

Powick CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116841
Local Authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	326460
Inspection date	28 April 2009
Reporting inspector	John Eadie

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)	194
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	Cathryn Throup
Headteacher	Richard Drewett
Date of previous school inspection	29 March 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	42 Malvern Road Powick Worcester WR2 4RT
Telephone number	01905 830336
Fax number	01905 831675

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

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

- The reasons why standards in mathematics are not as high as those in English and science, particularly for the higher attaining pupils
- The quality of pupils' personal development and well-being, to establish whether it has improved as much since the last inspection as the school judges
- The reasons why the school judges leadership and management as good rather than outstanding as it judges outcomes for pupils as outstanding.

Evidence was gathered from discussions with leaders, the Chair of the Governors, pupils, parents and staff, visits to all classes, scrutiny of pupils' work, observation of other aspects of the school day such as assembly, break and lunchtime, and analyses of parents' questionnaires and school documentation, in particular data on pupils' progress.

Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but 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

Powick Church of England Primary is an average sized primary school. Almost all pupils are White British and none is learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is broadly average, and one has a statement of special educational needs. Early Years Foundation Stage provision is made in a Reception class.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school. Pupils thoroughly enjoy their time at school and the lively learning that is planned for them. A high proportion of parents returned their questionnaires, which were extremely positive, and said such things as:

'Our child has blossomed due to the wide range of opportunities, such as playing in the orchestra and singing with the choir in Birmingham. Any concerns are sensitively and speedily dealt with.'

A further comment was: 'This is a wonderful school with motivated, friendly and approachable staff.'

The success of the school is illustrated by the outstanding outcomes for pupils. Not only do they reach very high standards academically by the time they leave, but they also develop into very mature and responsible young people, who have a keen sense of their responsibilities to society. Children join the school with levels of skills and knowledge broadly in line with those expected for their age. They make excellent progress in the Reception class, due to the outstanding provision for them, and join Year 1 having reached comfortably above average standards. This excellent progress continues through the school and pupils' achievement is outstanding. They are on track to reach very high standards in the national tests in a few weeks time. Particularly gratifying is the improvement in mathematics, where standards now match those in English. The school had correctly identified that standards in mathematics were relatively weaker and initiatives to address this have been successful. Around two thirds of the pupils are on track to gain the higher Level 5 in the national tests in English, mathematics and science, indicating the good levels of challenge for more able pupils. Those with learning difficulties also make excellent progress, almost all reaching the expected Level 4 in the national tests.

A major reason for this outstanding progress is the excellent quality of teaching and learning. Lessons are typified by lively, active learning, with pupils thoroughly engaged in their tasks and often working in pairs and small groups very effectively. Teaching assistants play a key role in pupils' learning and are a large part of the reason for the excellent progress of pupils with learning difficulties. Teachers use information and communication technology (ICT) very well to add interest to their lessons. Pupils' work is marked assiduously and teachers make many helpful comments. Short-term targets are set to enable pupils to know what they need to learn next and there is much dialogue between pupils and their teachers to check on this progress. However, when teachers mark pupils' work they do not direct pupils to their next steps in learning sufficiently regularly. This means that pupils are not always aware of these targets or working habitually to address them.

The outstanding curriculum also contributes to pupils' excellent progress. Pupils find their learning exciting and interesting because of the range of topics studied. ICT is a strength and pupils use ICT in many lessons and have high levels of skills in this subject which have been maintained since the last inspection. A further innovative use of ICT is the webcam set up in a nesting box, pupils being fascinated watching the blue tit and its 10 eggs. Many creative opportunities are provided within the curriculum, for instance there are a wide range of musical opportunities and chances to perform in drama and dance productions. Visits and visitors into school enhance learning and pupils said that they really enjoy these experiences. The range of extra-curricular activities is splendid, as one parent typically said, 'We are extremely pleased with the range of activities – there is something for everyone.' Within this, there is a multiplicity of very well attended sporting activities, which add to pupils' adoption of healthy lifestyles.

Pupils are well aware of healthy habits and were genuinely shocked when an inspector told them that he had seen a couple of pupils with chocolate bars and crisps at breaktime.

The care provided for pupils is outstanding and contributes significantly to their personal development and the progress that they make. As a pupil said, 'I want to work at school because the teachers treat you with respect and explain things really well.' Safeguarding arrangements were secure at the time of the inspection and health and safety requirements are effectively adhered to. Parents are very happy that their children are looked after well, this question being answered positively by all parents who responded to the questionnaire. Academic support and guidance are excellent. Data is used well to ensure that all pupils are making good progress, based on challenging targets set for each pupil's progress each year.

