

Preston Candover Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116308
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	338789
Inspection dates	22–23 June 2010
Reporting inspector	Rob Crompton

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	145
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Ian Cammack
Headteacher	Mrs Katy Harris
Date of previous school inspection	22 May 2010
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. They observed 10 lessons taken by five teachers, and support sessions led by teaching assistants. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, governors and staff. The inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at curriculum plans, assessment records, minutes of meetings and 80 parental questionnaires. They also had informal discussions with parents.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the gap in pupils' achievement between reading and writing at Key Stage 1
- the differences in achievement between boys and girls at Key Stage 2
- the effectiveness of the school's plans to modify the curriculum in order to improve pupils' writing skills in Key Stage 1 and to build pupils' confidence in problem solving in Key Stage 2.

Information about the school

The school serves a rural community and is smaller than average. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. No pupils are at an early stage of learning English. Around a quarter of the pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities, which is above average. Most of these pupils have learning difficulties or speech, language and communication problems. A very small minority has behavioural and emotional difficulties. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in a mixed Reception/Year 1 class. The four other classes also include pupils from two age groups. The school has gained enhanced Healthy School status, the Arts Mark, the Intermediate Award for International Development, and Fair Trade status. A privately managed pre-school operates on the same site.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

The school provides an outstanding quality of education. Pupils thoroughly enjoy learning because the excellent curriculum takes full account of their interests and suggestions, and teachers ensure that lessons are challenging with a strong element of fun. Pupils develop a remarkable level of maturity and independence, taking the initiative and managing projects such as the recent 'Fair Trade fortnight'. They make good progress through the school and reach above average standards. Pupils have very secure basic skills, including high levels of competence in using modern technology. The combination of these factors means they are extremely well prepared for their future education and beyond.

Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is exemplary. They have a strong sense of justice and fairness, underpinned by a very good understanding of cultural diversity within the United Kingdom and beyond. They are sensitive to the needs of their classmates, for example those who find it difficult to mix with others. The thoughtfulness shown by pupils is promoted, nurtured and modelled by the school's excellent care, guidance and support. Every pupil is known by all adults. A watchful eye is kept on their personal and academic development and pupils are safe in the knowledge that they are cared for extremely well. Parents hold the school in high regard. Their comments included, 'A happy and caring community,' and, 'The very caring staff are very good at communicating with parents.'

Those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities benefit from very effective support. Teaching assistants play a strong role, helping them during lessons and by teaching individual and small groups outside the classroom. Teachers keep support staff well briefed so that they provide very good guidance for pupils as they are working. Sometimes, however, teachers do not fully capitalise on the expertise of the support staff during the introductions to lessons or when summing up at the end. This limits the opportunities for individual pupils to contribute ideas or comment on what they have learned.

The school evaluates itself very well, quickly and clearly prioritising areas for improvement. As a result, areas identified at the last inspection and additional priorities, such as tackling occasional dips in performance of individual year groups, have been successfully addressed. The high quality engagement with a range of external partners contributes significantly to the school's effectiveness, securing excellent value for money. All of these successes indicate the school's outstanding capacity to improve further.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Provide further opportunities for pupils to contribute their ideas and reflect on their learning by:
 - deploying the highly skilled support staff as effectively as possible in introducing new work and reviewing outcomes at the end of lessons
 - sharing the good practice evident in most lessons in displaying prompts for learning and providing further structure for less confident pupils when they are tackling written tasks.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Although the small numbers in each year group lead to fluctuations, the overall picture is that pupils make good progress and reach above average standards, and this was fully supported by observations of work in lessons and pupils' books during the inspection. Admirable relationships and excellent behaviour create an environment in which pupils are very well motivated to learn. A strong emphasis on writing in Years 1 and 2 has resulted in pupils' skills in writing more closely matching those in reading. Writing as a caterpillar, after being encouraged to use adjectives, one pupil wrote, 'I like eating nice, crunchy, juicy leaves.' At Key Stage 2, there is no significant difference in the achievement of boys and girls. Pupils' confidence in solving mathematical problems has increased significantly. This is because they have learned to instantly recall the basic number facts that they need. For example, when being introduced to algebraic expressions, pupils in Year 6 quickly solved equations such as $7x = 56$ and $x = ?81$. Pupils who have learning difficulties or fall behind in their work are supported effectively and progress well. Those who find difficulty in communicating, because of their limited language skills and/or speech and pronunciation problems, make good progress due to skilful support.

