

Prestbury St Mary's Church of England Junior School

Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|-----------------|
| Unique Reference Number | 115696 |
| Local Authority | Gloucestershire |
| Inspection number | 326252 |
| Inspection date | 30 April 2009 |
| Reporting inspector | Stephen Lake |

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

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| Type of school | Junior |
| School category | Voluntary controlled |
| Age range of pupils | 7–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School (total) | 232 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Daphne Philpot |
| Headteacher | Nicki Bennett |
| Date of previous school inspection | 11 July 2006 |
| School address | Bouncers Lane Prestbury Cheltenham GL52 5JB |
| Telephone number | 01242 244387 |
| Fax number | 01242 244387 |

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Introduction

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

- attainment and achievement especially in mathematics, attainment on entry to the school and the achievement of those deemed gifted and talented
- the support for those pupils deemed gifted and talented
- the school's strategy for community cohesion and pupils' personal development and well-being especially in relation to staying safe, bullying and cultural development.

Evidence was gathered from discussions with the headteacher, chair of governors, pupils and staff, visits to classes and a scrutiny of pupils' work, observation of other aspects of the school day, such as breaktime, an analysis of parents' questionnaires, and school documentation, including data on pupils' progress, records of visits by other external assessors and minutes of meetings. 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 assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Prestbury St Mary's C of E Junior is an average-sized school. It serves mainly the village of Prestbury with the majority of pupils coming from established estates. A small number come from nearby social housing. Almost all pupils are White British and none has English as an additional language. Attainment on entry for the current Year 6 was well above average but changes in the school population have caused attainment on entry to fall a little over recent years; it is now above average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities has risen in recent years from well below average to average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Prestbury St Mary's C of E Junior School is an outstanding school. All groups of pupils succeed in this school because of the way everyone strives for continual improvement. The outstanding leadership of the headteacher has formed all staff into a team focused on ensuring that every pupil achieves of his or her best. One of the very many parents who wrote in support of the school summed this up well – 'I think that this school is fantastic, I feel the passion for education and for children shines through in the deliverance of education.'

All pupils achieve very well and attain standards that are significantly above average because of outstanding teaching. Despite the already well above average standards on entry, the school builds effectively upon them, raising standards even further. Teachers challenge pupils constantly, working very closely with the skilled teaching assistants to monitor the progress of each pupil and setting work that stimulates and motivates them to learn. Pupils appreciate this and their great enjoyment of learning is evident. A typical comment was, 'I love school.' Pupils respond very well to the well targeted challenges that encourage them to achieve of their very best. This is clearly seen in the significant improvement in mathematics since the last inspection where standards have risen year on year. Nevertheless, the extremely high standards in mathematics on entry to the school mean that progress in mathematics, although good, is a relative weakness when set against the outstanding progress in English. Standards in science are consistently significantly above average with pupils achieving well overall and those whose attainment on entry was average or below achieving very well.

The excellent curriculum provides a rich and interesting experience for pupils that not only motivates them to learn well but supports their personal development and well-being extremely well. Pupils enjoy the many visitors to the school, such as those who come in to talk about their own faith or the life in their country. They talk with enthusiasm about the residential visits and visits to places of interest and also about the wide range of after school activities. Despite its many strengths, the school is not complacent. For example, the school has identified further improvements that can be made to ensure the curriculum is more creative and supports community cohesion more effectively, for example through links with schools in other countries such as The Gambia.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. Outstanding personal development and well-being owe a great deal to the excellent role models that all adults in the school provide as well as the high quality contribution for this area in the curriculum. Pupils learn by example to respect one another and work together harmoniously. Their spiritual, moral and social development is outstanding but their cultural development, although good, is a comparative weakness. Pupils know about and respect cultures and faiths found in other countries, but their understanding of the wide diversity of cultures found in Britain is a relative weakness. The school is aware of this and is already planning how this can be addressed. The excellent guidance that pupils receive means that they know how to stay safe and feel safe in school. Many demonstrate their excellent understanding of how to stay fit and healthy through the healthy choices they make for snacks and meals and the very high participation in after school sports clubs. This has been recognised in the awards of Activemark and Healthy Schools awards. Pupils take on many roles around school such as prefects, members of the school council or 'peer mediators' who are trained to help resolve any disputes that arise. These tasks not only enable them to make an outstanding contribution towards the smooth running of the school, but also give them skills that, together

with the extremely high standards, contribute very well to their excellent preparation for future economic well-being.

