

Evercreech Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123755
Local Authority	Somerset
Inspection number	359509
Inspection dates	27–28 September 2010
Reporting inspector	Anna Sketchley

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	153
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Carol Searle
Headteacher	Heather Barraclough
Date of previous school inspection	11 July 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 10 lessons and observed six teachers. Inspectors spoke informally to parents and carers and analysed 45 questionnaires. They held meetings with members of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. The inspection team also observed the school's work and looked at a wide range of documentation, including pupils' work, systems for monitoring and tracking pupils' progress, plans for improvement and reports written by the local authority. Questionnaires completed by 33 pupils and 16 staff were also evaluated.

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

- The ability of leaders at all levels to ensure equal opportunities and improve the attainment and progress of different groups of pupils.
- The quality of teaching and how quickly strategies in teaching and learning and the curriculum are improving the achievement of different groups of pupils and especially: more able pupils in general; pupils who have special educational needs and disabilities in general; boys in writing; girls in mathematics.
- How well children achieve in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Information about the school

Evercreech is a small village primary school with six classes. Years 4, 5 and 6 are all taught in single-age classes. There are three mixed-age classes in Year R and Year 1, Years 1 and 2 and in Years 2 and 3. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average and comprises those with specific and moderate learning difficulties and speech, language and communication difficulties. There are two physically disabled pupils. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage and none is at the early stages of learning English. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The school has achieved several national awards including Healthy Schools Status and Activemark. There is a privately run pre-school on 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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Evercreech is a good school and one that has rapidly improved under positive leadership. It has a number of very significant strengths. Parents endorse this judgement, making such comments as, 'I have had children in Evercreech school for twelve years in the last few years it has flourished into an exceptional school that I am very happy to send my child to'. Pupils demonstrate how much they enjoy school by their high rate of attendance which has improved considerably since the previous inspection. Pupils are impeccably behaved and polite both in class and around the school. They have very good attitudes to learning, and enjoy being rewarded with a 'golden ticket' for their efforts. The Christian ethos and 'family feel' of the school underpin all its work and these features, together with excellent relationships and a calm and happy atmosphere, ensure a very positive climate for learning. Despite significant disruption to staffing in the past few years, the headteacher, staff and the governing body are determined to reach the highest standards in all aspects of the school's work.

Children in the Reception class experience a calm and well-organised environment, ensuring that they begin school with confidence; consequently, they make good progress and achieve well. This sound start is maintained through Key Stage 1. The most significant recent improvement has been the rise in attainment which is now above average. Attainment has improved markedly for boys and for the more able pupils. In addition, the progress of all pupils is now more even from year-to-year and the gap in achievement between girls and boys in both writing and in mathematics is closing. Individual targets to help pupils improve their work are not yet used in lessons, which restrict pupils' ability to work independently. The diverse group of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities learn well through personalised programmes and highly skilled help, enabling them to make similarly good progress to other pupils.

In this very cohesive school there are impressive links with the local community and other countries. However, there are fewer opportunities for pupils to develop an understanding of the diverse cultures that exist in the United Kingdom. The school is already addressing this issue although plans are at an early stage of development. Rigorous tracking and monitoring procedures and regular discussion of pupils' progress ensure that the school's self-evaluation is accurate. The school sets challenging targets and the new strategies implemented over the last year, especially in writing, have shown early indications of success. The rapid success of curriculum initiatives, together with improvements in the quality of teaching and learning and in achievement, indicate that the school has good capacity for sustained improvement.

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?

- Ensure that the new strategies to raise attainment in writing are fully embedded in all year groups in order to sustain recent rapid improvement.
- Extend pupils' independence as learners by providing them with individual targets to help them review and improve their own work.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

In 2009, national test results dipped significantly for pupils in Year 6, especially in English. However, results for 2010 and evidence gathered during the inspection for current Year 6 pupils, show that attainment is above average in both English and mathematics. Evidence for the current Year 2 gathered during the inspection shows that the recent rise in attainment in Key Stage 1 is being maintained. Initiatives to improve writing, particularly for boys and the more able pupils, are showing signs of growing effectiveness. Year 6 pupils, particularly the more able, were very well challenged when using the poem, 'Millers End', and demonstrated through a series of excellent strategies that they could use a poem as a basis for writing a story. Strategies to help pupils tackle problem solving in mathematics are also helping to increase girls' skills, resulting in a marked improvement in their attainment and progress. During a lesson on calculating decimals, for example, girls in Year 5 gave confident and accurate answers accompanied by clear explanations of their method.

