

Church Preen Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123359
Local Authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	327890
Inspection date	11 May 2009
Reporting inspector	Martin Cole

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	Community
Age range of pupils	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	65
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	Steve Hall
Headteacher	Jude Duffy
Date of previous school inspection	5 June 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Church Preen Church Stretton SY6 7LH
Telephone number	01694 771359
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Age group	5–11
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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:

- pupils' progress at each stage of their passage through the school
- pupils' understanding of the diversity of their society and the world
- the use of information and communication technology (ICT) to support learning
- the guidance pupils receive on their work.

Evidence was gathered from the school's assessment information, planning, monitoring and other documents, observation of lessons, discussions with staff and pupils, and from parents' written comments. There was no detailed investigation of other aspects of the school's work 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

Almost all the pupils of this small rural school are White British. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities varies from year to year. It is usually lower than that found in most primary schools, but is currently a little higher.

Provision is made for Reception children in the Early Years Foundation Stage in a class that includes Year 1 and 2 pupils.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school. Pupils' academic achievement is good and standards are above average. Pupils also develop well in their personal qualities. Enthusiastic and imaginative leadership and management make this a vibrant school, a quality particularly evident in the very lively curriculum. Amongst very many positive comments written by parents, words like 'warm', 'friendly' and 'calm' capture the school's ethos. Children are said to be 'excited', 'challenged' and 'stimulated' and as 'having a real enthusiasm for life and learning'.

Right from their earliest days in the Reception Year, the children really enjoy school and learning. Pupils feel safe and happy at school, thanks to their very good relationships with both peers and adults. Pupils are very well cared for and there are rigorous procedures in place to keep them safe. School staff know pupils and their families very well and 'go the extra mile' in the care and pastoral support they provide. Strong links with parents support the good quality of care and help to ensure pupils' excellent attendance. Pupils grow markedly in confidence and readily take on responsibility in an environment that encourages them to be independent and self-disciplined. Behaviour is excellent. Pupils contribute constructively to the school community in many ways, such as the school council or the 'Eco Committee'. They grow vegetables for school lunch or for sale to parents. From time to time, they run 'Café Preen' for pupils and parents to raise funds for charity. The school and the local community enrich each other through shared interests and activities. Pupils join in many local social, musical and other cultural events. Parents and community members support the school in a host of ways, from practical work to improve the school site to curriculum contributions when they share their expertise and experience with pupils.

In this very positive atmosphere, pupils take full advantage of the good teaching and the good curriculum provided. As a result, almost all pupils, including those who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, make good progress throughout their time at the school, regardless of gender or background. Pupils' attainment on starting school varies but overall is broadly average. The school accepts a small number of pupils who have particular difficulty with learning or behaviour and who have sometimes transferred from other schools where they have not prospered. By the time they leave the school at the end of Year 6, pupils' overall standards are significantly above average.

The teaching is engaging and supportive and it is challenging for most pupils. Pupils get on with their work willingly and try hard. The imaginative curriculum inspires pupils' interest and makes learning enjoyable. Well-planned themes link work in a range of subjects to make learning interesting and relevant for pupils. The integration of the work with many special events, educational visits and visitors further adds to its appeal. Themes are often linked to the local environment so that pupils' appreciation of the environment grows, and the local landscape, economy and community are fully exploited as means of giving life to the curriculum. Much is also done to extend pupils' understanding of the diverse world beyond the school's remote rural location. A valuable partnership with a multi-ethnic urban school allows pupils to visit each other's schools, neighbourhoods and places of worship. At the international level, new links with schools in Guinea and Egypt have begun to give good support to pupils' understanding of diversity and global issues. A wide range of after-school activities, including good opportunities for exercise and sport, further enriches learning and enjoyment.

The teaching and curriculum generally provide well for the range of pupils' abilities and needs. Pupils finding difficulty in learning or behaviour are given effective additional support. However, the progress of a small number of more able pupils, while at least satisfactory, is sometimes restricted when work given to them is insufficiently challenging. This happens particularly when classes are taught as a whole for most of the lesson and the planned activity does not fully challenge the most able. Although pupils are clearly able to work independently, they are given too little time to do so. Opportunities to learn through using ICT are also too few; the school recognises this, is tackling the matter and acquiring the necessary extra resources.

