

The Ferncumbe Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125687
Local Authority	Warwickshire
Inspection number	340819
Inspection dates	25–26 November 2009
Reporting inspector	Judy Dawson

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	111
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Jean Lewis
Headteacher	Mrs Christine Edmonds
Date of previous school inspection	0 May 2007
School address	The Green Hatton Warwick
Telephone number	0192 648 4318
Fax number	0192 648 4318
Email address	admin3210@we-learn.com

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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

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited six lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff and pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at the school's plans for improvement, teachers' planning and records, subject leaders' tracking of pupils' progress, pupils' individual education plans and the school's documentation relating to safeguarding pupils. They also analysed 50 parental questionnaires.

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

- boys' progress in writing through Key Stage 2
- how the leadership has responded to the changes in staffing and what the impact of these changes has been
- whether pupils know how to improve their work
- the impact of the creative curriculum on pupils' learning.

Information about the school

This small village primary school draws pupils from the village and a nearby housing development. About half the pupils travel to school by bus. Almost all pupils are White British. A higher percentage of pupils than average have special educational needs with a range of physical, learning and emotional challenges, but the percentage with statements of special educational needs is similar to most other schools. The school has had major building work, which has recently been completed, and several staff changes in recent months. The school holds the Activemark, Healthy Schools status, and has attained the second stage of the Becta Mark for information and communication technology (ICT). The governors provide an after school club, The Wren's Nest, for up to 20 pupils. An independent nursery leases a building on the school playground and is inspected independently. The school received a monitoring visit by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors on 17 June 2008.

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

This is a good school. Pupils are cared for well and their educational, emotional and social needs are met effectively within a strong Christian ethos. The monitoring visit found good improvement since the last inspection. These improvements have continued. Pupils now attain above average standards in English, mathematics and science by the end of Key Stage 2, having made good progress from their average starting points. Clear and accurate systems for tracking progress enable teachers to meet individual pupils' needs well. All pupils now have targets to help them improve their work. However, few are involved in evaluating their own performance in order to set their own targets. Some forget to respond to their teachers' marking and the wise advice is wasted.

Leaders and managers have responded swiftly to the challenges generated by the staff changes. The rigorous and accurate monitoring of teachers' practice has resulted in the provision of additional support and training to ensure that pupils have the best possible opportunities throughout the school. Almost all teaching is now at least good. Staff are used creatively to provide good support for pupils with special educational needs or whose progress has slowed. This allows some lessons in mixed aged classes to be taught in single age groups and provides additional support for newly qualified teachers. Several staff have gained, or are working towards, additional qualifications. This record of improvements and the good plans for development, based on an accurate analysis of the school's strengths and weaknesses, show the school's good capacity to improve further. The school has identified that there are weaknesses in pupils' knowledge of the religious, cultural and economic diversity within the United Kingdom and has plans to address this. There are good links with parents and carers. Many children in the Reception class arrive by bus. They have home/school reading diaries but some parents and carers have few regular opportunities to contribute to their children's learning or to see how well they are doing across the curriculum.

Pupils thoroughly enjoy their education and they achieve well. They have very mature and responsible attitudes to their work and carry out conscientiously any duties that they are given. The school council, for example, conducted a survey to see whether hand driers or paper towels are best for the environment. However, they rarely run their own meetings or devise their own ways of supporting the school or local community independently. The lively curriculum, with topics posed as questions, helps pupils to learn through research and investigation. Lessons progress at a good pace and provide plenty of challenge for pupils of all abilities.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

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- Give pupils more responsibility for their learning by:
 - ensuring all pupils respond to their teachers' written advice
 - making sure all teachers encourage pupils to evaluate their own work so they can take responsibility for improving it themselves
 - creating individual learning books for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage to which teachers, children and parents and carers contribute.
 - Strengthen pupils' understanding of citizenship and the diversity of nationally and international societies by:
 - forging links with contrasting locations and different ethnic groups within the United Kingdom
 - giving pupils responsibility for running their own school council and organising ways to improve the school and their local community.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Most children join the Early Years Foundation Stage with the expected knowledge and skills for their age, although, because of the small cohorts, this varies from year to year. The school's tracking of individual pupils shows that almost all make good progress as they move through the school. In the 2009 teacher assessments at the end of Key Stage 1, standards in reading, writing and mathematics were slightly above the national average. Pupils make good and sometimes rapid progress in their lessons in Year 1 because they know exactly what is required of them, checking and correcting their writing themselves.