A common view of pupils is that 'Most lessons are fun'. In most literacy lessons, pupils discuss their writing enthusiastically and share their ideas with a partner or in groups. Pupils in the Year 2/3 class, especially boys, made exceptional progress in using adjectives through the teacher's imaginative presentation of the 'Pirates' topic using the interactive whiteboard. Examples of the good progress of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities were consistently evident. These pupils were skilfully supported but encouraged to be independent. When finding the difference between two numbers, the teaching assistant encouraged a pupil to count aloud so that, 'I can hear your thinking'.

Pupils feel very secure in school and have an excellent understanding of how to stay safe. They say school is 'comfy and safe' and a friendly place to be. If there are any small problems, they feel confident that they can go to an adult who will always help them. Healthy School Status and the Activemark are helping pupils to have a good understanding of how to live healthily and they take part in the daily 'Wake and Shake' with great enthusiasm and enjoyment. Pupils take a pride in their responsibilities and make a significant contribution to the life of the school through being members of the school council, house captains, monitors for a variety of jobs and helping playtimes to be agreeable and enjoyable. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very well developed because of the strong Christian ethos and excellent links with the local community, such as the well-attended Sunday worship in school. Pupils regularly organise activities to raise money for those less fortunate than themselves and the life skills learned through these opportunities and their good basic skills are preparing them well for the future.

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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	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

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

How effective is the provision?

Good subject knowledge and carefully planned lessons ensure that tasks are usually matched well to the needs of all abilities. Teachers are particularly good at sharing learning intentions with pupils so they know exactly what they are to learn. This helps pupils assess their own learning both during and at the end of lessons. Imaginative use is made of information and communication technology and this captures pupils' interest and helps them to make good progress. Pupils are consistently given the chance to explain their answers to teachers' probing questions, creating good speaking and listening opportunities. Marking, especially in the 'Super Writing' books, is of high quality and makes a significant contribution in helping pupils to improve. However, pupils do not have individual targets set to help them know the next steps to secure improvement. In a small minority of lessons, introductions are too long and the pace of the lesson slows so that pupils do not make as much progress as they might.

The curriculum although currently under review, to see if more can be made of pupils skills across different subjects, is interesting and stimulating. Well-attended 'Inspire' mornings are an exciting initiative through which parents can share in their child's learning. Information and communication technology is a strength of the school, as are music and sport. Opportunities for enrichment of the curriculum are extensive. Pupils benefit from trips, visitors and many extra-curricular activities, especially sport, and show their appreciation by the high take-up of all that is on offer.

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The school is extremely sensitive in the way that it cares for each individual. Parents show a very high level of satisfaction with the level of school safety, and safeguarding procedures are carried out diligently. Pupils whose circumstances make them more vulnerable and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are especially well cared for and provision is well organised and effective. This is much appreciated by parents who make comments such as, 'Evercreech school could not do more to ensure my child enjoys school and is able to succeed. The team manages her needs very well and communicate with me daily'. Links with outside agencies are outstanding, including those which help to provide excellent support for the school's physically disabled 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
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and senior leadership team have communicated a strong vision for improvement to the whole school community and as a result there is strong team spirit and commitment to excellence. There remains a small element of less effective teaching but the school has the ability to address this from within and plans for teachers new to the profession to learn from more experienced members of staff are being implemented. The governing body offers good support, is well informed and is prepared to challenge issues of underperformance when they arise.

The promotion of community cohesion at school, local and global levels is strong, demonstrated by projects such as links with an orphanage in Zimbabwe. Pupils' understanding of the cultural diversity that exists in the United Kingdom is less strong but the school has already made contact with an inner-city school in Cardiff and visits are planned for the near future.

