

# Tewkesbury Church of England Primary School

## Inspection report

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Unique Reference Number	115654
Local Authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	326243
Inspection dates	4–5 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Julia Coop

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 under pilot arrangements; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	386
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Karen Vincent
Headteacher	Andrew Holt
Date of previous school inspection	7–8 December 2005
School address	Chance Street Tewkesbury Gloucestershire
Telephone number	01684 292309
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## Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors. The inspectors visited 19 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. A group of pupils also took inspectors around the school. The inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at the data the school has collected on pupils' progress, the school improvement plan and procedures for keeping pupils safe. Over 100 parental questionnaires were returned and scrutinised by the inspection team, who also spoke with a number of parents.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- The effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- The quality of teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2, and how well boys and less able pupils develop their writing skills
- How well basic skills are developed and embedded within subjects across the curriculum.
- The impact of leadership and management at all levels in contributing to the school's improvement.

## Information about the school

This is a larger than average sized primary school. Almost all of the pupils are from White British backgrounds, the rest representing a wide range of other ethnic groups. A small proportion of the pupils do not speak English when they start in the school. The current proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is in line with the national average, but this percentage is above average in some year groups. Far more pupils than usual leave or join the school at times other than the norm. Provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage is in two Reception classes. The school has close links with a Children's Centre in the school grounds. There has been significant long term staff illness in recent years, resulting in the employment of temporary teaching staff. The school holds a Healthy School's Award.

## Inspection judgements

Grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness

2

Capacity for sustained improvement

2

## Main findings

Pupils enjoy coming to this effective school, because they trust the staff who they say are always 'friendly and helpful'. As a result of an interesting curriculum and a wide range of additional learning opportunities, pupils have an excellent awareness of how to keep themselves safe and healthy. This is a highly supportive school, which welcomes new arrivals whatever their backgrounds, and helps them to feel very quickly a part of the school. By the time they are ready to leave the school, the pupils are mature and very thoughtful young adults, who have made a very positive contribution to the school and local community.

The school's positive reputation in the community and good pupil outcomes is due to the hard work of all staff and governors who share the headteacher's values and ambitions for the school. Although the school has been through a difficult period, good leadership and management has ensured that it has maintained its many strengths. Accurate self-evaluation has meant that attendance has improved. In addition, the quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage and for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities has been enhanced. Older pupils with literacy difficulties are now making much better progress in writing, but the school is aware that there is still some work to do to improve boys' writing in Key Stage 1.

The drive and determination of the headteacher and senior leaders has ensured that teaching and learning is good overall. From a below average start, in the Early Years Foundation Stage by the time pupils leave at the end of Year 6 they achieve levels in English, mathematics and science that are higher than the national averages. The school has a wealth of data about individual pupil performance, but it is not in a format that can be easily used by teachers to fine tune their planning to accelerate learning further. Although there is some good teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2, the quality is not as consistent as in the rest of the school. There is more still to do so that pupils in these years are provided with activities that consistently challenge all learners, and that pupils clearly understand what they need to do to improve in writing.

Links with other schools and agencies are harnessed very well. There is an atmosphere of high expectations. Consequently, the school is well placed to build on its strengths. However, although focussed in the right areas in its drive for excellence, the school improvement plan is trying to do too much and the success of

individual actions is not easily measured.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

Raise the quality of teaching and learning from satisfactory to good in Years 1 and 2 by:

- encouraging teachers to use a wider variety of teaching approaches to challenge and motivate all learners
- accelerating the progress, particularly of boys, in writing by:
  - ensuring teachers use the external environment more purposefully to provide a real life stimulus for writing
  - developing individual literacy targets that are more easily understood and used by pupils to improve their work.
- Promote excellence in learning by:
  - making sure that all teachers have access to clear measures of pupil and group progress to enable them to plan lessons even more closely matched to individual learning needs.
- Enhance the good monitoring and evaluation of the school by:
  - revising the school improvement plan so that it contains an achievable number of actions, the success of which can be more easily measured.

How good is the overall outcome for individuals and groups of pupils?

2
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In many lessons observed, pupils made good progress and sometimes learning was excellent. On these occasions the pupils were highly involved in learning and totally engrossed in the activities. In an outstanding English lesson, for example, Year 3 pupils delighted in working with a partner to share ideas about imaginary characters journeying through a forest. The classroom was filled with a buzz of purposeful conversation where the boys in particular were filled with ideas such as a 'Giant dragon would meet a vegetarian bear and a non-nocturnal owl'. The pupils' enjoyment and thoughtful consideration of each others' opinions and good attempts to record their ideas was impressive.

