

# Churchstanton Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	123701
<b>Local Authority</b>	Somerset
<b>Inspection number</b>	314677
<b>Inspection date</b>	28 February 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Tom Simpson

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	84
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	David Bleloch
<b>Headteacher</b>	Simon Mills
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	8 March 2004
<b>School address</b>	Churchstanton Taunton TA3 7RL
<b>Telephone number</b>	01823 601354
<b>Fax number</b>	01823 601354

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector, who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: • standards and achievement in the Foundation Stage • achievement in Years 3 to 6, particularly in English and for boys • the effectiveness of assessment procedures in raising standards and providing academic guidance for pupils. Evidence was gathered from lesson observations, analysis of the school's tracking and assessment data and discussions with the headteacher and other staff, governors and pupils. The views of parents were gathered from the returns of Ofsted's questionnaire. 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 judgements, as given in its self-evaluation form, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

## Description of the school

This is a small school serving a rural community. Nearly all the pupils are from a White British background and none is at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is around average. The main difficulties of these pupils relate to speech, language and communication. Attainment on entry varies from year to year but is broadly as expected for children of this age. The school has received the Healthy Schools award and the Activemark, and has reached the bronze level of Eco-school status.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This popular and improving school provides a good education for its pupils and has some outstanding features. One of its main strengths is the high regard staff at all levels have for the personal as well as the academic needs of the pupils. It is a very inclusive school and pupils across the ability range, including those with learning difficulties and the more able, are very well catered for. An unusually large proportion of the parents responded to a questionnaire sent out by inspectors. The vast majority are satisfied or very satisfied with the provision the school makes for their children. Typical of the observations written on the questionnaires was the comment: 'Churchstanton is a fantastic school. My children are getting an excellent education. I cannot rate this school high enough.' Another parent observed, 'My child has had the best primary school care in the world. He has been helped to become a well rounded and happy little boy.'

One of the main reasons for the school's success is the high quality of leadership provided by the headteacher. He is deeply committed to further improving the school's provision and continuing to raise academic standards. He is very well supported by all staff, who work closely together as a team. Being a small school, individual members of staff have to share a significant number of responsibilities. They do this effectively, monitoring standards in the subjects they are responsible for through, for example, analysing data and scrutinising samples of pupils' work. They do not often have the opportunity, however, to observe colleagues teaching these subjects. The governing body is very supportive and fulfils its statutory responsibilities well. Individual governors bring a wealth of expertise to their role and are actively involved in all aspects of school life. Several, for example, support teachers regularly in lessons while others provide or support extra-curricular activities such as the computer and 'eco' clubs. They fulfil their monitoring role well through an active committee system and are fully prepared and able to challenge the school's management if necessary.

There is a culture of self-evaluation at the school and a very effective range of procedures in place to help it judge the quality of its provision and the progress being made by the pupils. Data is rigorously analysed and the information obtained is used effectively to identify how well different groups of pupils, such as boys or girls or those with learning difficulties, are doing. Where areas of weakness are identified, action is taken to change teaching strategies or to provide extra support for individuals or groups of pupils. At the strategic level, recent examples of the effective impact of the school's strong self-evaluation include the recognition of relative weaknesses in standards in science and mathematics. These have now been successfully addressed. At the classroom level, teaching assistants provide very effective support to pupils who have, for instance, delayed literacy skills.

Pupils' achievement is good. Children get off to a good start when they enter the school. They make good progress during the Reception Year in all the areas of learning. Their progress is particularly strong in their personal, social and emotional development and this prepares them well for their future education. They continue to make good progress in Years 1 and 2 and reach standards that are above average overall. The school continues to build on this in Years 3 to 6 and, by the time pupils leave the school, standards are above average in all key areas. Standards in science, which were a key issue at the time of the last inspection, are now a particular strength. On the other hand, standards in writing, particularly for boys in Years 3 to 6, are a relative weakness. The school is currently in the process of introducing a number of

strategies to address this issue and these are already beginning to have a positive impact on results.