This excellent care results in pupils' outstanding personal development. Their behaviour is impeccable, without ever resulting in them being over-restrained. They are lively, but show impressive levels of care and concern for others. As a parent typically said, 'All children are considerate of each other and there is a strong sense of pride in the school.' Pupils adopt safe practices extremely well, having very good knowledge of how to stay safe when using the internet, for example. They are being prepared extremely well for their future, not only in the development of excellent proficiency in literacy, numeracy and ICT, but in their learning of skills of independence and teamwork. They make a significant contribution to the wider community, their initiatives in charity fund raising being particularly impressive. However, they do not have a wide range of opportunities to help in the daily running of the school.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. There are close links with the local church and pupils' spiritual development benefits from these links. Although pupils have good knowledge of cultural and religious diversity, this has not been enhanced by many first-hand experiences. This is seen as an area for development in the school's contribution to community cohesion. Leaders have a very clear knowledge of the local community and its needs and strive to meet these extremely well. However, they acknowledge that, being an almost mono-cultural community, work is needed to increase opportunities for pupils to work alongside those from other cultures and religions.

The success of the school and the good progress it has made in recent years, taking the step up from 'good' at its last inspection, are largely down to the extremely clear direction provided by the headteacher. His vision is shared by all – staff, governors and parents – and there is a corporate sense of wanting to provide the best for the pupils. This has been possible because of the very good systems that enable regular checks to be made on the effectiveness of the school's strategies. These have resulted in a clear picture being built and areas for further development identified and addressed. Governors play a very strong role in all of this and their work in supporting curriculum developments is exemplary. The school is modest in its own judgement on leadership and management as they only judge it good. Bearing in mind the progress that has been made in recent years, the rising standards and the excellent plans for future development, the school is extremely well placed to continue on its upward path – there is no complacency here! A parent summed up the success of the school extremely well when they said, 'The school helps our children to be confident, resourceful, creative and happy – as well as literate and numerate.'

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Provision in the Reception class is outstanding. A very strong team of experienced adults is led very well and ensures that children have a stimulating and engaging range of experiences. For instance, during the inspection the focus was Jack and the Beanstalk. Children thoroughly enjoyed dressing up and were excited to see that the giant had forgotten his boots. They also enjoyed making their own 'bonfire' in the role-play area. A good scheme of developing children's phonic skills is planned well and ensures that children develop good pre-reading skills. Learning outside is being developed well, though at present children do not have enough opportunities to make their own choices in learning.

Children join the school from a range of pre-school settings and their skills and knowledge are broadly in line with those expected for their age. Their skills are good in number and their dispositions and attitudes are better than one would expect, but skills are relatively weak in calculation and writing. They make outstanding progress during their time in the Reception class. This progress has been improving year on year over the last three years and, by the time they join Year 1, their standards are above average and particularly strong in number and their personal, social and emotional development. Information from assessments is not recorded as regularly as it might be to identify gains in learning and the next steps in learning so that all adults are aware of these targets.

There are excellent welfare arrangements in place and this is the reason for children's especially good progress in their personal development. Parents were particularly enthusiastic about induction arrangements, being impressed with how quickly their children settle in. Parents also spoke warmly about the way that staff work closely with them, keeping them well informed about what their children are doing.

What the school should do to improve further

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- Improve the use of assessment information in the Reception class, by recording more regularly children's gains in learning and identifying their next steps in learning.
- Ensure all pupils know their precise next steps in learning and that teachers refer to these targets more regularly when they mark pupils' work.

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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?	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

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?	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

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	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

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

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**

29 April 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Powick Church of England Primary School, Worcester, WR2 4RT

Thank you so much for welcoming us so warmly when we visited your school recently. We were really impressed with how well behaved, polite and friendly you all are. Many of you told us that you enjoy school a great deal and we are not surprised as it is an outstanding school.

These are some of the best things we found about your school:

- You are making excellent progress and reaching high standards by the time you leave, because you are being taught extremely well.
- You thoroughly enjoy school as there is a wide range of things planned for you to do. You told us that you really enjoy all the music, sport and ICT and we thought that you do really well in these subjects.
- All adults look after you extremely well and give you clear guidance on how you can improve your work and become more responsible citizens.
- You have an excellent start in the Reception class as all the adults there work well together to provide lots of interesting learning activities.
- Your headteacher has very good plans to make your school even better and he is extremely well supported by all the staff and the governors.

We have given suggestions to the school that could help you make even better progress:

- Make sure that when adults check on how well you are doing in Reception they write down what you can do more often and use this information to find out what you need to learn next.
- Make sure teachers refer to your learning targets more often when they mark your work so that you find it easier to remember your targets and what you need to do next to improve your work.

You can help by continuing to work hard and trying to remember what your learning targets are.

Best wishes and keep up the good work.

Yours faithfully

John Eadie

Lead inspector