

Freshford Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109195
Local Authority	Bath and North East Somerset
Inspection number	324922
Inspection date	4 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Stephen Lake

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	139
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Curwen
Headteacher	Anne Forrest
Date of previous school inspection	4 November 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	High Street Freshford Bath BA2 7WE
Telephone number	01225 723331

Age group	4–11
Inspection date	4 June 2009
Inspection number	324922

Fax number

01225 722832

Age group	4-11
Inspection date	4 June 2009
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a small school serving the village of Freshford and the surrounding area, with a few travelling from further-away towns. Almost all pupils are of White British origin. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in a class with some of the Year 1 pupils. The school is very popular and a significant number of pupils join the school during Years 3 to 6, often as late as Year 5 or Year 6. A number of these pupils have additional learning needs. As a result, the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average, as is the proportion with statements of special educational needs. This covers a wide range of needs but the majority have either specific learning difficulties or speech, language and communication needs. A significant number of these pupils join the school in Key Stage 2. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is below average. For one year the substantive headteacher is currently working with the National College of School Leadership and is away for two days a week. At present the substantive headteacher and an acting headteacher are sharing the leadership and management of the school.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Freshford Church of England Primary School is a good school. It has some outstanding features. Children make an excellent start to school because of the outstanding provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Pupils achieve well in the rest of the school because of good teaching. There is an unremitting commitment to providing a high quality learning environment and rich learning experience for all pupils. Good care, guidance and support, particularly the excellent pastoral support coupled with the excellent curriculum, ensure the outstanding personal development and well-being of the pupils. Parents hold very positive views of the school. All who wrote in were pleased with all aspects of the school but many praised the holistic approach to education as one of their reasons for choosing the school. Typical comments from the questionnaires included, 'We feel privileged that our children attend Freshford school' and 'Cross-curricular links are fantastic for my children.'

Since the last inspection good leadership and management have ensured improvements in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in English. The strong leadership of the substantive headteacher is ably supported by the acting headteacher, who is sharing the job with her. They make an effective team that is well supported by other senior staff and an effective governing body. School performance is regularly reviewed so that the school knows what it does well, and it takes effective action to bring about necessary improvements. Nevertheless, the good quality information on pupils' attainment and progress could be presented in a clearer manner to make it easier to compare overall school or year group performance with national standards so that areas for improvement are identified more quickly.

Standards are above average overall by the end of Year 6. Standards in English are significantly above average and pupils' achievement in this subject is outstanding. This is due to the drive to improve reading over the last few years. Standards in mathematics and science are average. They are held down because of the low attainment of several pupils who joined the school during Years 3 to 6. Achievement in science is good but achievement in mathematics is satisfactory. The school has recognised this and raising standards in mathematics is a key action in the school development plan. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make the same progress as other pupils. High quality work was also observed in art and design and in design and technology.

Pupils enjoy school immensely because of the way teachers strive to make the curriculum stimulating and motivating. The many activities and experiences provided for pupils make a huge contribution to their personal development and well-being. Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to stay safe because of the excellent guidance they receive in this area. They know how to stay healthy and keep fit. Pupils are friendly and polite. Behaviour is exemplary. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is outstanding. Although pupils' cultural development is good, their knowledge of the wide range of cultures found in Britain is not as strong as other aspects of their cultural development. The school is already taking steps to address this. Pupils make an outstanding contribution to school life and the wider community through activities such as the school council and raising funds for charities. The skills gained, together with the standards attained, ensure pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education.

