

Curry Rivel Church of England VC Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123752
Local Authority	Somerset
Inspection number	314706
Inspection dates	19 September 2008
Reporting inspector	Caroline McKee

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 on roll	150
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Ingrid White
Headteacher	Mrs Amanda Tutt
Date of previous school inspection	22–24 November 2004
School address	Church Street Curry Rivel Langport TA10 0HD
Telephone number	01458 251404
Fax number	01458 251465

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average primary school. The great majority of pupils are White British and the percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below the national average. Over the last four years the school has experienced leadership turbulence with three headteachers leaving in swift succession. The new headteacher has been in post for one year. The school holds a number of accreditations including the Healthy Schools Award and Investors in People.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Curry Rivel School provides a satisfactory standard of education. It is a happy school and pupils feel safe and well cared for. Their personal development is good because of the high quality of individual care provided. This is particularly evident in the school's effective links with the local community. The parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the headteacher, who, after considerable previous leadership turbulence, has managed to gain confidence and stability. Good support from local consultants, including clear guidance on how to improve teaching and learning, is now having a positive impact on standards, particularly in writing and mathematics. Teaching, although improving, is satisfactory. Governors are supportive and are increasingly well informed. The school's self-evaluation is accurate and it has good plans to bring about improvement, but the systems of collecting data and then using it for the planning of teaching are not sufficiently rigorous to identify the finer details of what needs to be improved. This is especially so for the higher attaining pupils in Years 1 to 6, whose progress is unsatisfactory.

Pupils achieve consistently well in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) in all areas of learning. Much effort at the start of the year goes into ensuring that children feel confident in their new environment and this is very evident at this early stage of the year. Although academic guidance for pupils is satisfactory the rate of progress slows in Year 1. This is because EYFS assessment information is not used to match work to the pupils' ability and expectations have been too low in relation to how much progress should be made by the end of Year 2. In Key Stage 2, pupils make satisfactory progress. The selected schemes for improving the pupils' skills in writing and mathematics have started to have a positive impact in accelerating progress and raising standards. Standards are broadly average in both key stages.

The pupils have a good knowledge of how to live healthily. They know how to stay safe and who to talk to if they have a problem. The pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. They say that they enjoy school and the many additional activities. The school council plays an active role in the school's decision-making processes. It was involved, for example, in the interviewing of the new headteacher. Pupils are effectively involved in the life of the local and wider community and regularly help to raise funds for charities. They are knowledgeable about ecological issues. The 'Eco Team' take their role very seriously and are keen to create a more sustainable school. The introduction of a playgroup on site helps children to move smoothly into the EFYS, and the school is proactive in creating effective links with the main destination secondary school.

The curriculum is satisfactory and enriched with the provision of French. Additional activities such as residential visits, music and sports clubs ensure that the pupils receive a good diet of opportunities. There is a good emphasis on personal, social and health education as well as the multicultural development of the pupils, and this makes an effective contribution to their personal development.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The school has made satisfactory progress since the previous inspection, and is suitably placed to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. The children start school with skill levels that are below those expected for their age, but the majority reach the expected learning goals by the time they enter Year 1. Good relationships and care from the staff and the quality of information received before they arrive ensure that the children settle quickly. The children feel safe, confident and happy at school. They play and behave together very well. The parents are very appreciative and many say that they are pleased with how well the children settle. Teachers plan how to develop the children's learning effectively, both inside and in the outside learning area. They capture their interest and assess their needs accurately. In group activities, the children are well supported by adults to guide their learning. All areas of learning are covered, with particularly good opportunities to develop their language and literacy skills. The outside play area is relatively small but the school has plans to improve this further. One parent expressed concerns about the safety of this area but it meets all expected standards. There are also limited role-play resources. Leadership and management are good, ensuring that staff work together effectively. All these factors result in the children making good progress.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the use of EYFS assessment data for planning in Year 1, and thus improve overall progress at Key Stage 1.
- Increase the challenge for higher attaining pupils throughout the school.
- Improve the system for tracking pupils' progress and the rigour with which this information is used to identify what needs to be improved.

