

West Pennard Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123780
Local Authority	Somerset
Inspection number	327986
Inspection dates	24 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Mark Lindfield HMI

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	215
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sylvia Smith
Headteacher	Helen Burchell
Date of previous school inspection	28–29 September 2005
School address	Church Lane West Pennard Somerset BA6 8NT
Telephone number	01458 832866
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an Additional Inspector. They evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- What is the effectiveness of the school's actions to reduce absences?
- Are leaders at all levels fully involved in moving the school forwards?
- How well are lesson activities adapted to meet the needs of all learners and challenge the more able?

Evidence was gathered from visits to lessons, sampling pupils' work, discussion with pupils and staff and by analysing the school's documentation and assessment information and inspection questionnaires returned from the parents. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

West Pennard Church of England Primary is an average-sized school located in a rural setting. It draws pupils from a wide area, and the vast majority are White British. An above average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities but no pupil has a statement of special educational needs. The school provides for one class of 27 Reception-aged children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The school provides a breakfast club.

The school has achieved the Healthy Schools, Investors in People, Dyslexia Friendly and Artsmark Gold awards.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school. Under the good leadership of the headteacher there is a clear drive to accelerate progress further. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding and this is reflected in the exceptionally positive relationships that epitomise the friendly and warm nature of the school. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school, and say things like, 'There is a very happy, positive and caring environment for the children to learn in.' Pupils enjoy their various roles and responsibilities and help to make the school successful. Given their mature and sensible attitudes and their ability to articulate their ideas, they have relatively few opportunities to be involved in shaping school policy and in assessing their own progress. They have an excellent understanding of how to live safe and healthy lifestyles, are keen to participate in sport and have strong understanding of a healthy diet. Pupils' enjoyment of school is clearly evident in their very positive approach to learning and their desire to learn more. However, pupils' attendance is only satisfactory.

Children enter the Reception class with skills generally above those expected for their age. They make good progress because staff quickly assess their needs and ensure that a range of appropriate activities are provided. Pupils continue to make good progress throughout the school. By the end of Year 2, they attain standards in reading, writing and mathematics that are above average. The school's emphasis on matching work to the needs of all learners has been effective, with a larger proportion of pupils attaining the higher National Curriculum levels in reading and writing in Year 2. By the end of Year 6, pupils attain above average standards in English and science and significantly above in mathematics. A rising proportion of pupils attain higher levels at this stage, also. Consequently, pupils are well prepared for the next stage of education and later life. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, who need additional support with their work, also progress well. This is because there are good procedures in place to identify their needs, and work and support are planned accordingly.

Teaching is good across the school and is characterised by strong relationships which help the good development of pupils' self-esteem. Teachers regularly provide a range of activities in each lesson that match pupils' varying needs and abilities. This is helping to increase the rates of progress of pupils, especially the more able learners. Pupils recognise this aspect of teaching and confirm that staff take the trouble to find ways to make learning easier and to make lessons enjoyable. Teaching assistants provide good levels of support and are well deployed to reinforce learning for small groups and individuals. Questions are used well to draw out pupils' knowledge and understanding of key concepts and to encourage them to expand their ideas. Teachers take the time to explain the content of the lesson, but their communication of the progress pupils are expected to make is often too general. Where pupils make outstanding progress it is often because they are given specific tasks with clear goals that are regularly referred to throughout the lesson, and pupils are then expected to reflect on their progress. However, this is not currently common practice across the school.

Good curricular provision in English and mathematics, alongside recent improvements to information and communication technology, helps to prepare pupils well for secondary education. Pupils' outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is due to the school's strong emphasis on religious education and collective worship. Music lessons further enhance the curriculum with all pupils in Years 3, 4 and 6 learning the recorder, trumpet, trombone, violin or cello. Opportunities for pupils to participate in fortnightly enrichment days are well received and add to their enjoyment. Staff display a high level of care for the pupils, who feel safe and secure in the confidence that their concerns will be listened to and addressed. All staff are appropriately trained in first-aid and safeguarding procedures. Good systems are in place to identify learners' individual needs and provide appropriate support where necessary.