Personal development is outstanding. Most pupils are very well behaved and have very good relationships with staff and with one another. The pupils love coming to the school and attendance is above average. They thoroughly enjoy supporting the school and wider community. All pupils show exceptionally high levels of care for themselves, for others and for the environment and have a very good understanding of how their own decisions can have an impact on other people. They spoke with enthusiasm about helping others through, for instance, the playground 'buddy' system and taking part in a sponsored silence to raise funds for Children in Need. They show an excellent understanding of how to lead healthy lifestyles and told the inspector that they feel 'seriously' safe at school. The pupils are successfully developing an awareness of other cultures through, for example, the Years 5 and 6 youth enterprise visit focusing on global diversity and fair trade. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 recently attended a whole-day workshop provided by a Hindu priest. The school council is active and plays a significant role in several aspects of school development.

One of the strengths of the good curriculum is the way in which it is made meaningful for the pupils. There is a strong emphasis on developing an awareness of the need to develop sustainable energy, whilst the school's very attractive and diverse external environment is used effectively to support learning across various areas of the curriculum. Careful planning ensures that the academic and personal needs of pupils, including Reception-aged children and pupils with learning difficulties, are met fully in mixed age classes. A very good number of out-of-lesson activities such as visits, visitors and a wide range of after-school clubs enrich the curriculum well and further support pupils' learning. There is specialist music teaching, and good links with other providers include the recent introduction of lessons in French for pupils in Years 3 to 6 with the support of staff from a local secondary school. The school has appropriately identified the extension of writing skills across the curriculum as a developmental target.

One of the strengths of the good teaching and learning at the school is the good range of imaginative methods that are employed to motivate the pupils and stimulate them to want to learn. Another is the positive way in which they are managed. There are extensive and thorough strategies in place to assess and track the progress of individual pupils. These are used very well to set individual and group targets for academic improvement in key areas and to match work set in lessons to the needs of pupils with different levels of ability. However, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to become involved in the assessment of their own progress during lessons. Care, guidance and support are outstanding and contribute very well to pupils' personal development. There is very good involvement with outside agencies such as the school health service, particularly to support the more vulnerable pupils. There is also very good guidance for pupils on what they need to do next to improve their work. Thorough systems are in place for child protection, health and safety and safe staff recruitment.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

Provision for the Reception-aged children is good and well managed, which ensures that they get off to a good start in their education. Good induction procedures include home visits and meetings for new parents during the summer term prior to their children's admission to the school. All staff have a very good understanding of the needs of children of this age. Children are well taught, their specific needs are well planned for in the mixed age class and they have very positive attitudes towards their learning. The tasks provided for them are made interesting.

As a result, they make good progress across all the areas of learning and regularly reach standards that are above the expected levels. The rich outside environment of the school is used well, particularly to support the children's physical development and their knowledge and understanding of the world. However, the play area specifically designated for them is small and unattractive and this restricts the opportunities they have to move freely between the classroom and outdoors.

**What the school should do to improve further**

- improve achievement in writing, particularly for boys in Years 3 to 6.

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## 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?	1
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 <sup>1</sup> 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	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	2
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	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?	1

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
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	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**

28 February 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Churchstanton Primary School, Taunton TA3 7RL

Thank you for making me so welcome at your school. I really enjoyed meeting you and hearing about your work. I want particularly to thank those of you who gave up part of your lunch break to speak to me. I found that your school provides you with a good education which has some excellent aspects.

Here are some of the things that I found to be particularly good:

- the headteacher and other staff are working hard to make sure that school becomes even better
- you are exceptionally well cared for by the adults at the school
- most of you are very well behaved and your personal development is excellent; for example, you care exceptionally well for one another and for other people
- you are making good progress and reaching standards that are above average
- teaching and learning, as well as the activities staff plan for you, are good, which is why you enjoy school so much.

Here is what I have asked the school to do now:

- ensure that you do as well in writing as you do in other subjects. Boys in Years 3 to 6 in particular can help by working very hard to improve their standards in writing.

Thank you again for your help. Churchstanton provides you with a good education and you can all help keep it that way by working as hard as you can while you are there.

With best wishes

Tom Simpson Lead Inspector

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**Annex B**

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Lead Inspector