Teachers give sound guidance to pupils on their work. Helpful termly reports to parents state pupils' achievement, set fresh targets and show where improvement is required. However, pupils find some difficulty in remembering long-term targets and general pointers to improvement. The marking of pupils' day-to-day work is often evaluative, but gives too little precise guidance in terms of the next steps pupils can immediately take to improve their work. The more able pupils are often praised by teacher's comments, but seldom given fresh challenges.

The school's many good qualities reflect the enthusiastic and determined leadership and management and the full commitment of a hard-working team of staff. Enterprising leadership has led to good links with other schools and organisations to supplement this small school's limited resources and establish a rich and broad curriculum. There has been good improvement in recent years. Parents report increased pupil enjoyment, a more exciting curriculum and closer community links. The capacity for further improvement is good. The school has a generally accurate understanding of its own performance and of how it can be better still. However, checks on day-to-day processes such as lesson planning and marking have received less energetic attention than curriculum innovation. Governors are very supportive of school improvement and keep a general watch over the school's performance. However, they make too limited a contribution to checks on the rigour of the school's management procedures.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The small number of children at the Reception stage are taught alongside the class of Year 1 and 2 pupils. Very careful planning and very good teamwork between the class teacher and classroom assistant ensure the needs of children in the Reception Year are met well within a mixed-age class. The children benefit from good teaching, a good curriculum and the close attention paid to their welfare and well-being. The calm, encouraging and caring atmosphere the staff create helps the children to soon become happy, confident and enthusiastic. Their personal and social development is good. They enjoy school and grow in confidence and independence, which leads to very good progress in speaking skills. The children make good overall progress. Standards vary from year to year, reflecting the very small numbers of children, but overall are rising. They were clearly above average at the end of the last school year. This reflects improved provision resulting from greater stability in staffing. Careful assessment of children's progress to plan the next steps in their learning is a strength. However, there are limited opportunities and guidance to help pupils develop early writing. The provision is well led and managed. Commendable enterprise has been shown in developing a curriculum link with the local independent playgroup which visits once weekly to be taught by the class teacher. This gives valuable support to children's transition to school in both learning basic skills and in personal and social terms.

What the school should do to improve further

- In marking pupils' work, give them more precise and practical guidance on the next steps they need to take to improve.
- Ensure that the most able pupils are always fully challenged by their tasks.
- Improve governors' contribution to checks on the rigour and effectiveness of management procedures.

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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?	1
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?	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?	2
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?	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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
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	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?	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?	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	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**

12 May 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Church Preen Primary School, Church Stretton SY6 7LH

The inspectors who visited your school recently would like to thank all of you for your very friendly welcome. We enjoyed meeting you and talking to you.

It was good to see that you enjoy going to school. You told us that you feel safe and happy there. We also saw that you get on very well with the adults and with each other. You have a sensible attitude to school. You work hard and your attendance and behaviour are excellent. All of this is helping you to make good progress. Almost all of you achieve the standard of work that you should. A good many of you do better than is expected for your age.

Some of you told us how well the teachers and the other adults look after you. We saw for ourselves that they give you lots of help and encouragement. The teachers give you good lessons which are often fun. They provide suitable work for almost all of you to do. Sometimes, though, a few of you could do harder work. The teachers also organise lots of really interesting and exciting events, visits and other activities which you told us you enjoy.

We have said that yours is a good school. The adults who are in charge of it are doing a good job. They are working hard to improve the school. We think there are three things that would make the school still better.

- We think the teachers should give you clearer help on how to improve when they mark your work.
- We have asked the teachers to provide harder work for those of you who can do it, so that you make the best possible progress.
- We also want the governors to give the headteacher more help to keep a check on the work of the school.

We hope you will make the most of the new help and challenges you are given.

We wish you the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Martin Cole

Lead inspector