The school is led and managed well, and has clearly improved since the last inspection. Senior leaders have successfully used information from both the recent statutory tests and the school's tracking and monitoring system to identify areas of strength and comparative weakness. This enables them to organise and regularly review both support and guidance, and accelerate progress where necessary. They have accurately identified that marking of pupils' work is inconsistent and are trialling improvements to ensure marking and assessment clearly identify the next steps in learning. The school has given a high profile to alerting parents to the importance of attendance and this has led to some improvements in reducing levels of persistent absence, although the school's overall attendance remains satisfactory. The governing body knows the strengths and weaknesses of the school. It holds the school to account well and plays a full and active part in monitoring progress. The school's contribution to community cohesion is satisfactory and demonstrates awareness of all aspects in reaching out to other communities. Given the school's track record of recent improvements in pupils' standards and progress and the considerable maintained strengths in pupils' personal development, the school has a good capacity to further improve.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children enter Reception with skills which are higher than national expectations, especially for literacy and numeracy. They quickly settle in because staff create a warm and secure environment in which they feel safe. Parents and carers are consulted over induction arrangements, leading to good opportunities to participate in sessions about learning through play and sharing books. These arrangements led one parent to comment that their child had experienced 'a seamless transition to full-time education'.

Children have access to a broad range of activities, some of which they are able to choose for themselves and others that are carefully chosen for them. During the adult-led activities, children extend their problem-solving skills well and apply their good calculation skills. There is also a good balance between indoor and outdoor activities. To compensate for the restricted outdoor area, staff regularly plan opportunities to access the school grounds and play equipment, increasing children's knowledge and understanding of the world beyond the classroom and their gross motor skills.

Children make good progress in developing their literacy and mathematical skills throughout the year, because staff plan carefully and monitor their progress well. The Early Years Foundation Stage is well led and managed, and all staff share in the careful tracking of children's progress. There are satisfactory arrangements for transfer of those children who attend breakfast club prior to the school day. Children are encouraged to complete activities in class time that they had started during breakfast club. Children's personal development is good. They work cooperatively in groups and are ready to take turns and to share. They behave well and show considerable interest in any visitors. They enjoy the opportunities for role play, where they show good levels of articulation and self-expression.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that specific learning intentions within lessons are clearly and consistently explained to the pupils.
- Ensure that assessment procedures include regular and consistent diagnosis of pupils' progress, include opportunities for pupils to reflect on their progress, and clearly identify their next steps needed to improve their work.
- Improve the school's overall levels of attendance.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate.	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2

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	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well 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	2

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Annex B



25 March 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of West Pennard Church of England Primary School, West Pennard, BA6 8NT

Thank you so much for the friendly and cheerful way you greeted us during our visit. We are pleased to let you know that West Pennard is a good school with several real strengths. One of the most obvious strengths is you, the pupils! You look after each other exceptionally well and are thoughtful in the way you consider each other's feelings. You made it clear how much you enjoy the chance to take part in the enrichment days and the school clubs. You have an excellent understanding of how to stay and act healthily through regular exercise and eating a balanced diet.

The majority of you take the chance to learn a musical instrument. You show a good understanding of mathematics and English and appreciate the chance to use computers more often. You show very good attitudes in lessons, listening carefully and sharing your thoughts and ideas well with each other when you are asked to. Your teachers take care to set you work that is at the right level for you and this makes learning easier for you and helps you to make good progress. Staff are polite and thoughtful and make many lessons fun, which helps you to feel confident in yourselves and behave sensibly. We have asked them to explain clearly what they want you to learn in each lesson and to repeat this during the lesson. We have also asked teachers to mark and assess the progress you have made in a lesson and to give you more chances to consider how well you have done. This will help you to understand what exactly you need to do next time.

Your headteacher keeps a careful eye on how each of you is getting on. She regularly checks on your progress with your classteacher and other staff members. She is quick to notice when you need more help or pushing on a little further and she has many tricks up her sleeve to help you. There are several adults who give you good support and guidance and help you with your learning. This helps you to make good progress in your academic subjects and to reach above average standards in English and science and well above average in mathematics.

Your headteacher, staff and governors are working hard to make the school better. You can help them by making sure that you come to school as often as you possibly can and don't miss out on any of the lessons.

Thank you and best wishes

Mark Lindfield HMI