The improved provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities has led to these pupils making much better progress than in past years. More boys than girls have literacy difficulties. Older boys have benefitted from tailored individual or small group literacy sessions which have successfully helped to plug the gaps in their writing skills. Activities that involve them using all of their senses to learn letter sounds and clusters of sounds have aided their confidence in writing for different purposes. This has had a positive collateral effect on their learning in other subjects. Although younger pupils with literacy difficulties receive good quality additional support, boys in these groups are still struggling to learn their basic letter sounds. This is because class teachers are not as confident as specially trained staff in using

a variety of approaches, such as using the outside environment or practical activities, to support better writing. Another reason that learning is satisfactory, rather than good, in Years 1 and 2 is because too much time is often spent listening to the teacher rather than being actively involved in learning. On these occasions pupils' enjoyment of learning diminishes.

Pupils who arrive part way through a school term quickly settle down and this enables them to seamlessly continue their learning. The school is equally successful in ensuring pupils who arrive without speaking English receive the right sort of help so they make good progress in developing speaking and comprehension skills.

Another reason that pupils make good progress overall and achieve well is because attendance has improved. Their good attendance and happy faces in many lessons and around the school are a testament to this. The school successfully instils in the pupils a strong spiritual, social and moral understanding which accounts for their good behaviour and positive attitudes to school. This, together with their good awareness of other cultures and faith groups, and excellent understanding of how to maintain a healthy lifestyle and to stay safe, means they are well prepared for the next stage of their education. This is exemplified by the pupils themselves undertaking a risk assessment of the outdoor play equipment and arranging for repairs to be made.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and their progress	2
How well do pupils achieve and enjoy their learning?	2
To what extent do pupils feel safe?	1
How well do pupils behave?	2
To what extent do pupils adopt healthy lifestyles?	1
To what extent do pupils contribute to the school and wider community?	1
Pupils' attendance	2
How well do pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	2
What is the extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development?	2

## The quality of the school's work

There are common strengths in teaching such as very good relationships and the use of praise and encouragement that support pupils as they try hard to do their best. Teachers have good subject knowledge and most use this and different teaching

<sup>1</sup> Grades for attainment are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; 4 is low

approaches successfully to make learning interesting and meaningful. All teachers use interactive whiteboards to make learning relevant, while in the best lessons role play and partner work are regular occurrences that help to bring a variety to lessons. Pupils say that these approaches ‘really help us to learn’. In addition, aide memoires, in Years 3 to 6 such as ‘VOCAP’ displayed on classroom walls, remind pupils to think carefully about ‘vocabulary, connectives, openings and punctuation’, which they say helps their writing. Elsewhere, lessons are sometimes overly directed by the teacher, and on occasions the pace of lessons is slow.

Older pupils know what level they are working at in English and mathematics, and marking is usually supportive of learning. Younger pupils are also aware of their mathematics learning targets, but their writing targets are written in adult language which the pupils do not always understand; for example, ‘to write words containing CVCC’. Pupils’ individual progress is tracked carefully and this helps the school to recognise when to intervene. Challenging targets are set for individual cohorts and monitored closely, but the current way of tracking progress means that this data is not easily shared between staff. This is a missed opportunity to assist them in refining the activities they plan to support even better learning.

The success of the curriculum in supporting learning owes much to the hard work of staff who have ensured that meaningful links are made between subjects to aid learning and the progressive development of subject skills. In addition, an extensive range of visits and visitors helps bring the curriculum to life and make learning enjoyable. The school is developing the links between the Reception and Year 1 curriculum and improving the outside environment to better support learning. It recognises the importance of developing this further so as to increase the range of first-hand learning experiences for the youngest pupils. A carefully adapted personalised curriculum successfully meets the needs of pupils who find learning more difficult.

The school has a very caring, supportive family atmosphere. Consequently, pupils feel very safe and happy in school. Parents have a high level of trust in the school. Peer mentors are very proud of the role they play in helping the new pupils to settle in and make new friends. The more vulnerable pupils receive extra special help and their needs are extremely well met by very effective links with outside agencies.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

High quality teaching and purposeful learning	2
Effective assessment	2
An appropriate curriculum which meets pupils’ needs, including, where relevant, provision through partnership with other organisations	2
Support, guidance and care	1

## How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher provides a clear educational direction for the school and works very closely with a wide range of other agencies and partners to achieve success and enhance provision. In this school, teamwork is strong and a shared leadership style

ensures that there is not excessive dependence on the headteacher.