The school has an excellent range of partnerships. Not only do these enhance outcomes for pupils but they also enable the school to share some of its good practice to help other institutions. Promoting equality of different groups of pupils is well managed through careful monitoring and is becoming more effective as provision and outcomes for all pupils continue to improve. Leaders do not tolerate any form of discrimination. The governing body and school staff ensure that safeguarding procedures are exemplary and regular training and rigorous monitoring ensure that this very high quality is maintained.

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

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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	1
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	1
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

Children enter school with levels of knowledge and skills broadly similar to those expected nationally, although some aspects of communication, language and literacy, and calculation skills are below those expected. Relationships are warm and caring and the environment is safe and calm for young children. Good teaching and organisation and the correct balance between adult- and child-chosen activities help children to make good progress, particularly in literacy and numeracy. As a result, they reach the goals expected and sometimes exceed them by the end of the Reception Year.

Adults interact well with children, for example joining in their water play with a long hose filled with water while asking questions and facilitating learning. The outdoor area is particularly stimulating but some areas within the classroom, such as the role play corner, are not yet as inviting and do not attract children in the same way as the exciting activities outside. Whatever they are engaged in, children's behaviour is exemplary. During the week of the inspection, it was children's first full day in school and yet most were already confident, fully at ease in their new surroundings and developing their personal and social skills well. Good assessment procedures make a significant contribution to progress because they are used to plan the next steps in learning for each child.

Thorough induction procedures and good liaison with the local pre-school ensure that both parents and children are familiar with the Reception class before starting school. Parents spoke of how pleased they were with arrangements, one commenting that 'The whole experience has been excellent, I cannot fault any part of his first few weeks'. The leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are good; children are extremely well cared for and their welfare is paramount.

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

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 vast majority of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire are extremely supportive of the school. In the words of one parent, 'We are very proud of the school and very happy with our children's achievements thanks to the input the school has given'. Of the very small number of concerns raised, most were individual issues. A small minority of parents indicated concerns about how unacceptable behaviour is dealt with. However, during the course of the inspection, the behaviour seen was exemplary and the school has effective strategies for managing it for all pupils. Inspectors spoke personally to a small number of parents who had not completed the questionnaire and all were pleased with their child's progress and had no concerns about behaviour at school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Evercreech 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 45 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 153 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	32	71	11	24	1	2	1	2
The school keeps my child safe	33	73	12	27	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	27	60	12	27	3	7	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	24	53	13	29	3	7	2	4
The teaching is good at this school	26	58	16	36	1	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	24	53	16	36	3	7	1	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	24	53	17	38	4	9	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)	23	51	16	36	1	2	2	4
The school meets my child's particular needs	24	53	14	31	1	2	3	7
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	19	42	11	24	6	13	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	25	56	10	22	2	4	2	4
The school is led and managed effectively	29	64	10	22	2	4	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	29	64	10	22	1	2	1	2

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 all 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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 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 pupils' 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.



29 September 2010

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Evercreech Church of England Primary School, Evercreech, BA4 6EH

I should like to thank you for the very warm and friendly welcome you gave to the inspectors when we visited your school recently and for spending time talking to us. We really enjoyed meeting you. Evercreech is a good school. It has some outstanding features and you are doing well because of your hard work and the actions taken by your headteacher and other adults in your school. These are some of the best things we found.

- You really enjoy coming to school, your attendance is excellent and you are very polite and well behaved. This is helping you do well.
- You have a very good understanding of how to stay safe and a good understanding of how to live a healthy lifestyle.
- You really enjoy helping others in school and get on very well together.
- Your teachers teach you well and make learning fun. You have a very good attitude to your work and find your learning interesting.
- You are exceptionally well cared for and you told us that you feel very happy and safe in school.
- Your headteacher and governors manage the school well.

All the adults in your school want you to do your very best. Although they know what needs to be done next, we have asked them to do some additional things to make your learning even better. These are the things we would like to see improved.

- We would like them to make sure that you continue to improve your writing skills by always using all the new techniques you have been taught.
- We would like you to have individual targets set to help you review and improve your work.

Please keep working hard!

Yours sincerely

Anna Sketchley

Lead Inspector

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