Personal development is a real strength. Healthy Schools status is reflected in pupils' extremely good knowledge about the importance of keeping safe and healthy. Pupils appreciate the need to eat sensibly and to take regular exercise, and know all about how to deal with situations which concern them. Pupils' love of school is shown in their high level of attendance. They make a substantial contribution through a wide range of roles, such as school councillors, peer mediators and playtime leaders. Pupils engage at a variety of levels to take responsibility and lead projects, such as energy conservation and recycling. Pupils understand the ethos and principles that underpin their highly positive respect and consideration for others. This is evident not only through their daily interaction with other pupils and staff, but also through their strong commitment to supporting those less fortunate than themselves. The work the pupils engage in to link with other schools locally and internationally provides excellent opportunities to understand and celebrate many different cultures and beliefs.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Pupils gain very useful insights into their own learning and, as they move through the school, increasingly see their learning as a partnership between themselves and their teachers. New topics are routinely introduced by asking pupils what they know and what they would like to find out, rather than being based on pre-determined content. Teachers provide ongoing feedback during lessons and include specific points for improvement in their marking. Pupils regularly review their own progress and that of their classmates, often using criteria they have helped to devise at the beginning of a topic. In most classrooms, prompts for improvement are displayed, to which pupils refer as they work. In some lessons, however, these hints are not so prominent. Teachers are generally very good at pitching work at a suitable level of challenge for different groups, although occasionally some pupils struggle to make a start as the tasks are not simplified or backed up with useful vocabulary or key questions.

The rich curriculum provides a wealth of opportunities to make learning fun and is well supported by a range of visits, visitors and clubs. Literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology skills are used very effectively to support learning in other subjects. For example, pupils in the mixed Year 4 and 5 class demonstrated a very good grasp of persuasive language as they used their excellent computer skills to create advertisements for the felt animals they had made in design and technology. Good opportunities in art are recognised by the reward of the national Arts Mark. Residential

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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visits provide pupils with memorable experiences. Alongside pupils from widely differing backgrounds they gain insights into cultural diversity and hone their interpersonal skills. Their work on fair trade and with schools overseas also enhances pupils' understanding of different cultures and beliefs, and this is acknowledged in the International Schools Award. The way teachers interpret the curriculum has a strong impact on pupils' spiritual development. This was exemplified as groups of pupils interpreted poems on the theme of declining environmental resources. Their moving performances reflected sincerely held views and had a powerful impact on everyone watching. Pupils' mutual respect for one another emerged through their feedback comments, including, 'I'm not being harsh or anything but perhaps you could learn the verse so you can make more eye contact with the audience.'

A highly inclusive ethos ensures that concerns are quickly highlighted and addressed with sensitive support. Pupils and families whose circumstances make them vulnerable receive excellent support. The sensitive guidance provided for the very few pupils experiencing emotional or behavioural difficulties enables them to sustain their concentration and move forward. Pupils with speech, language or communication difficulties are very well supported by excellent programmes, including those from external agencies. Arrangements for transition into and out of the school are excellent because of the well-established links with parents and with receiving schools.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

In this small school, all teachers willingly take on extra responsibilities. This means that everyone is focused on driving improvements. In addressing some emerging anomalies in pupils' performance in English and mathematics, for example, all staff pulled together under the highly effective leadership of the headteacher. The deputy headteacher and mathematics leader played a major part in devising strategies for improvement and in providing exemplary role models in their classroom teaching.

Governors are innovative in their approach. For example, they devised imaginative ways to generate local interest and secure extra funding for the current building extensions. They keep a sharp eye on assessment information and are quick to question any fluctuations or explore any emerging trends, reflecting the school's strong commitment to equal opportunities and determination to quickly spot and eradicate any discrepancy in the achievement of different groups. Governors keep themselves informed by visiting

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regularly, consulting parents, and inviting staff members and school council representatives to their meetings. The governing body ensures that policies for the safeguarding of pupils are implemented effectively by regularly reviewing the compliance with regulations, undertaking risk assessments and ensuring that child protection policies are implemented.

