

Church Aston Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123358
Local Authority	Telford and Wrekin
Inspection number	314573
Inspection date	13 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Mary Hamby HMI

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4-7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	41
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Stuart Ridgewell
Headteacher	Anne Garner
Date of previous school inspection	29 November 2004
School address	Church Aston Newport TF10 9JN
Telephone number	01952 386390
Fax number	01952 386393

Age group	4-7
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Introduction

One of Her Majesty's Inspectors carried out the inspection. The inspection evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school, and investigated the following issues: • how well pupils' literacy skills are being developed, with a particular focus on higher order writing skills and the impact of phonics teaching • aspects of the curriculum in the Foundation Stage, and the opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development • how well the school is making progress with assessment and tracking. Evidence was gathered from a range of sources, including observation of lessons, discussion with the pupils and staff, and analysis of school documents. The views of parents and the pupils themselves were taken into account, as was the school's self-evaluation. Other aspects of the school were not investigated in detail, but the inspection found no evidence to suggest that the school's own judgements, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified; these have been included, where appropriate, in this report.

Description of the school

There are more girls than boys in this small village school. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds and very few are learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is well below average and fewer than average have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Staffing is stable, but most class teachers are employed on a part-time basis. There is no nursery at the school and so the children enter the Foundation Stage in Class 1, which caters for children from four to six years of age.

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. Every child is valued and the caring family atmosphere supports pupils of all abilities well. Each child thrives, both in academic achievement and in personal development, because the teaching is good, the pupils are highly motivated to learn, and they receive good support at home. Attendance is high because the pupils love coming to school and say that 'lessons are fun' and 'everybody is kind'.

All the pupils achieve well. This is evident in the progress they make in a variety of subjects and the outcomes of national test results, which have been above average for the last five years. Standards in mathematics and science are particularly high and the pupils are very confident in applying their knowledge in different situations. The effective method for teaching reading enables the pupils to break down words into sounds and blend them together again and so they soon become fluent readers with a love of books. This love of literature fires their imagination for their own creative writing. Writing is developing well for a range of different purposes and pupils of all abilities achieve well.

The strong belief that every child matters, held by all staff, underpins pupils' outstanding personal development. The pupils respond well to instructions, carry out their responsibilities well, and make a good contribution to the smooth running of the school. School councillors are proud of their roles, understand that they have to represent the views of others, and do so well. Playground friends take care of pupils who are a little reticent and ensure that these pupils are included in games. The pupils know their learning targets, and even the youngest children are becoming more aware of what they need to do to achieve them. Behaviour is good; the pupils are patient when waiting for their lunch, are keen to help each other and have a clear sense of right and wrong. Their awareness of healthy lifestyles is very good; they know, for example, that 'chocolate tastes nice but is not nice for your teeth' and that 'vegetables help you to grow'. They have a keen awareness of road safety and the importance of fire practice.

The pupils have excellent attitudes to learning because the teaching is good and the curriculum is exciting, providing 'fantastic experiences' according to one parent. The outstanding curricular provision captures the pupils' interests very well. It is planned creatively with links between subjects and this brings meaning to the pupils' learning and reinforces basic skills. Visits to theatres, galleries and places of worship help the pupils to really appreciate cultural and spiritual aspects of society, whilst school clubs bring enjoyment and extend learning. The effective use of technology brings subjects to life and broadens the pupils' horizons. The staff set appropriate curricular targets for the pupils, and support is given where necessary so that pupils of all abilities experience success. Learning at home is encouraged through the sharing of reading diaries and through mathematics boxes, which are provided for each child to take home.

Each member of staff exemplifies the good care and guidance at the heart of this school. Consistent policies and procedures ensure safe practices, and the diligence in their application is plain to see. Relationships are very positive and the pupils themselves feel safe and happy. Procedures for tracking progress are developing. They are in place for English and mathematics but there is no system to track the pupils' personal development in Key Stage 1 to build on those in place for children in the Foundation Stage.

The driving force behind this successful school is undoubtedly its hardworking and inspirational headteacher. Her excellent knowledge of the needs of young children, combined with effective leadership skills, is a winning combination. A committed governing body and a strong staff

team ably assist the headteacher; together, they provide good leadership and management. The staff work very well as a team and the job-share arrangements work well. They have high expectations, not only of the pupils, but also of themselves, and strive constantly to improve. They check the quality of teaching and learning regularly, but reports from this monitoring are not written up or drawn together well enough, and so some of their potential is lost.

Since the last inspection, the school has achieved nationally recognised awards, for example in information and communication technology. Other improvements are evident in the quality of provision, particularly in the rich curriculum, which now includes the teaching of French, and the developing of links with a school in Malta. The school has good capacity to continue its successful path.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The children attend a variety of pre-school settings before entering the school in either September or January. Their attainment is typical of most four year olds. Parents are pleased with the arrangements to introduce children to the school and say that this helps their children to settle well. The welcoming atmosphere and well-established routines ensure that each child feels valued and help them to develop a sense of identity with their new surroundings.

The provision is good; children are encouraged to try hard and the planned activities are successful in developing their confidence and nurturing in them a love of learning. Achievement is good and so standards are slightly higher than the level expected at the end of the Reception class. This gives them a head start when beginning their learning in Key Stage 1.

The teaching is good. Staff cope well with the mix of age groups in Class 1 and ensure that questions and work are suitable for each group of learners. They encourage children to be independent, and the children respond very well to all such opportunities. Learning in the outside area is developing well, but is an aspect that the school, rightly, wants to improve further by making it more accessible in all weather conditions.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that the outcomes from the monitoring of teaching and learning are written down and followed up regularly.
- Extend the tracking of pupils' progress in Key Stage 1 to encompass personal, social and emotional development.

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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?	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	1
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?	1
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

14 November 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Church Aston Infant School, Newport, TF10 9JN

I really enjoyed visiting your school because you made me feel so welcome. Please say 'thank you' to your parents for filling in the questionnaires because this helped me to know what they thought of your school. Like me, they think that Church Aston is a good school with some excellent features.

I was very impressed by all the things that you learn and enjoyed talking to you about the subjects that you like best. It is no wonder that you like science because you do exciting things like making rockets and paper aeroplanes. The designs for the puppets in Class 2 looked very interesting and the pictures of the Three Billy Goats in Class 1 were lovely. You are good at reading and writing and I know how much you enjoy your mathematics lessons because you told me so. I was pleased to see that you know your targets and are trying your best to achieve them; well done! Your teachers work very hard to plan all these interesting things for you to do and are good at making sure that you learn well and that you feel safe and happy in school.

I was glad to see that you behave well and help each other out. Always remember to be kind and caring, like the adults in your school. All the staff take care of you well and want the best for each of you. They have good plans to make the school even better and I suggested two things to help them with this. One is to write down what they find out when looking at your books, or when they come into each other's lessons to look at your learning. This will help them to remember what they noticed so that they can use the information more effectively. The other thing is that they should check up on how well each of you is doing in your personal development. This means looking at such things as how independent you are becoming, whether you are kind, how well you understand someone else's point of view and how confident you are in new situations.

Good luck for the future, and remember always to try your best.

Best wishes

Mrs Hamby HMI