

Preston CofE VC Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123819
Local Authority	Somerset
Inspection number	327996
Inspection dates	29–30 April 2009
Reporting inspector	Jane Neech

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)	414
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	Simon Cleal
Headteacher	Robert Steele
Date of previous school inspection	8 February 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	The Toose Abbey Manor Park Yeovil BA21 3SN
Telephone number	01935 474538
Fax number	01935 433549

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

Preston Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School is larger than average. The school draws from a mix of private and housing association homes. The uptake of free schools meals is relatively low. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is in line with the national average. Their needs mostly relate to moderate learning difficulties or behavioural and social problems. A small proportion of pupils are from minority ethnic groups. The school has gained a range of awards including Healthy Schools status, School Achievement Award and sports awards.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Preston Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School is a satisfactory school providing a happy, safe and secure environment in which pupils enjoy coming to school. As one parent put it, 'My children are always happy to go to school and happy when they come out of school.' The school is popular with parents and regularly oversubscribed. The school's contribution to the local community is good and it is well regarded as a result. Pupils receive good pastoral support through the strong caring ethos which underpins the work of the school. Those new to the school benefit from a well-thought-out introduction to school life. As a result, new pupils settle well and soon begin to show the confidence to learn. Pupils' personal and academic development is monitored by staff. The school looks after its pupils well, and pupils feeling safe in school. Their good personal development is particularly evident in lessons where pupils' good behaviour is often respectful and mature. The whole school celebrates a range of pupils' achievements, such as older pupils demonstrating examples of team building in assembly. Children enter Reception with skills typically seen for their age. Good induction arrangements help the youngest children settle quickly into the Reception classes. Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 range from average to below average in reading, writing and mathematics. By the time pupils leave at the end of Year 6, standards in English, mathematics and science are broadly average. Taking into consideration pupils' starting points, they make satisfactory progress. However, the rate of progress pupils make as they go through the school is not consistent. Systems for tracking progress are now in place and staff are making better use of the information gained to help pupils improve their learning. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teaching seen during the inspection ranged from satisfactory to outstanding. However, the quality of teaching is not consistent across the school and some lessons lack challenge for more able and less able pupils. Relationships within the classes are harmonious and there is some friendly and respectful teasing of teachers by older pupils. Pupils collaborate readily as learning partners, making the most of opportunities for independent thinking. However, there is insufficient consistency in the way teachers mark work and set pupils targets so that all pupils are helped to move on to the next steps in their learning.