Good quality teaching is contributing effectively to pupils' good progress. Teachers and other adults establish excellent relationship with the pupils and manage them very well. Teachers'

questioning promotes learning well, with teachers knowing just when to intervene so that pupils are well supported. Teachers use information on how well pupils are doing to plan work that challenges and extends pupils, especially in English, but this is less consistent in mathematics. Marking in English is very detailed and sets pupils precise steps to follow to improve their work and meet challenging targets for attainment. However, marking in mathematics is inconsistent, with targets for future learning that are too general. As a result, pupils do not have clear enough guidance on what they need to do next in order to improve their work.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

The well-established routines help children new to the school to feel really secure and cared for and ensure they get a very good start in this school. Teachers are skilled at ensuring a good balance between direct teaching and opportunities for children to learn through purposeful play. The strong teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants ensures that the welfare and needs of the children are met consistently well. This ensures that all children make significant gains in their learning and achieve very well, growing in confidence and building on their previous experience. The excellent teaching ensures that children start Year 1 very well prepared for learning and with well above average standards for their age. The rich and stimulating environment, particularly the high quality outdoor environment, is used very effectively to support a rich and varied curriculum that provides a high degree of challenge to children. Nevertheless, this is done in a calm way that reflects the school theme of 'an unhurried school'. This area is led and managed very well. The expertise and skill of the adults and the rigorous systems for checking on progress mean that all individuals are gently but effectively challenged to achieve of their best. The constant drive for improvement based upon a holistic and creative experience for children sets the tone for the rest of the school.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that marking in mathematics matches the high quality marking in English and gives pupils clear guidance on what they need to do next to meet carefully structured targets for learning.
- Improve the way data are presented to enable a clearer strategic overview of school and year group performance compared to national standards.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children start school with skills and experiences similar to those normally expected at this age. They make excellent progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage to start Year 1 with skills that are well above average. Pupils build effectively on this good start and by Year 2, standards are well above average, especially in reading and mathematics. The good progress continues in Years 3 to 6 but there are variations between the subjects. The outstanding progress in English reflects the considerable work put in to improve reading, but similar action is only just starting to be applied to mathematics, which is why progress in mathematics is satisfactory and standards at Year 6 are average. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are making good progress in relation to the targets set for them. Nonetheless, their low starting points mean that, in small groups, the impact of their lower attainment, especially that of the several who have particular difficulty with mathematics, holds down overall standards. Nevertheless, when the progress of the remaining pupils is looked at in both Years 5 and 6, progress in

mathematics remains satisfactory and well below the progress made in English. Standards in information and communication technology are broadly average.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils are very enthusiastic about school and have extremely positive attitudes to learning, as shown by their well above average attendance. One pupil expressed this by saying, 'We feel nourished in this school.' Pupils' excellent behaviour ensures that the school is a calm and tranquil place in which to learn. Pupils show a good understanding of healthy diets and take part enthusiastically in the many opportunities for physical activity that exist, not only in after-school clubs but also at playtimes and lunchtimes in the exciting play environment provided. Healthy School status and the Activemark and Best Play awards bear testimony to this. Pupils show excellent consideration for the views of others, reflecting the school's Inclusion Mark. Members of the school council and the eco team take their responsibilities very seriously. They organise a range of fund-raising activities to help those less well off nationally and internationally and support younger pupils through the 'buddy' system. Activities such as the Arts Week that was based on different cultures, pupils develop an excellent understanding of cultures in other parts of the world. Through this work last year and the evolving work on trade and economy pupils gained valuable skills that were developed in their own version of Dragons' Den, where pupils' ideas for developing trade were tested out by other pupils. Through such activities pupils develop key skills that prepare them well for their future lives and enable them to make a large contribution to the community around them. Pupils have a strong understanding of culture internationally and the school is exploring ways of setting up links with an inner-city British school to further improve pupils' understanding of the wide range of cultures in Britain today.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Good teaching is a key factor in the progress made by pupils. There are examples of outstanding practice, particularly in the teaching of reading. The close partnership between teachers and teaching assistants ensures that all children, especially those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, are fully included in lessons. Teachers know how to motivate and stimulate pupils to learn. They know just when to let pupils work things out for themselves and when to prompt them through good questioning. The significant improvement in English is due to careful planning that sets pupils clear targets for learning that are broken down into small and precise steps. Marking then makes it very clear to pupils what they need to do to meet the next target. This precision is extremely effective. These actions are only just starting to be applied to mathematics where, although clear targets for learning are set and understood by pupils, these are not yet as precise. Marking in mathematics is not as rigorous and consistent as in English and therefore does always not make it clear enough to pupils exactly what it is they need to do to improve. Information and communication technology is used effectively to stimulate and motivate pupils in many subjects, especially English, but is used less effectively in mathematics.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The heart of this school is a curriculum that links areas of learning together providing a rich and vibrant curriculum, including French. This adds meaning and relevance to pupils' learning, and they bubble with enthusiasm when talking about their learning experiences. A clear focus on the development of skills is central to the rich and rewarding experience provided. Teachers are very good at linking subjects together into topics or themes. For example, during the Arts Week pupils brought a wide range of skills to bear to produce their own puppet plays. They not only researched stories but looked at different styles of puppets and then wrote their own versions of well-known stories to be acted out in a puppet theatre. The school works with a variety of partners to enhance the curriculum, for example their 'Lets Explore' theme where they are working with the National Trust in an outside environment on a range of activities crafts and skills. The many and varied opportunities for developing pupils' understanding of healthy living and keeping fit make a significant contribution to pupils' personal development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school looks after the pupils very well and the pastoral care is outstanding. Safeguarding arrangements meet requirements and excellent advice is provided to pupils on how to stay safe. The school works very closely with a range of agencies to ensure that the needs of those pupils who are vulnerable or who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities are met effectively.