Pupils' progress is consistently good throughout Key Stage 2, which is a tribute to the pupils' good attitudes to learning. Teachers and teaching assistants ensure pupils are challenged and supported well, enabling them to achieve their targets. Boys' writing has improved because they study topics that interest them. In a very good assembly, several pupils, the majority being boys, shared their lively, high quality accounts of the life and times of Henry VIII. Standards in science were significantly higher than the national average in the 2009 national tests, and half the pupils attained the higher Level 5 in mathematics. Several pupils now in Year 6 are already working within the higher levels for English and mathematics. Pupils have many opportunities to apply their good literacy, numeracy and ICT skills across the curriculum. This, combined with their good attendance, prepares them well for their futures. Pupils know how to keep themselves healthy and safe. They debate issues relating to internet safely and making the right choices. Behaviour is good and pupils take good care of each other. They have an impressive regard for pupils with physical challenges, who are fully included in playground games. Pupils are involved in environmental issues, and those in Class 2 enjoy their weekly 'Forest School' project. Their French studies, support for a home and the child victims of the civil war in Sierra Leone through a local charity and links with a school in China provide an insight into different cultures across the world. Their knowledge of the diversity of society closer to home is more limited. They have a good

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knowledge of Christianity and older pupils understand the similarities between this and other faiths.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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	3
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?

Pupils are taught well and, in some lessons, inspectors observed outstanding practice. A strong feature of all lessons is the respect adults have for their pupils. Pupils' responses are valued and well-focused questioning encourages individuals to extend their answers. Work is almost always closely matched to individual needs. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils' behaviour and expect work to be well-presented and thorough. Exemplary marking, especially for the older pupils, gives them plenty of good advice, praise and questions to extend learning. This hard work is wasted, however, when some pupils fail to respond. In the small minority of lessons where teaching is less effective and pupils' learning no better than satisfactory, pupils have too few opportunities to work cooperatively and independently and grow restless while listening to the teacher.

English and mathematics lessons are planned well to ensure pupils gain the skills they

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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need. Much of the mathematics involves pupils in problem-solving and investigation as they apply their skills to new learning. Basic reading and writing skills are taught rigorously and interesting tasks encourage pupils to produce lively and imaginative writing. The school makes good use of visits and visitors to enrich the curriculum and stimulate learning. During the inspection, Year 2 walked round Warwick as part of their studies of buildings. The sailors' visit gave Class 5/6 a good insight into their work to counteract modern piracy as part of their project on Pirates. Pupils have a weekly session where they can select an area of interest to pursue, ranging from sports to recorders or 'Godly Play', story telling with biblical themes run by a governor. The environment is used to promote learning in a range of subjects through the 'Forest School' initiative. The Wren's Nest, run by teaching assistants, is a good quality resource for pupils after school, providing tea and a relaxing range of activities after a hard day's work.

The school care for the pupils well. Staff and governors are rigorous in ensuring that they carry out all possible actions to ensure the safety of everyone in school. Everyone is valued and any incidents are treated promptly and sensitively. This judgement is endorsed by the unanimous agreement of the parents and carers who returned questionnaires. The good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education give pupils the knowledge they need to make informed choices about relationships, behaviour and their personal safety. High quality individual education plans for pupils with social, emotional or behavioural challenges are very effective in helping them to achieve their targets. Because of the good guidance, pupils throughout the school have mature attitudes and are well-motivated. The school does not make the most of these attributes by providing more opportunities for them to take responsibility independently of adults.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher, leadership team and governors are ambitious for the school and the adults and pupils in their care. They have high aspirations for their pupils, setting challenging targets for each. This has been a factor in raising attainment over the last two years. Good support for staff, based on the thorough monitoring of teaching and pupils' progress, improves practice and the outcomes for pupils. The well-planned curriculum is adjusted to meet the needs and aspirations of the pupils and has helped

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successfully promote equal opportunities, for example by tackling boys' underachievement in writing. Governors and staff take pupils' and parents' views into account. For example, parents and carers requested an after school club for their children to accommodate work commitments. This has been very successful and valued by parents and carers and pupils alike. The school ensures that all pupils are included in all aspects of school life where possible. There are ramps to aid pupils with disabilities and, when appropriate, comprehensive links with outside agencies to provide additional support. Home visits before they start, and a staggered entry, help children in the Early Years Foundation Stage settle into school quickly. Good links with the other local primary and secondary schools enable pupils to extend their horizons through, for example, mathematical challenge sessions. However, there are few links with other schools beyond the local cluster. Pupils have some practical understanding of other cultures through their French lessons and their support for war victims Sierra Leone and learn about different countries and faiths through their studies. These links, however, do little to help pupils appreciate the rich cultural mixes closer to home.