The curriculum has a range of activities aimed at making learning enjoyable, but the school is aware that subjects, particularly English in Key Stage 2 and reading, writing and mathematics in Key Stage 1, are not yet planned well enough to ensure that all groups of learners make consistently good progress. Particular favourites with pupils are the sporting and musical activities. There is a range of clubs and the take-up is high, as is the level of enthusiasm. Residential visits are well supported and enjoyed by pupils.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Strategies for improvement are considered by the senior leadership team. Since the last inspection the school has focused on monitoring, including monitoring by subject leaders. This is leading to a clearer picture of the standards and progress made by pupils, but as yet, this process is limited and does not have enough impact on raising pupils' standards and achievement. The school's capacity to make further improvements is satisfactory. Governors are proud of the way the school cares for its community. As one governor put it, 'The Christian ethos underpins how the school cares for its whole community.' Community cohesion is satisfactory and the school works well in supporting local community events.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Children's skills at the beginning of Reception are in line with the levels typically seen. By the time children leave Reception they have reached standards that are in line with national expectations. They are well looked after and supported in their start to school by all adults in the staff team. As a result, they quickly settle and show a desire to learn. Their progress is tracked and the school responds to those children who need extra help by putting in appropriate support. A suitable range of learning experiences is provided for the youngest children and they make satisfactory progress. However, some activities do not allow the children freedom to explore and engage with their own ideas. As a result, progress is not as good as it could be. While the conservatory area provides some exciting play activities, opportunities for outside play are limited. The Early Years Foundation Stage coordinator has a clear view of the strengths and areas for development and has been instrumental in responding to the need for improved outside learning opportunities. Tracking systems are thorough and, as a result, all adults know how children are progressing. However, the continuity of assessment and learning opportunities for children as they enter Key Stage 1 has yet to be fully developed.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning across the school, so that all pupils are challenged to do as well as they can, especially the least and most able.
- Ensure there is consistency in the way teachers mark work and set pupils targets so that pupils are helped to move on to the next steps in their learning.
- Raise overall standards in literacy from broadly average to good.
- Raise standards in Key Stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics from broadly average to good.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement overall is satisfactory. Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 are broadly average. Pupils' progress throughout the school is uneven. In Key Stage 1, progress is slow. Pupils 'pick up speed' at the beginning of Key Stage 2 where a number of pupils quickly reach higher levels in their work. Pupils continue to make satisfactory or better progress in Key Stage 2. Results in Key Stage 1 remain broadly average and the school has put measures in place which are resulting in some improvement, but at this stage it is too early to show sustained improvement. Over the last few years, standards at the end of Key Stage 2 have been broadly average and this represents satisfactory progress. In some cases, good progress was seen in lessons during the inspection. However, in a number of lessons pupils were not making the expected progress, and progress over time has not been high enough. Results in English and mathematics over the last few years have fluctuated from average to below average. In the 2008 statutory assessments, pupils reached standards in mathematics and science that were broadly in line with national averages. Standards in English were below average. The achievement of pupils against their adequately challenging targets in English, mathematics and science was satisfactory.

The progress made by pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is satisfactory overall; some make good progress as a result of effective interventions but for others progress is not as good as it could be. Tracking systems are now part of the work of the school and provide a platform for raising achievement and standards but as yet these are not rigorously applied to ensure all individuals and groups make better than satisfactory progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The impact of the good provision for pupils' personal development and well-being is seen in their positive attitudes towards school and their good behaviour. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength. Assemblies offer time for reflection and older pupils demonstrate their understanding of team building which is a strong feature of the school. Pupils learn about life in other societies and show that they value a variety of faiths and cultures. Pupils have a good understanding of living and eating healthily and the importance of exercise and a good diet. They recount how much they enjoy taking part in the many sporting opportunities on offer. Pupils are polite and talk maturely about what they are learning. They have good relationships with staff and are ready to turn to them with confidence, should the need arise. Pupils feel safe in school, which they enjoy attending and speak about with enthusiasm. Attendance is satisfactory. Pupils relish the responsibilities they are given, for example charity work projects and participation in local musical events such as the African drum music recital. Pupils are adequately prepared for their future economic well-being through the challenges they are given, such as each class investing £10 for a year and at the end of the year deciding how to spend profit from the investment.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching ranges from the inspirational to the pedestrian. In the most effective lessons, teaching meets the needs of the full range of learners and pupils demonstrate high levels of engagement. As a result of teachers' confident subject knowledge and probing questions, pupils benefit from appropriate levels of challenge. Teaching assistants support pupils well, especially those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Teachers ensure that the contribution to lessons of this group of learners is shared and celebrated. Where teaching is less successful at meeting learners' needs, work is not matched to pupils' abilities and they have limited opportunities to apply their learning throughout the lesson. Expectations are lower and tasks are not sufficiently challenging for the more able and less able pupils, whose progress slows as a result. The inconsistency in the quality of teaching is contributing to the picture of uneven progress throughout the school. Marking helps pupils move on to the next step in their learning when it is directly linked to targets set but this is not consistent across the school.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school has taken effective action to develop a range of opportunities to enrich pupils' learning experiences. The range of activities on offer include many sporting and musical opportunities, visits to places of interest, themed days and weeks, residential camps and visitors in school. Younger pupils happily attend lunchtime music and drama clubs. Cross-curricular

