

# Chirbury CofE VC Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	123467
<b>Local Authority</b>	Shropshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	327916
<b>Inspection date</b>	12 February 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Doris Bell

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.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	85
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
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Heather Kidd
<b>Headteacher</b>	T J Roberts
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	18 January 2006
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Chirbury Montgomery SY15 6BN
<b>Telephone number</b>	01938 561647
<b>Fax number</b>	01938 561647

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<b>Age group</b>	5–11
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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:

- what effect the school's work to improve reading, writing and mathematics is having on pupils' progress
- pupils' personal development and why the school feels the care it provides for pupils is outstanding but personal development is only good
- whether the checks made on teaching are helping to improve pupils' learning, and whether all statutory requirements are being met.

Evidence was gathered from visits to lessons, sampling pupils' work, observing pupils at work and at play, discussions with pupils, staff and governors, analyses of the school's documentation, assessment information and responses to the parent questionnaires. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspection 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

The pupils in this small primary school come from a wide rural area, some of which extends into Wales. All pupils, including children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, are taught in mixed-age classes. The current Reception children started school in January 2009. Privately operated pre-school provision takes place on a site adjacent to the school.

## 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. It has several outstanding features, not least the excellent care, guidance and support that turn pupils into well-rounded young people ready to face their future in a culturally diverse society. Several parents acknowledge this, praising the school highly for what it does, and particularly for helping their children to become 'independent and mature'. Pupils thoroughly enjoy school and attendance is above average. They describe their teachers as 'nice' and say that they make learning 'fun', even if they are 'a bit annoying' at times when they push them to do more and more.

A testimony to the pupils' excellent behaviour in and around the school is the way in which they worked purposefully throughout the day of the inspection, even though they were very excited about performing that evening in the pantomime they had written themselves. Pupils readily help and support each other, for example with their learning and in the playground. They follow the excellent example of the staff who, as parents report, regularly go out of their way to help pupils and their families. Pupils have an excellent understanding of how they can contribute to the school and local community. They have well-developed moral and social consciences that result in a good understanding of the need to ensure equality for all. This is supported effectively by their studies of different faiths, cultures and backgrounds in this country and abroad. This aspect of the school's work has improved considerably since the previous inspection. It contributes effectively to the pupils' growing awareness of their place in the global community and shows that the school is promoting community cohesion well.

Pupils have a real 'voice' in the school. They acknowledge that their views are valued and know that they make a valuable contribution to school improvement. They work and play in a warm, supportive learning environment where they feel safe and know how to keep themselves safe. They state confidently that staff will always help them should they have any concerns at all. Pupils also appreciate the importance of eating healthily and taking regular exercise. However, the snacks that some pupils bring to school, including in their packed lunches, do not always bear witness to this despite the school's best efforts, which include a healthy tuck shop run by Year 6 pupils.

Pupils achieve well throughout the school. Children start school with skills and experiences below those expected for their age. They reach average standards at the end of Reception, although weaknesses remain in writing. In most years, standards are above average in Years 2 and 6, as they are in the work of pupils currently in those two year groups. The small numbers and the changes in different year groups after Year 2 cause standards to fluctuate in Year 6. However, the school assesses and tracks the progress of each pupil meticulously and its data confirms that progress is consistently good for all groups of pupils. Pupils know their targets well. They rise to the challenges set in each lesson and are closely involved in assessing and marking their own and others' work. This, and the good practice of helping them to determine at the end of a lesson whether they have met the learning objectives, develops in them a good understanding of what they need to do to improve.

The school is quick to recognise where there are problems and it acts swiftly to overcome them. This is particularly evident in mathematics and writing, where pupils' progress is getting better because of actions the school has taken. For example, in 2007, the outcomes of the national tests for mathematics revealed that pupils lacked a secure understanding of shape. The work Year 6 pupils now do on shape is very challenging indeed, taking many of them into elements

of secondary school work. In 2008, weaknesses were identified in pupils' ability to break down mathematical problems and work out how best to solve them. The school has made a good start on tackling this, including through a review of the teaching of reading and the pupils' ability to understand the meaning behind the written word. However, opportunities are still sometimes missed to move pupils on more quickly from straightforward calculations to using those calculations to solve problems.