Despite the difficulties associated with staff absences, morale is high. There is a corporate understanding of the school’s strengths and areas for development based on an accurate diagnosis of its work. The school, therefore, has a good strategy to support different pupil groups which has led to improved pupil outcomes in many areas. There is an effective plan for further development and a shared vision and willingness to work hard to make further improvements. However, whilst the main improvement actions are identified correctly, it is not always clear how the impact of the actions taken will be measured in order to aid senior leaders and governors monitor and evaluate the impact of this work more closely.

The school’s safeguarding arrangements meet requirements well. The school also makes a good contribution to community cohesion. Links with the local and also the international community in Malawi and Mozambique are strong. Email and staff exchanges with schools in these regions are well established, which benefits the pupils’ cultural and moral development well and help develop their knowledge and understanding of the underdeveloped areas of the world. Links with the wider British community are not as well developed.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

Communicating ambition and driving improvement	2
Promoting equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination	2
Ensuring that safeguarding procedures are effective	2
Ensuring that the governing body provides effective challenge and support so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities are met	2
Promoting the school’s relationship with parents and carers, including their involvement in decision-making about matters relating to learning and well-being	2
Developing partnerships with other providers, organisations and services	1
Ensuring the school contributes to community cohesion	2
Deploying resources to achieve value for money	2

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage has improved. This is due to the good leadership and management by the provision leader who has very effectively harnessed the support of external advisors to train staff and improve their confidence. As a result, new staff are more skilled in assessing children’s progress and planning suitable learning activities. Consequently, the children experience a range of well planned activities across all six areas of learning. The classrooms are well resourced and the conservatory area is used particularly well to provide additional space for children to select their own equipment and resources and engage in self selected practical activities. This successfully aids their independence. Staff know individual children well and this contributes to children making good progress. In particular the staff are working successfully to enhance the children’s



communication and language skills. The recent development of the outdoor area means staff are beginning to plan a wider variety of activities to ensure children can make more choices. However, the children still tend to regard this area as a place to play rather than as also a place to work. Staff correctly identify that it has more potential to be developed as an outdoor classroom to extend learning opportunities even further.

How good are the outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2
What is the quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2
How effectively is the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	2
Overall effectiveness: how well does the setting/school meet the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2

## Views of parents and carers

Parents who returned questionnaires or who spoke to the inspection team are very happy with the school. They consider that the school has a dedicated team of staff and the headteacher leads and manages the school well. They agree that the school has a warm, friendly atmosphere and that their children make good progress. Inspectors fully endorse these views. A small minority would like to see better communication between home and school and would particularly welcome more notice when their children are involved in assemblies. The school is reviewing these arrangements.

## What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. In 2007-8, 15% of schools were judged to be outstanding.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well. In 2007-8, 49% of schools were judged good.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils. In 2007-8, 32% of schools were judged satisfactory.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves. In 2007-8, 5% of schools were judged inadequate.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Achievement:	an overall measure of the pupils' success in their academic learning. The term combines attainment and progress. Pupils might make good progress, for example, but if their attainment remains low, inspectors may judge that their achievement is only satisfactory.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.



6 March 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Tewkesbury Church of England Primary School, Tewkesbury, GL20 5RQ

Thank you so much for being so polite and extremely helpful to us when we visited. We really enjoyed seeing your smiling faces around the school. We were particularly impressed with your brilliant clarinet playing and your excellent understanding of how to keep safe and healthy. You also make a superb contribution to the school and local community. This is because everyone at the school takes very good care of you. We agree with you that you go to good school where an extensive range of visits and visitors helps make your learning enjoyable.

You all have very good relationships with your teachers who encourage you to try hard and make good progress in lessons. You are lucky to go to a school where you have strong links with Malawi and Mozambique. These help you to develop your knowledge and understanding of the underdeveloped areas of the world. The headteacher, governors and other staff work effectively together to make your school successful. They are working hard to make it an even better place to learn. We have asked them to work on four things:

- Make sure boys in Years 1 and 2 get better at writing and that teaching is always good and interesting.
- Help the pupils in Key Stage 1 to understand their writing targets.
- Make good teaching excellent in Years 3 to 6 by making sure that teachers have the right kind of information to help them plan even more challenging lessons.
- Ensure that the school plan for improvement is easier to check so that everyone knows if the school is doing as well as it could be.

I hope you go on trying hard and enjoying all of the interesting activities which help you learn and play.

Yours faithfully

Julia Coop (Lead Inspector)

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