

Taxal and Fernilee CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112872
Local Authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	325706
Inspection date	16 July 2009
Reporting inspector	Bob Roberts

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)	178
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	Mr Christopher Wooley
Headteacher	Mrs Victoria Keen
Date of previous school inspection	6 June 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Reddish Road Whaley Bridge High Peak Derbyshire SK23 7DL

Age group	4–11
Inspection date	16 July 2009
Inspection number	325706

Telephone number
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspection evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- personal development and well-being in order to verify the school's own evaluation
- the quality of teaching and learning in order to verify the school's own evaluation
- leadership and management with a view to evaluating the quality of leadership at all levels and its impact on achievement.

Inspectors gathered evidence from observations and visits to lessons, assessment of data and documents, and meetings with governors, groups of pupils and school managers. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail but the inspectors 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

Taxal and Fernilee Church of England Controlled Primary is a smaller than average school on the outskirts of the town of Whaley Bridge. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportions of pupils entitled to free school meals, who have statements of special educational needs or have learning difficulties and/or disabilities are below the national average. A Reception class provides Early Years Foundation Stage provision for children aged four to five years. Pupils are taught in single-age classes. An out of school club is run on the site. This is not managed by the governing body and is subject to a separate inspection report. The headteacher has been in post since January 2009.

The school holds a Healthy School award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Taxal and Fernilee is a satisfactory school with a number of good features. The personal development and well-being of pupils are outstanding. The large majority of parents who responded to the questionnaire which formed part of the inspection were supportive of the school. Many shared similar views to the parent who wrote: 'Taxal is a bright and happy school which my children enjoy attending.'

Overall, achievement is satisfactory. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is broadly average. They make good progress in Key Stage 1 and levels of attainment in the assessments at the end of Year 2 are consistently above the national average. During Key Stage 2 this good rate of progress has not been sustained. In the national tests taken at the end of Year 6, standards in recent years have been broadly in line with national averages. In 2007 the standards were good, but that year proved to be an exception. At the time of the inspection, test results for 2009 suggested levels of attainment similar to those of previous years. There are no significant differences between the attainments of girls and boys. Whereas higher-attaining pupils do not always achieve their potential during Key Stage 2, the progress of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good.

The school evaluates the personal development and well-being of its pupils as outstanding, and inspectors agreed. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is exceptional. They spoke about having time to reflect, and to consider their feelings. They demonstrate a very good understanding and appreciation of cultural diversity in a modern society. Pupils enjoy coming to school. They behave well and have extremely positive attitudes to others. Attendance is excellent. Pupils show an excellent understanding of how to act safely and a good understanding of how to be healthy. There are high levels of participation in the wide range of sporting opportunities which are available to them. All pupils are involved in making significant contributions to the community and to the life of the school. They are being well prepared for their future lives.

The school judges the quality of its teaching to be good. In the light of pupils' achievement, and from observations of lessons during the inspection, inspectors judge it to be satisfactory overall, with good teaching in Key Stage 1. Teachers develop good relationships with their pupils, building trust and confidence. Planning builds on pupils' knowledge and understanding, but sometimes lacks sufficient attention to how lessons might be organised to secure effective learning. Pupils are encouraged to work collaboratively and to listen carefully. Teachers use modern computer technology well. Where teaching is satisfactory there is insufficient matching of tasks to the needs of different groups and a lack of urgency and challenge, especially for the more able pupils. Marking is satisfactory.

The curriculum meets statutory requirements and matches pupils' needs well. There is a helpful emphasis on linking subjects and skills together through developing topics and themed work. A wide range of activities, visits and visitors enrich the curriculum. Residential experiences are available to older year groups. There are enriching contacts with other countries, supporting pupils' cultural development well. Good links with the community and the local high school and frequent involvement in other initiatives, such as the National Gallery's 'Take One Picture', further enhance pupils' learning opportunities.