Overall, the quality of teaching is good. This, and the well-planned curriculum, contributes effectively to pupils' learning and personal development. The curriculum is rich in opportunities for pupils to learn in a practical, hands-on way. Teachers use the curriculum well to plan exciting activities for pupils, and include in this a good range of visits and visitors that extend pupils' learning. Topic work is often of a high standard, and provides pupils with many opportunities to use their writing, mathematical, and information and communication technology skills. However, pupils are not always sufficiently encouraged to sift and interpret written information and then use it to solve a range of problems.

Because of recent and impending changes in staffing, the headteacher currently carries a heavy leadership and management workload. He does this exceptionally well, checking teaching and its impact on learning, and providing practical advice and support equally for all staff. The sensitive way in which he alters his approach to suit different members of staff mirrors the excellent attention given to each pupil to help them improve. Staff respond well to the high expectations the headteacher has of them and they in turn have high expectations of the pupils. Staff, governors, pupils and parents are all effectively involved in making decisions about school improvement. They fully subscribe to the headteacher's vision, namely, that all pupils do as well as they possibly can, personally and academically.

Governors fulfil their roles well. They ensure all statutory requirements are met, including current safeguarding requirements. They manage the budget well, conscious of the fluctuating number on roll, thereby ensuring that the school is well prepared for the future. The school knows itself well. Using performance management targets and opportunities for professional development well, it works purposefully towards the well-founded priorities in the school improvement plan. The school also works closely with other schools and external agencies to help it reach its priorities. All of this ensures it has good capacity for further improvement.

## **Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

Good teaching, leadership and management and a well-balanced curriculum ensure children make good progress in this age group. Although Reception children had only been in school since January 2009, they had settled well into established routines. This is the result of the school's good links with parents and the effective procedures by which they and their children are introduced to the school prior to starting. The school makes the best use of the staff available to ensure the children's needs are met within the mixed-age class. The curriculum provides a good balance between activities directed by the staff and those the children can select for themselves, and learning takes place in and out of doors. As in the rest of the school, progress is checked thoroughly and the information used to plan the next steps in learning. However, not all staff are equally able to move children's learning on by seizing the opportunity as children respond to the learning planned for them. The careful management and organisation of the children's learning minimises the impact of this on their progress, as they work with different members of staff during the day.

Children successfully develop early reading, writing and mathematical skills, learning to share and read books, to write their names and simple words, to count and to recognise shapes. Excellent attention is paid to promoting children's welfare and well-being, including through strong links with their families and external agencies. As a result, children work and play happily together and on their own, chatting as they work, secure in their developing understanding of their place in the world.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Give pupils more opportunities to focus on how to get at the meaning behind the written word, and teach them how to use this skill more effectively to solve problems in mathematics.

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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?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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

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<sup>1</sup>Grade 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

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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	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	2

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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?	1

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	2
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**

13 February 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Chirbury CofE (VC) Primary School, Montgomery, SY15 6BN

Thank you for the very warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school. You told us you really enjoy being there. This is evident in your good attendance, excellent behaviour and the way you work hard in lessons.

You go to a good school that is well led and managed, and provides you with excellent care, guidance and support. You make a good contribution to the school and local communities, and have a good understanding of different cultures at home and abroad. All of this helps you to become happy, well-rounded young people ready to face the future. You also know how to keep yourselves safe, fit and healthy, although not all of you put that knowledge to good effect, for example by bringing healthy snacks or healthy lunchboxes to school. Perhaps you could work with your parents to improve this, especially as you are really proud of the healthy tuck shop that you run yourselves.

You make good progress in your learning because your teachers and the headteacher keep a close check on how well each one of you is doing. They quickly provide extra help for you if your learning shows signs of falling behind, whatever the reason. Your parents and carers are very pleased about this. Your teachers make sure you know how to check your own and each other's work and how to improve it. Like you said, they plan exciting things for you to do. Your topic work is particularly impressive. It shows how much you learn as different subjects are linked together.

We noted that, in mathematics, you are not always as good as you could be at solving problems. We have therefore asked your school to give you more opportunities to learn how to get at the meaning behind the words you read in all subjects, and to teach you how to use this skill better in mathematics. You can help by reading problems more carefully and breaking them down so you can see the steps you need to take to solve them. We hope this will help you to make faster progress in this aspect of mathematics, and that you will continue to enjoy learning as much as you do now, for the rest of your lives.

Yours sincerely

Doris Bell

Lead inspector