

North Curry Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123797
Local Authority	Somerset
Inspection number	340429
Inspection dates	17–18 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Steffi Penny HMI

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Girls
Number of pupils on the school roll	145
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Fowler
Headteacher	Elsbeth Hedges
Date of previous school inspection	12 July 2007
School address	Greenway North Curry Taunton TA3 6NQ
Telephone number	01823490423
Fax number	01823491080
Email address	office@northcurry.somerset.sch.uk

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Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 08456 404045

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one additional inspector. The majority of time was spent looking at learning, all five teachers were observed and 10 lessons visited. Inspectors held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the work of the school, and looked at policies related to the safeguarding of pupils, documents to support the school's self-evaluation, and the school's assessment data. Inspectors analysed questionnaires from 55 parents and carers, and looked at responses from 13 staff and 30 pupils.

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

- how well assessment is used to improve standards and raise pupils' achievements, particularly for those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities
- the effectiveness of the governing body to support and provide direction for the school
- what the school is doing to improve attendance.

Information about the school

This is a smaller-than-average school with a fluctuating roll due to the high mobility of some pupils. Most pupils are of a White British background, with a small proportion from other heritages such as Gypsy/Roma or Travellers families. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is similar to most schools. The majority of these have reading and language difficulties. Since the last inspection, there have been some staff changes and the number of pupils on roll has fallen. All five classes are taught in mixed-age groups. The school has achieved several awards, including the Healthy School status, Activemark for 2008 and 2009 and Artsmark Silver award.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

North Curry Church of England Primary School is a very caring and inclusive school. Overall attainment is above average. The school's tracking information shows that all groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are making good progress and that attainment is rising. Good provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage enables the children to make good and sometimes outstanding progress.

Good teaching ensures pupils work eagerly with tasks that are interesting and challenging. Teachers use good questioning skills that test individual pupils at the right level. Consequently, pupils are quick to respond to questions in lessons and eager to give their views. Teachers use marking and assessment well to ensure that gaps in learning are spotted and are met in subsequent lessons. Sometimes, marking is too detailed or complex for the pupils to understand and pupils' self-assessment is superficial, limiting their learning and independence. This is because the way pupils are supported to identify for themselves what they need to do to improve is not consistent across the school.

Pupils are known exceptionally well as individuals and as a result they have a great deal of trust in the adults who look after them. Nearly all pupils say that they greatly enjoy school and feel safe. The school is a very cohesive community where pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils have a strong sense of right and wrong and older pupils set a very good example. These positive attitudes, together with good academic achievement, make a good contribution to the development of pupils' skills for their future economic well-being.

Significant progress has been made in resolving the issues raised when the school was last inspected. The headteacher and other leaders work well together and have high expectations based on a belief that 'all our pupils deserve the best'. They have ensured that the quality of teaching and learning has not only been sustained but improved and is now good. Attendance has significantly improved as the result of continued partnership work with the local authority and other agencies. Accurate school self-evaluation and action taken by leaders has enabled the school to improve on the previously reported satisfactory outcomes. This demonstrates a good capacity for sustained improvement.

Governors support the school well but do not consistently provide challenge and support to staff to help them develop and improve provision and raise achievement. Staff, parents and carers and pupils would like them to become more familiar figures around the school to celebrate successes and share forward planning.

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

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Simplify marking in day-to-day work so that pupils understand and are helped to make the next small steps in their learning.
- Increase the amount of pupils' self-evaluation of their work, and provide more self-reflection time for this in class.
- Raise the profile and increase the effectiveness of the governing body in the life of the school and its drive for improvement.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

There are good interventions and support for lower attaining pupils, those who are vulnerable and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. As a result, the majority of these pupils make good or better progress. Other pupils, including higher attaining ones, are also sufficiently challenged and guided; consequently, they achieve equally well in lessons and reach the higher levels in the assessments at the end of Year 6.

Pupils have a positive attitude towards learning. In a literacy lesson, good pair discussion meant that pupils enthusiastically drafted out characters for the story they had been planning. Imaginative use of resources also helps pupils to enjoy their learning and make good progress. For example, in a numeracy lesson, pupils enjoyed working out what 3D shape the 'spotlight' was revealing, in another, they used the interactive whiteboard themselves to share the thinking and problem-solving skills they had used to work out answers to the rest of their group.

Pupils' obvious willingness to embrace cultural diversity is one of the school's strengths. Pupils are very supportive of each other in school and behave well. They especially enjoy their new playtime equipment and the opportunity to act responsibly, for example as leaders at playtimes. The school council provided a more formal voice for the pupils in the school and had some influence on decision making. In order to encourage more pupils to share their opinions and develop greater leadership skills for all pupils, the school is in the process of developing classroom communities through 'Learning to Lead' activities. A good example of how well this work is developing was seen during a science lesson where pupils used a 'veto' when working in teams to design an environmental habitat advertisement for an animal.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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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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	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teachers have high expectations of all pupils to work hard and succeed. They check the progress of pupils well during lessons and are alert to any who might be in danger of falling behind or who need greater challenge. In particular, the use of discussion and questioning in lessons, along with paired talk, helps to develop and strengthen pupils' learning.

