarndon Derbyshire DE22 5JA
Telephone number	01332 550172
Fax number	01332 556303

Age group	4-11
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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 aspects of the following areas: pupils' achievement and standards, personal development and well-being, teaching and learning and leadership and management. Evidence was gathered from the school's self-evaluation, national published assessment information, the previous inspection report, and the school's records of progress over time. A range of other documents, including the questionnaires returned by parents, was scrutinised. The inspector looked at parts of lessons, and met staff, pupils and governors.

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 this report.

Description of the school

The school serves the village of Quarndon on the outskirts of Derby. Although many of the children live locally, an increasing number are drawn from further afield. Almost all of the pupils are from White British backgrounds. Attainment on entry is above national expectations. The proportion of children entitled to a free school meal and the proportion with learning difficulties is below average.

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 with some outstanding features. It provides good value for money. It has improved significantly since the last inspection and is well placed to maintain this momentum. Standards remain consistently high because the quality of teaching and learning is good and the school benefits from enthusiastic leadership that nurtures teamwork. One delighted parent, whose views are echoed by many others, commented, 'I feel very privileged to be able to send my children to The Curzon. The new headteacher and teaching staff are very committed to achieving the best possible for every child and are continuously seeking to improve the school'. The school has the respect of the community that it serves and works well with other schools, particularly to develop the curriculum.

Achievement is good. Children in the Foundation Stage make good progress and reach standards that are well above national expectations. The skills that the children acquire in the Reception class provide them with a secure footing for future learning in Key Stage 1 and very positive attitudes towards school. In Year 2, standards in reading, writing and mathematics are consistently high. This is because the teaching is good. Teachers make careful use of assessment information to ensure that work set for pupils is matched well to their needs. Standards in writing are exceptionally high. After a period of a few years, when achievements in Key Stage 1 were not maximised, pupils' progress in key Stage 2 is now good. Standards are well above average and rising at the end of Key Stage 2. This change for the better is reflected in the improved results of the national assessment tests in 2007. Gains in mathematics are particularly noticeable. In science, pupils benefit from the exciting investigative approach to learning with strong links to other subjects. An increasing proportion of pupils are set to achieve extremely well this year. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are above average because the use of computers is fully integrated across a range of subjects.

The school's approach to promoting equality of opportunity is outstanding. Pupils are encouraged to develop their own particular talents and interests; everyone is included in the life of the school and all families are welcomed into the school. Pupils who find learning difficult are supported very well. Consequently, they make good progress. The team of dedicated teaching assistants and volunteers make a significant contribution to the support provided for pupils. Those who are more able are successfully motivated and challenged to reach their potential. For example, they are encouraged to apply their skills to solve problems, particularly in mathematics and science.

The personal development and well-being of all pupils is exemplary. The school makes an excellent contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. It provides a rich range of opportunities for the children to develop a sense of their own worth and to value and respect their peers. The strong links with the church underpin the moral values that are so clearly evident in the pupils' attitudes. Pupils really enjoy coming to school and attendance rates are above average. The pupils' behaviour is outstanding. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe and they respond very well to the many initiatives encouraging them to adopt healthy lifestyles. They work hard and play well together, forming excellent relationships with one another and with adults in school. They willingly take on extra responsibilities, such as involvement in school council and the wider community. The standards reached by pupils, their attitudes to learning together with the respect they show for people and property, prepares pupils extremely well for the next stage of their education.

The quality of teaching is good. Teachers work well together and plan interesting topics to motivate the pupils. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and academic progress and this promotes good achievement. A common feature in all classes is the warmth of the relationships and this motivates the pupils to do their best. Teachers and classroom assistants work very effectively together to provide pupils with a good level of support to develop their independent learning skills. Because the work set is designed to encourage the pupils to think and is closely matched to the range of ability in each class, learning is fun and the pupils make good progress. Teachers are skilled in asking open-ended questions to gauge the pupils' level of understanding and pupils are keen to respond because they know that their answers will be valued. Interactive whiteboards are used very successfully to demonstrate new techniques and the teachers ensure that the pace of learning is good. Teachers provide good oral feedback to the pupils but the quality of marking in the pupils' books does not consistently ensure that the pupils learn from their mistakes.

The curriculum is good and strongly supports pupils' personal, academic and physical development. The headteacher has made developing creativity within the curriculum a priority and has encouraged her colleagues to prioritise excitement and enjoyment when planning lessons. The curriculum is moulded to the needs of the pupils to ensure that they remain interested and alert to the joy of learning. Imaginative and creative links are made between subjects, successfully promoting learning. Pupils particularly appreciate the wide range of additional activities, including clubs, visits and visitors. Welfare, care and guidance are good. All safeguarding requirements are met. The level of pastoral care is outstanding and the school is increasingly making effective use of assessment information to raise academic expectations of pupils' achievement.

Leadership and management of the school are good. Issues arising from the previous inspection have been successfully resolved. Under the guidance of the newly appointed headteacher, the school's view of itself is honest and accurate; resulting in a clear strategy for continuing improvement. Targets set are realistic yet challenging. The headteacher has spent her first year with colleagues productively developing assessment procedures and devising a more interesting curriculum. There is an increasingly strong commitment to sharing accountability for the school's performance. Although the new senior leadership team are keen and interested in their new roles, the school rightly recognises the need to improve their skills and expertise in relation to evaluating school effectiveness. Governance has improved since the last inspection. Governors have developed a range of strategies to gauge the school's effectiveness. Consequently, they are increasingly able to hold the school to account for standards attained.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children's attainment on entry to the Reception class is generally above national expectations. Because teaching provides a stimulating curriculum and working environment, children make good progress. This is particularly noticeable in their personal and social development and in their communication skills. The curriculum places great emphasis on encouraging children to work together across a range of activities and strongly promotes their speaking and listening skills. For example, the current theme 'Space' has captured the children's imagination and promoted excellent learning opportunities. This not only builds the confidence of the children but also strongly supports their knowledge and understanding of the world. Leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are good and parents speak highly of how well their children settle in their first few days at school. As one parent commented, 'My son started

school in September 2007 and I could not be more impressed by how caring, supportive and positive the staff have been at this important stage in his school life'. Furthermore, the staff work well as a team and are excellent role models. The enriched curriculum and the effective teaching ensure that the children are well prepared for making good progress as they move through the school.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the skills of senior leadership team in monitoring and evaluating the work of the school.
- Implement a consistent marking policy to ensure pupils know what they have done well and how to 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	1
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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

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	1
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

15 January 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Curzon CofE Primary School, Quarndon DE22 5JA

I really enjoyed my visit to your school earlier this month because everybody was so helpful and friendly. I was very pleased to be able to work with you in your classrooms, join in with your morning assembly, meet the school council and have conversations with so many of you. I can understand why you enjoy your school so much as there are so many things that make your school very special. Here are some of them:

- You clearly want to do your best to learn in lessons and are prepared to work hard.
- The standard of your work is very good.
- Everybody understands the school rules and your behaviour is wonderful.
- Everybody tries to be friendly, thoughtful and helpful. Well done!
- All of your teachers work well to make your lessons interesting and fun.
- The school provides an excellent range of out-of-school activities and visits to keep you interested.
- Your headteacher is helping your school to get better and better.

You are very, very fortunate to be able to attend The Curzon School because the staff really understand how to make learning fun and work very hard to help you. It is really important that you remember to thank them and continue to try your best. I am also asking your teachers to keep an even more watchful eye on the school's work and to improve the marking in your books so that you can learn from your mistakes. I would like to wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Keith Edwards

Lead inspector