Many parents expressed the view that the care, guidance and support given by staff to pupils are good, and inspectors agreed. One parent wrote of the staff as a team having 'a holistic

approach' to child education. The ethos of the school is both supportive and inclusive and contributes significantly to pupils' excellent personal development. For example, older pupils act as 'buddies' to new pupils and one parent referred to her child being 'very well supported by his Year 6 buddy and staff'. Another parent of a child with additional learning needs wrote of 'how well she has been integrated and valued as a member of the school'. Safeguarding procedures meet current requirements. Health and safety are taken seriously. Targets are used to guide pupils' work and pupils find them helpful, although the degree of challenge they represent is insufficient for some. Good links with outside agencies are used to support pupils with a range of additional needs.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. At the last inspection leadership and management were judged to be good, but levels of achievement have not been sustained. The new headteacher has taken steps to improve both the monitoring of progress and communications with parents. These have been widely welcomed. Measures have been taken to improve standards and rates of progress, such as changes to planning arrangements and measures to tackle underperformance in writing. Test results for 2009 suggest that these measures have not yet had sufficient time to impact fully, although there has been a quickening of pupils' progress in lessons. Leadership and management at other levels are variable in effectiveness. There is a recognition that developing their capacity and expertise is a priority. The school has a good commitment to equality and inclusion. The promotion of community cohesion is excellent, making a substantial contribution to pupils' personal development. The school has strong links to local churches and the community, promotes a wide range of events, and exploits contacts with schools in other countries and the town's twinning arrangements with Poland. Governors work hard, are committed to the school and there is a good range of expertise on the governing body. However, there has been insufficient monitoring of the work of the school, particularly with respect to achievement, and too little involvement in strategic development. The need for leaders and managers at all levels to develop their skills in leading and being accountable for their contributions to pupils' achievement means that the capacity for improvement is, at the moment, no more than satisfactory.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children come into the Reception Year with skills which are at about the level expected for their age. They make good progress and by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage most have achieved, and some have exceeded, the expectations for their age group. Provision meets the children's needs well because of the good level of support they receive in their learning. Children's behaviour and attitudes are excellent and contribute significantly to their overall personal development and well-being. The children's welfare is given good consideration and the setting is well led and managed. Those involved are clear on what to do to improve and enhance the outdoor provision by developing space and facilities that are protected from the worst of the weather.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve standards and achievement with a particular emphasis on ensuring that higher attaining pupils reach their potential.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that pupils sustain the good progress made in Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1.

- Develop the expertise and capacity of leaders and managers at all levels to enable those involved to contribute to improvement.

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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?	3
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	3

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
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?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
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	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	1
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 learners' needs?	3
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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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**

17 July 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Taxal and Fernilee CofE Primary School, Whaley Bridge, Derbyshire, SK23 7DL

As you know, your school was inspected recently and this letter is to tell you about the results of the inspection. We very much enjoyed our visit to your school and would like to thank you for the extremely friendly way in which so many of you greeted and spoke to us. Speaking to many of you really helped us with the inspection.

Your school is providing you with a sound education. Almost all of your parents who sent back the questionnaires were positive about the school and they believe that the new headteacher is doing a good job since she arrived. On the whole you all make satisfactory progress in your subjects and leave school having reached standards that are satisfactory. The teaching you receive is satisfactory and some of it is good. We think the curriculum offers you a wide range of interesting experiences that help your development. The care and support that you receive from all the adults at the school are good and help you to develop the right sense of respecting and caring for other people. These aspects of the school's work contribute to your own personal development which we think is outstanding. We were very impressed by your attitudes and knowledge of how to stay safe, and you also show you know how to be healthy. You all make an outstanding contribution to the school and to the life of the community. You behave well, and your attendance is excellent. In many ways the school is preparing you well for the next stages of your lives.

There are a number of things we have asked the school to do to improve. We want the progress you make across all the years of the school to be at least good so that the standards you reach are higher when you leave. There is some good teaching, but we want it all to be at least of this quality. We especially want those of you who can learn quickly to be fully challenged to achieve your very best standard. Finally, we have asked that all those involved in leading and managing the school develop their skills and capacity so that they can contribute to improvements for you. You too can contribute to the improvement of your school by continuing to attend with the same attitudes and willingness that you show at the moment.

Yours faithfully

Bob Roberts

Lead inspector