The school is in the process of transforming its curriculum so that it is even more flexible. Parental concerns about dedicated physical education time are in the process of being met, and in the meantime the school has ensured that pupils are physically active whenever practicable. This relative weakness is countered by the excellent way that the school has enriched the curriculum through making lesson activities pertinent, real-to-life and enmeshed with each other. During science week, literacy and numeracy were effectively interwoven into experiments and activities such that skills in all three areas were being developed well.

The school's inclusive nature is reflected in the good level of individual support, which helps new pupils, especially those with particular learning needs, to settle quickly into school routines. There are strong links with a wide range of outside agencies. These links contribute very effectively to pupils' well-being, especially for vulnerable pupils.

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

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	
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher is ably supported by members of the senior management team. They give the school clear direction with a focus on continued and sustained improvement. The school makes a strong contribution to promoting community cohesion based on a clear analysis of its religious, ethnic and socio-economic context. It works in partnership with a range of community groups beyond the school and the immediate community. School leaders have identified that a relative weakness has been its involvement with some aspects of the global community. It has firm plans to increase this dimension through its partnership with an overseas school.

The school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination well. It has relevant information about different groups of pupils and carefully evaluates their performance across the curriculum and contribution to school life. Everyone is treated equally and fairly and this is reflected in the excellent team spirit generated and the respect adults and pupils show to others when they are in school.

At the time of the inspection, there were good arrangements in place for safeguarding pupils. Checks have been made on all adults who work within the school and a single central record is maintained and updated when needed. Health and safety checks and risk assessments are appropriately carried out. The school has a systematic way of seeking the views of parents, carers and pupils, although a small minority of parents and carers expressed some dissatisfaction with how well the school had responded to their concerns. Resources are used appropriately to achieve good value for money.

The school judges that governance is satisfactory and inspection evidence concurs. The governing body has carried out a review of its roles and responsibilities so that it can act more constructively in helping to raise pupils' achievement. The new appointments recently made are receiving appropriate training and induction.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2

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	
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	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

The children's introduction to the Reception Year is carefully planned so that children feel safe and happy when they join the school. Children get a good start at school from starting points on entry to Reception that are broadly in line with typical expectations, and are on target to exceed the goals expected of them at the end of the year. They make good progress in developing the personal qualities that enable them to take responsibility for small tasks and develop skills for the future. Equally, their language, early literacy and numeracy skills are developed well through fun activities typified as containing open-ended questions that children increasingly feel confident to try to answer.

Staff, including parent and carer helpers, are good role models for the children. They work hard as a dedicated team and have very good relationships with each other and the children. Adults have high expectations, provide clear routines and enable children to build strong, positive relationships with each other. Children demonstrate a caring nature for one another and a willingness to keep themselves and peers safe through good behaviour. An example of this is when children said: 'You must be careful with music makers because they are noisy and might hurt my friends.'

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

Most of the parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire said they agree or strongly agree that they are happy with their children's experience at the school. A very small minority of parents and carers were critical of the way the school deals with unacceptable behaviour. Inspectors found evidence that staff manage behaviour well.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at North Curry Church of England 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 55 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	32	58	21	38	2	4	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	30	55	24	4	1	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	22	40	27	49	2	4	1	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	16	29	32	58	4	7	1	2
The teaching is good at this school	19	35	31	56	2	4	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	19	35	29	53	3	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	19	35	33	60	1	2	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)	18	33	26	47	3	5	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	17	31	31	56	4	7	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	14	25	32	58	3	5	2	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	13	25	33	60	2	4	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	12	22	34	62	4	7	2	4
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	23	42	27	49	3	5	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 inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

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 were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

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.



Dear Pupils

Inspection of North Curry Church of England Primary School, North Curry, TA3 6NQ

Thank you for your kind welcome when we came to your school to see how well you are doing. We enjoyed talking with you and seeing you at work and at play. The things you and your parents told us were very helpful in making our judgements on how well the school is doing. We judged it to be a good school. Here are some of the main things we found that you and your school do best:

- Your behaviour, both in class and around the school, is good.
- You know how to lead safe and healthy lives and enjoy helping each other in lessons and at playtime.
- Teaching is good and you make good progress in lessons. Those of you who struggle with your learning get the right sort of help in class or individually.
- You work hard for your teachers, who care for you well and do their best to help you learn.

You have such wonderful adults who are always looking for ways to make your school an even better place to be! We have asked them to do the following things to ensure that this happens:

- Governors should come to school more often to see how well you are doing and look at ways to make your school even better.
- Teachers need to make marking easier for you to understand how well you are doing and what you need to do next.
- In lessons, you need more chances and time to think about how to improve your work.

You can help by remembering your targets and using them to improve your work.

Thank you for being so polite and helpful during the visit. I hope that you continue to enjoy your learning and do your best. Please thank your parents and carers for the helpful comments they made on the questionnaires.

With my very best wishes for your future.

Yours sincerely

Steffi Penny

Her Majesty's Inspector

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