

Church Vale Primary School and Foundation Unit

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122731
Local Authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	314377
Inspection date	20 May 2008
Reporting inspector	Martin Newell

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	176
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Garry Hall
Headteacher	Mrs Olwen Hawkes
Date of previous school inspection	7 February 2005
School address	Laurel Avenue Church Warsop Mansfield Nottinghamshire NG20 0TE
Telephone number	01623 842250
Fax number	01623 842283

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector. The inspection evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- the consistency of progress and achievement across the school
- standards in speaking, listening and writing
- how involved pupils are in their own learning.

Evidence was gathered from lesson observations, sampling of pupils' work, assessment, tracking and target setting information, initiatives to raise standards and discussions with the headteacher, key members of staff, pupils and the Chair of Governors. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspection found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as detailed in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in the report.

Description of the school

Church Vale is a smaller than average sized school. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well above the national average. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is a little above the picture nationally, with the proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs, being a little lower. Most of the pupils are from White British backgrounds. There are a small number of pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds, although none are at the early stage of learning English. The school has gained Healthy School, Activemark, Basic Skills and ECO school awards.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Church Vale is an outstanding school and rightly deserves the high regard and reputation with which it is held in the local community. Parents are very appreciative of the quality of education their children receive and the comment of one parent, reflected the thoughts of many, 'A very happy and caring school where all the staff work excellently together.' It is this shared commitment and determination to strive for the best for all pupils that lies at the heart of the school's mission. Under the outstanding leadership of the headteacher, it is a school that never stands still, a school that has made excellent progress over the last three years and a school that simply continues to set the bar of expectation higher.

The school's many successes are built around the exceptional progress that pupils make. Children start school with levels of attainment that are well below national expectations, particularly in key aspects such as communication and mathematical skills. By the time that they leave school, standards are above, and at times, significantly above the national average, although the school recognises the scope for further improvement in writing and speaking and listening skills. The progress that pupils make between Year 2 and Year 6 has been in the top 5% of schools in the country for the last two years and the school's own data suggests that this will continue in 2008. Pupils' exceptional progress owes much to the outstanding teaching, which challenges, motivates and enthuses the pupils. Teachers and teaching assistants form a winning combination to provide lessons that move along at a fast pace, set high expectations in terms of behaviour and keep the momentum of learning going until the end of the lesson. All this is done in an atmosphere of mutual respect between adults and pupils, where relationships are excellent and opportunities seldom missed to build up pupils' confidence and self-esteem. Add to these strengths, the high quality of marking which makes crystal clear to pupils what they need to do to improve, and it is evident that the school has hit on a recipe for sustained success.

The school has very well established and rigorous procedures in place for assessing and tracking pupils' progress. Individual teachers are held accountable for the progress pupils make. The information is used in a highly effective manner to set challenging targets and to guide and inform teaching. Key to this is that the school sets targets that are higher than the expected rate of progress and it then puts in place excellent support and challenge to help these targets become a reality. The role that pupils play in this process cannot be underestimated. They have an excellent awareness of their individual targets, the levels they are working at and what is needed to reach the next level. They assess their own work, compare it to the teachers' comments and set their own targets for improvement, all factors that help to make academic guidance a shining strength of the school. This is further supplemented by a high level of pastoral care where the welfare and well-being of pupils is given a high priority. The school has worked very hard at improving pupils' attendance and this is now in line with the national average. Discussions with pupils indicate that they feel very safe in school and that they have a voice that is listened to, respected and acted upon. All procedures for ensuring the safeguarding of pupils are in place and rigorously followed by staff. Pupils are adamant that bullying is not an issue in the school and that if it did happen, 'We know it would be sorted out straight away.'

There is little doubt that the pupils play a significant role in helping make the school what it is. For many pupils, behaviour is exemplary and older pupils go out of their way to help the younger ones. Pupils are very attentive and respectful and they are great ambassadors for the school as they talk enthusiastically and with great pride about their teachers, their learning, and all that the school provides. Their readiness to contribute to the school and local community

is impressive. The school council, recycling and environmental projects, the outstanding 'Doorstep Green' initiative, their ECO school work as well as the many tasks they carry out with great maturity around the school, are just some examples of pupils' unstinting commitment to their school and community. They show a good understanding of what is needed to follow healthy lifestyles and to manage risks in their lives. Their readiness to help others is reflected in the many fund raising activities they instigate and participate in. When they leave school, pupils are equipped with a range of skills, qualities and attributes that make them exceptionally well prepared for future challenges.

Pupils' enjoyment of school and their outstanding achievement is fuelled by a rich and vibrant curriculum. A curriculum that enables them to acquire basic skills at a rapid rate, but also a curriculum where many subjects are covered in depth. The many excellent displays around the school are testimony to this. The school has accurately targeted the need for a greater focus on speaking and listening skills, role-play and drama activities to help further improve writing skills. The provision made for pupils who find learning difficult and for vulnerable pupils is excellent and contributes much to their achievement. The very good range of visits, visitors and after school clubs all add to pupils' love of school and provide further proof of a curriculum geared towards high achievement and enjoyment.

At the core of the school's mission for excellence is the headteacher, who modestly and in an understated manner, drives the school forward. Her leadership brings staff, pupils, parents and governors with her. Issues for improvement are tackled with rigour and have a lasting impact. She is the first to recognise the importance of teamwork and values the high levels of support from the senior leadership team and subject leaders who together make a significant contribution to the life of the school. Add to this the high quality of governance and it is evident that this is a school where continued success is in safe and accomplished hands.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The children get off to a very good start in the Foundation Stage. Teaching is good and at times outstanding and provides a wide range of learning activities that capture children's interest and imagination. Adults work very well together and excellent assessment provides a clear and accurate picture of just how well children are progressing. By the time that children are ready to start in Year 1, although standards are a little below national expectations, it nevertheless represents very good progress from their starting points. Many improvements have recently been made to the accommodation, both indoors and outdoors, and the impact of these changes and the push to develop children as independent learners, are having an increasing impact on what is already strong provision.

What the school should do to improve further

- Seek to improve writing skills through the systematic development of pupils speaking and listening skills and more opportunities to participate in role-play and drama activities.

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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?	1
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?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

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

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	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
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?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
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	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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

21 May 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Church Vale School, Church Warsop NG20 0TE.

I would first like to say thank you for making me feel so welcome and making my visit one that I will remember for a long time. I have told your teachers how you were all so helpful and polite. Through my discussions with you, it was great to hear how much you love coming to school. It was also good to hear about how safe you feel in school, that bullying is not an issue and that there is always someone to talk to if you are worried.

I found so many impressive things about Church Vale Primary School that I have to say it is an outstanding school. Teachers and other staff make teaching and learning challenging and fun and help you to achieve exceptionally well. The curriculum, the clubs, the visits and visitors, all help to make the school a great place to learn. The way in which the school helps you to keep safe and how it cares and supports you are all excellent. You have an outstanding headteacher and together with all the staff and governors, make Church Vale the place to be. There is another tremendous strength of the school. That is you, the children. You are great ambassadors for the school. I was so impressed with your behaviour, your enthusiasm, what you know about keeping healthy and particularly the contribution you make to the school and your neighbourhood. Well done!

Even outstanding schools like yours can improve. I have asked your teachers to help you further improve your speaking and listening skills and in turn your writing skills. Your headteacher, the staff and governors want the school to continue to be successful, and I know you will play your part by continuing to behave well and working hard. I wish you every success in your future. It was a pleasure and privilege to meet you.

Martin Newell

Lead inspector