The school has excellent, very effective systems for the care, guidance and support of pupils. Great attention is given to ensuring that pupils are safe. Pupils say that they feel that they can approach adults if they have concerns and say that they know they will get any help they need. High quality systems to monitor the progress of every child are in place and used very effectively to set targets. Pupils know these targets well because of the regular 'pupil conferences' in which they discuss their work with their teachers. They talk confidently about things that they 'must', 'should' or 'could' do to improve their work. Pupils like the extra challenge provided by the 'super could' targets. They say that teachers' marking is really helpful. Pupils all like the fact that the school system of using highlighters to mark key parts of their work as 'green for growth' or 'tickled pink' is used consistently by teachers. They talk with enthusiasm about what 'green for growth' means in relation to a particular piece of work. The use of assessment has an extremely positive impact on pupils' learning. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make excellent progress because of the high quality support provided for them. A very small number of parents expressed concern about the provision for pupils who are gifted and talented. Inspection evidence does not support these concerns. The school has recently put in place a new strategy for those pupils identified as gifted and talented. Already this is enhancing the achievement of these pupils who achieve at least as well as other pupils. Strong partnerships with other schools provide additional opportunities for those identified as more able to further improve their skills, although the school acknowledges that the strategy is not yet fully embedded.

Key to the success of this school is excellent leadership and management and the successful way all teachers take on a leadership role in their subjects. Teachers praise the way the inspirational headteacher empowers them to contribute to school improvement by analysing what is working in their subjects and being innovative in addressing areas for growth. The strong contribution made to checking on the work of the school by all those responsible means that the school has a very accurate view of how well it is doing. The outstanding governing body is very supportive. Budgets are well planned and care taken to spend money wisely to support school improvement. Governors visit regularly to support the school in implementing the excellent systems for checking on the work of the school. The very strong partnership between all staff and governors not only helps in identifying areas for improvement but also supports the continual improvement taking place. However, the school recognises that procedures for evaluating the work of the school do not yet include robust enough systems for checking on the effectiveness of the school's actions to promote community cohesion. Work is already in hand to address this. The forward thinking approach of all staff and governors, together with the excellent improvements that have taken place over the last few years, clearly demonstrates that this school has an outstanding capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

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- Improve pupils' already good achievement in mathematics to match the outstanding profile of English.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of actions to promote community cohesion and improve pupils' understanding of the rich diversity of cultures in Britain.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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| 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

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| How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners? | 1 |
| 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 capacity to make any necessary improvements | 1 |

Achievement and standards

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| How well do learners achieve? | 1 |
| The standards ¹ reached by learners | 1 |
| How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners | 1 |
| How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress | 1 |

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

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|---|---|
| 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 | 2 |
| 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 | 1 |

The quality of provision

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|--|---|
| How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs? | 1 |
| 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? | 1 |

Leadership and management

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| How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners? | 1 |
| 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 | 1 |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation | 1 |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated | 1 |
| How well does the school contribute to community cohesion? | 2 |
| How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money | 1 |
| The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities | 1 |
| 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**

1 May 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Prestbury St Mary's C of E Junior School, Prestbury, Cheltenham GL52 5JB

Thank you for making me welcome and talking to me about your school when I came to visit. I really enjoyed talking with you. You told me that your school is very good. I agree with your parents and teachers. Your school is outstanding. There are many things to praise about your school. Here are just a few of the most important:

- You make excellent progress in your learning and by the end of Year 6 reach standards in English, mathematics and science that are much better than those found in most schools.
- You learn particularly well because teaching is excellent. Your teachers and other adults are extremely good at setting targets for your learning and supporting you in reaching these targets.
- Your behaviour is excellent and you are really keen to learn.
- The headteacher and other senior teachers make an outstanding job of running your school. They make sure that all the adults in the school work together to help you learn as well as possible. They have excellent ways of checking what is working and really know how to make the school even better,
- The governors do an excellent job in making sure you have very good teachers and checking on how well you are learning.

There are only a few little things that I have asked the school to do to help your learning at this excellent level.

- I have asked the teachers to make sure that you make as much progress in mathematics as you do in English.
- I have also asked teachers and governors to introduce even better systems for checking on how well the school is helping you find out about other cultures and faiths, and different lifestyles of people in other parts of Britain.

Thank you again for all your help.

Yours faithfully

Stephen Lake Lead inspector