The school follows all the statutory procedures for ensuring the safety of the pupils. The necessary checks on all adults who care for pupils are carried out rigorously and staff are trained in safeguarding procedures and first aid. New staff are well-informed of procedures, and risk assessments are rigorous and well-documented. The school's stimulating workspaces are used to the full. There are attractive grounds with a large field, but the playground is small and space is limited. Leaders, staff and governors have generated a united, orderly and caring environment. Pupils thrive within 'The Ferncumbe Family'.

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	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
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	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

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Early Years Foundation Stage

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are happy, confident and eager learners. They join the school with a range of skills, most of them in line with the expectations for their age. Most children have been to one of several nurseries. The teacher has good links with these, making good use of their records of the children's progress to meet individual needs from the start. There is a very good mix of adult led and child-initiated learning opportunities. This means that children are taught the basic skills they need for their future learning and have plenty of opportunities to use these skills through the stimulating and wide-ranging activities on offer. Most of the activities require children to adapt them to their own use, forcing them to use their imagination and initiative. Within the topic of 'Who lives here?', children used junk materials to build skyscrapers and, outside, the water tray full of ice for the polar bears' habitat. The inspector was invited into a 'Bedouin tent' for a dish of coffee by djibba-clad children. The wide range of activities, coupled with the rigorous teaching of basic skills, ensure children make good progress in the Reception class.

The Early Years Foundation Stage is led and managed well. The teacher moves into Class 1 with her children, while the Class 1 teacher has the Reception class. Both teachers are skilled practitioners so children are provided for well. Transition to the rigours of the National Curriculum is seamless because pupils in Year 1 carry on learning in the imaginative and independent style that they are used to. Children are physically well-cared for and adults respond sensitively to any emotional or behavioural needs. Procedures for tracking children's progress from day to day are good and provide adults with the information they need to plan each child's next steps. The home/school reading records provide parents and carers with a good link with school and an overview of their children's reading progress. Parents and carers are welcome at any time. However, many are not local and their children travel to school by bus. This means that they are less well informed about other aspects of their children's learning because teachers are unable to have the 'school gate' conversations that can help them build on children's home interests and achievements.

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

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Almost all parents and carers agreed with the positive statements in the questionnaire. All parents and carers were happy about their child's experiences at school. Many praise the improvements in the site and the welcoming friendly atmosphere. One states, 'This is a happy school, which nurtures children as well as teaching them.' The inspectors agree with these views. A very small minority of parents and carers expressed concerns about the way the school deals with unacceptable behaviour. The inspectors found the school systems fair and appropriate.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at The Ferncumbe 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 50 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 111 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	32	64	18	36	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	39	78	11	22	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	32	64	17	34	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	22	44	23	46	2	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	34	68	16	32	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	33	66	15	30	1	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	27	54	21	42	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)	19	38	20	40	1	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	24	48	23	46	2	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	26	52	15	30	2	4	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	26	52	20	40	2	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	33	66	15	30	1	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	36	72	14	28	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 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.



28 November 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Ferncumbe Church of England Primary School, Warwick CV35 7EX

Thank you all very much for your friendliness and help when we visited your school recently. We were very impressed by your good behaviour, the way you carried out your duties and by how hard you work. A special thanks to the school council who shared their views with me.

You make good progress during your time at school. This is because of your hard work, the good teaching and the interesting things you learn. Well done. Keep up the good work! Your teachers take good care of you all. They make sure that everyone of you, whatever your abilities or challenges, has the help and support you need to help you learn well. Teachers give you good advice when they mark your work but some of you do not always take it. Please make sure that you do because it will help you to improve your work and make it even better. Some of you know how to check your own work and correct it independently. I know that you all could take more responsibility for checking and improving your work to set your own targets. I want your teachers to make sure you have plenty of opportunities to do this. I would like the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage to start their own collection of special things they have done in school and at home. I am sure that their parents and carers and teachers will help them. Everyone will then see how much they are learning.

You belong to a good school, which is led and managed well by the people in charge. I think, because you are so sensible, you should run your own school council meetings and take full responsibility for making improvements in the school or your village. You learn about people in other countries and enjoy your French lessons. I want you to learn more about people and places in the United Kingdom. I have asked your teachers to set up links for you so that you can make contact with people of other cultures and find out about the different ways of life in our own country.

I wish you all the very best for your futures.

Yours sincerely

Judy Dawson

Lead inspector

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