Academic guidance is good overall. Accurate assessments of pupils' attainment are recorded in great detail to enable the tracking of individual pupils' progress. Despite this, some inconsistency remains between the effectiveness of the support and guidance given in English and that given in mathematics. Although individual pupil progress is tracked effectively, the information is not presented in a way that makes overall performance of a year group clear enough to senior managers and governors.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

During this academic year the arrangement for the sharing of the headship between the substantive and acting head is working well. Leadership and management in subject areas are shared between teams of teachers. This has been particularly effective in English and works well in most other areas. The school's accurate analysis of its own strengths and weaknesses showed that standards in mathematics needed improving. Specific expertise has been sought and is now strengthening the teaching of mathematics in Years 3 to 6. Although a small improvement in mathematics has already taken place, it is too early to see the full impacts of the strategies being put in place. The good governing body is extremely supportive of the school. Budget management is excellent and has enabled innovative changes to the building which not only blend harmoniously with the old buildings but provide a very stimulating learning environment. Governors check regularly on the work of the school but there is room for a better use of data for checking pupil progress against national standards. The school's action to promote community cohesion is monitored effectively but is not yet extended to check on the impact upon pupils' understanding of the wide diversity of cultures found in Britain today. Taking into account the recent improvements, the school is well placed to improve further.

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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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

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/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
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	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of 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

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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

5 June 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Freshford C of E Primary School, Freshford, Bath BA2 7WE

Thank you for being so helpful and telling us about your school when we came to visit. We were particularly impressed by your excellent behaviour. You are very polite and friendly to everyone.

You attend a good school. We can see why you enjoy learning so much when we see the exciting things that you do. We enjoyed watching the Arts Week sessions in which all years groups worked together so well in teams. Some of the things that we particularly liked about your school are:

- You have an excellent start to school in the outstanding Early Years Foundation Stage.
- You reach overall standards that are above those found in many schools, especially in English, where you reach standards that are well above those found in most other schools.
- You learn well because the good teaching makes learning interesting and fun.
- The excellent curriculum enables you to see how many subjects are linked to each other and have some skills that are common. No wonder you enjoy school!
- Your personal development and well-being are outstanding. You know how to keep safe and stay fit and healthy. You make an excellent contribution to the school and the local community.

In order to make your school even better we have asked the teachers and governors to:

- Make sure that the marking in mathematics is as good as it is in English so that you understand what you need to do next to improve your work and achieve the same high standards in mathematics as you do in English.
- Find better ways of sharing the good information that they have about your progress so that teachers and governors know how well the whole school is doing compared to other schools.

You can help by telling your teachers if you are not sure how to make your work better.

Thank you again for all your help and best wishes.

Yours faithfully

Stephen Lake

Lead inspector