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

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Although there is some variation from one class to the next, between key stages and between subjects, pupils' achievement is satisfactory and standards are broadly average. National test results were lower in 2008 than in 2007 with no pupils attaining the higher levels in Year 2 and Year 6. However, more pupils reached Level 4 than in previous years in Year 6. Progress is slower in Years 1 and 2 because expectations and targets have not been sufficiently challenging. Standards in writing and mathematics are now improving as a direct result of new schemes that are firing the pupils' interest and improving achievement, especially in terms of the boys' writing skills. Pupils currently in Year 6 are making satisfactory and sometimes better progress when teaching is challenging and when they are more involved in setting their own learning targets. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress in line with that of their peers.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' understanding of healthy lifestyles is good. They participate enthusiastically in a wide range of extra-curricular sporting activities. The school council has a strong voice and ensures that the school is environmentally friendly and safe. The pupils' knowledge of how to stay safe is reflected in their good behaviour at break times. Their positive attitudes and relationships with adults and with each other show their enjoyment of school and they know who to talk to if they have any worries. Their attendance is average. Pupils support each other well and are considerate of those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The pupils have satisfactory skills in literacy and numeracy, although their good entrepreneurial skills help to prepare them for their future education and the later world of work.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. There are, however, variations from class to class. In some lessons, teachers make insufficient use of prior assessment data to provide tasks that are sufficiently challenging, especially for the higher attainers. Often, the pace of learning is not brisk enough to ensure that they make maximum gains in their learning. In some lessons, pupils are challenged well so that they work effectively and consolidate their knowledge with tasks that are exciting. In the best instances, pupils are effectively involved in the setting of their own targets. This is developing well throughout the school and is helping them to understand what they need to do for the next stage of their learning. Teaching assistants work well with the teachers, both in planning and in supporting the pupils.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is improving as the school develops creative ways to teach various subjects, and it has introduced French. Pupils find that the topic-based approach makes learning more interesting for them. This is also helping to develop ICT, numeracy and literacy skills across the curriculum. Provision for extra-curricular activities is good and pupils talk enthusiastically about them, especially the residential trips. Pupils actively seek ways to raise money to help fund such trips, and this contributes well to their social skills.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school ensures that pupils are safe and well looked after. Safeguarding arrangements are secure. They are sensitive and particularly effective for families in the community who have particular needs. Great importance is attached to rebuilding confidence in the community and ensuring that everybody is able to express an opinion and be a part of reshaping the school. Parents are supportive of this. One parent wrote, 'We appreciate that the school asks us of our opinion.' Academic guidance is satisfactory and improving. The school's tracking system is not yet rigorous enough and the information does not identify what the teachers need to do

next to help individual pupils. The quality and consistency of marking and assessment vary from class to class, but are satisfactory overall.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher and governors are fully committed to improving the learning for all pupils. The staff are now working as a team to overcome the impact of the significant turbulence in leadership over the last four years. The main focus has been to improve literacy and numeracy and there are promising improvements. The headteacher has a realistic view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. She has not been shy in making the necessary changes to raise expectations and improve the quality of teaching. Regular lesson observations provide a view of the quality of teaching but these do not always focus on accelerating the pupils' learning and progress. This is especially so at Key Stage 1, where targets have not been challenging enough. The school is proactive in seeking and reacting to the views of pupils and parents. Governors are actively involved in the life of the school. They help to shape school policy whilst acting appropriately as a critical friend.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	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?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	3

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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
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	3

The quality of provision

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

Leadership and management

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

Annex B



20 September 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Curry Rivel Church of England VC Primary School, Curry Rivel, Somerset TA10 0HD

Thank you very much for welcoming us to your school. We think that you are very serious about the responsibilities you take on to help make the school a better place. We were impressed with your good behaviour around the school and in lessons.

We have judged your school to be satisfactory. You start your school life well because the teachers make you feel welcome and help you to make good progress in the way you talk, use your numbers and play with other children. In Years 1 and 2 you have not been asked to work hard enough to make the expected progress and you will now have to try to meet the teachers' new challenges so that more of you get to the higher levels. By the time you are in Year 6, you reach standards that are average and you make satisfactory progress. Again, too few of you reach the higher levels. You show that you very much enjoy teaching that is exciting and uses different ways to help you to learn. Teaching and the curriculum are satisfactory. You use ICT well and you told us how much you enjoy learning about other countries and their different customs. The school provides good care and support so that you make good progress in your personal development. Satisfactory and improving guidance for your work is starting to speed up your learning.

The headteacher, staff and governors have worked hard to ensure that the school is a happy place and so far, they have made the right changes so that the school is making satisfactory progress. So it can continue to improve, we have asked the school to:

- help you to make better progress in Years 1 and 2 by setting harder challenges and making better use of the information about you from the Early Years Foundation Stage
- help more of you to reach the higher levels by the end of Years 2 and 6
- improve the systems that they use to highlight the progress you are making, and show you what you need to do to improve.

In order to do this we would ask you to play your part and accept the challenge to work harder. We wish you every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

Caroline McKee
Lead inspector