A drive to overcome the potential constraints of the school's isolated rural location in promoting community cohesion has been very successful. Recently, every class made a contribution to 'global awareness week'. Reception children traced their journey to school. Older pupils used a world map to illustrate the wide range of family and friendship links and write comments, including, 'I chose Ireland because I was born in Cork near the sea,' and, 'I chose Egypt because it's a beautiful country.' Pupils in Years 5 and 6 made a display of the symbols used in different religions. Such activities, together with introductions to French and Spanish, and direct links with schools serving diverse communities in the United Kingdom and abroad, very successfully promote an understanding and appreciation of diversity.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children join the school with skills and understanding that are broadly at the levels expected for their age. They settle quickly and enjoy learning in the warm and welcoming environment. The provision is managed well. The teaching team ensures learning and development are promoted well. They plan a good balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities to develop self-confidence and independence. As a result of good teaching and an interesting curriculum, children make good progress. They make

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particularly good headway in developing social and language skills. When discussing their model castles, for example, children cooperated well. They conversed easily using well-constructed sentences such as, 'I think we need a drawbridge', 'This could be our dragon' and, 'Don't forget the moat!' They showed a good understanding of symmetry as they used wooden blocks, junk materials and sand in their constructions. The children are very polite and courteous and respond well to high expectations. They make the most of all activities, which excite and fascinate them throughout the school day.

All staff contribute to the regular recording of children's progress across all areas of learning. They engage children in conversations and eavesdrop on their discussions, noting their comments and frequently take photographs to record significant events in children's learning. This information is used to track progress through the year and monitor outcomes. The assessments made at the end of Reception indicate that children's attainment is broadly typical for their age. This does not entirely reflect the good levels of personal development, language and numeracy evident during the inspection, suggesting some underestimation of children's attainment.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The overwhelming majority of parents and carers are positive about the school. Within these positive views, a few raised individual concerns about their child's progress, the information they receive, and the quality of leadership and management. The inspection found that the vast majority of pupils make good progress. It also found that the school provides a good range of information and opportunities for parents to discuss their children's progress, and plans to reiterate these on the website and in the regular newsletters and emails. However, it acknowledges that parents would benefit from more guidance about help with reading and writing. The inspection found no evidence to substantiate the concerns about leadership and management, and in fact inspectors judged that the effectiveness of the school owes much to the dedicated and successful leadership of the senior management team and governing body.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Preston Candover CE Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 80 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 145 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	37	46	39	49	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	49	61	31	39	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	23	29	42	53	11	14	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	25	31	41	51	7	9	2	3
The teaching is good at this school	31	39	47	59	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	28	35	39	49	8	10	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	36	45	42	53	1	1	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	34	43	33	41	3	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	33	41	38	48	3	4	2	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	31	39	42	53	6	8	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	22	28	49	61	4	5	4	5
The school is led and managed effectively	30	38	40	50	10	13	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	38	48	40	50	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



24 June 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Preston Candover CE Primary School, Basingstoke RG25 2EE

Thank you for making us so welcome during our recent visit. You were very helpful and keen to let us know what makes Preston Candover CE Primary tick. You go to an outstanding school where each one of you is cared for extremely well. You rise to the challenges given, and make good progress throughout the school.

Your behaviour is outstanding and we were impressed by the way adults and children get on together. You are polite and helpful and show a great deal of respect for one another and the adults who work with you. Your school is a happy place in which to learn and you are growing up to be confident and responsible young people. We saw how teachers follow up your ideas and make lessons interesting and fun. Lessons in PSHE, PE and science help you gain a good understanding of the importance of eating healthily, keeping fit, and knowing how to stay safe. The number of children taking part in after-school clubs shows how much you take exercise seriously. Congratulations on achieving Healthy Schools status. Well done also to the school council, the peer mediators and play leaders for the way they help out.

In order to help the school become even better, we have suggested that your very good classroom assistants could take small groups at the beginning and end of lessons so that more of you get a chance to ask questions and share what you have done.

One of the main reasons why your school has continued to improve since it was last inspected is that all the adults work well together. We are confident that with the positive attitudes you have to your work, you will try your hardest to help the school go from strength to strength.

We wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Rob Crompton

Lead inspector

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