links are made between subjects and pupils enjoy the topic approach to learning. Changes have been made to the curriculum to capture the imagination of boys, such as opportunities for writing about pirates and football, and there has been an improvement in boys' writing as a result. However, the curriculum is not always successful in addressing the needs of all groups of learners by providing suitably challenging work. The range of clubs and after-school activities are well attended by pupils. Pupils share and celebrate their work through well-presented displays and assemblies.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Pastoral care is a strength of the school and appreciated by parents. Safeguarding and child protection procedures are in place. The school has a comprehensive record of risk assessments that are effectively communicated to the pupils and this contributes to their sense of security. Outside agencies are in contact with the school and working relationships are good. However, the opportunity for the involvement of parent groups is limited. The school sign posts families to local extended provision before school. Considerable attention is given to all pupils, but especially those who find school challenging and, as a result, progress is satisfactory or in some cases better for individuals overcoming specific difficulties. Pupils' views are regularly sought and recorded in comprehensive records and, as a result, the personal needs of every pupil are well known to staff.

The school's provision for academic guidance is satisfactory. Adequately challenging targets are set for pupils, although they are not always high enough to stretch the more able and less able pupils. There is now a system in place to track pupils' progress and regular reviews by the leadership team help to identify individuals in danger of underachieving, leading to interventions. Where marking is effective, teachers' comments celebrate success and give advice on how to improve. Pupils can talk about their targets but are not always sure how to progress in their work. The less effective marking does not engage pupils in a dialogue on how to improve their work. As yet, not all pupils are sufficiently active in the assessment and target-setting process, and the link between their targets and the learning within lessons is not fully developed.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The school's leaders provide an adequate direction to its work and this is having some impact on raising achievement. The leadership team has a satisfactory view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The tracking system and training for staff have resulted in teachers' improved confidence in the use of data to track pupils' learning. Teachers know where pupils are in their learning and are beginning to look more specifically at the next steps to improve pupils' progress. The school looks after its pupils well with a high degree of pastoral care and is proactive in ensuring that the personal development and well-being of all pupils are priority. Leaders ensure that appropriate time is given to vulnerable pupils in order to make their experiences at school enjoyable and this has proved to be effective. The school listens to pupils' requests and puts actions in place, such as organising or supporting charity events. The school is addressing community cohesion within its own community through its Christian ethos which focuses on mutual respect. The school reaches out to other communities through links abroad and visitors to school. However, there is limited evidence of the impact of the school's work on pupils' perception of other communities. The majority of parents are supportive of the school and

particularly like the caring approach shown to pupils. The governors provide the school with a suitable balance of support and challenge in a spirit of open discussion. They are regularly in touch with the work of the school, such as hearing pupils read and accompanying the school on residential visits.

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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?	3
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?	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
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?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	3
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	3

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	3
The behaviour of learners	2
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	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
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**

1 May 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Preston Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School, Yeovil, BA21 3SN

I am writing to thank you for making the inspection team feel so welcome in your school when we visited recently and for helping us with our questions. This is what we found out about you and the school.

We agree with you and your parents that your school is a friendly and caring school. We judged it to be satisfactory overall, which means that it does some things well but some things need to be improved. Here are some of the things that we particularly liked about Preston Primary.

- You enjoy school and work well with each other.
- If you are new to school everyone helps you to be happy at school.
- You are polite and respect all adults in school.
- Your headteacher knows you well and puts things in place to make sure you are happy at school.
- All staff work together to keep you safe and healthy so you feel confident in all that you do.
- Many of you enjoy a range of clubs such as sports, music and drama.
- The governors are working hard with your headteacher to make the school even better.

We would like you to make more progress in your learning, and have asked your teachers to work on four things. We think they should make teaching and learning better so that all of you do as well as you can. We have asked that your teachers mark your work, giving you helpful tips on what to learn next. We have also asked them to help you improve your work in literacy and to help the younger ones of you in Key Stage 1 to do better in reading, writing and mathematics.

You can help to improve your school by always working hard and making the most of the opportunities available. I am sure that you will.

Yours faithfully

Jane Neech

Lead inspector