

Prestwood Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110247
Local Authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	310236
Inspection date	9 May 2008
Reporting inspector	Keith Sadler

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4-7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	182
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Robert Stretch
Headteacher	Mrs Jean O'Keeffe
Date of previous school inspection	26 April 2004
School address	Moat Lane Prestwood HP16 9DF
Telephone number	01494 862 263
Fax number	01494 890 865

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school. He investigated the achievement and attainment of current Year 2 pupils; how well assessments are used to inform future learning; and how well subject leaders contribute to the school's monitoring and evaluation procedures. Evidence was gathered from the analysis of pupils' progress, scrutiny of samples of their work and observation of lessons. Discussions were held with staff, governors and pupils. In addition, the responses of 60 parents' questionnaires were analysed and comments taken into account. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector 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

The school is smaller than most primary schools. Almost all the pupils are from White British backgrounds. None is known to be eligible for free school meals. The proportion with learning difficulties is about half the national average. Most of these pupils have speech, language and communication difficulties. The new headteacher was appointed permanently to her post in February 2007. The school holds the ICT Award (information and communication technology) and Sports Activemark.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Prestwood Infants is a good school. It has some outstanding features. Standards are significantly above average in reading, writing and mathematics and are sometimes exceptionally high. Pupils, including those who find learning more difficult and the more able, make good progress and sometimes better, from above average starting points.

The school's success stems from the leadership of the headteacher who provides a clear vision for, and direction to, a caring and committed staff. Even though she has been in post for only a short time, she has made an excellent start to her headship. She is much admired by the whole school community and has successfully built on the positive features of leadership identified in the previous inspection. She is supported well by the acting deputy headteacher. Teamwork is strong and staff morale high. As one parent suggested, 'All the staff work extremely hard to create a stimulating and supportive environment for the children which makes learning fun. The school just keeps improving!' These comments reflect the unanimously supportive view of parents. The nurturing, yet challenging ethos engenders pupils to become well-rounded individuals and to achieve well both academically and personally. From their entry to the Nursery (known in the school as Early Years), children settle quickly and well and grow in confidence. As one parent of a Reception aged child said, 'It has been such a pleasure to see how our son has thrived since starting school. He always comes out with a smile on his face'.

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Behaviour is excellent and pupils have very positive attitudes to school and learning. They take pride in helping others. As one pupil said, 'If any children are sad we go and talk to them, and they don't usually get as far as the friendship bench before we help them.' Pupils demonstrate a well-developed understanding of how to keep healthy. They love to be active and have a good understanding of how to keep themselves and each other safe. The combination of good literacy, numeracy and personal skills equip pupils well for their move to the junior school.

Good teaching enables all groups of pupils to achieve well. The recent focus on strengthening the assessment of pupils' learning is having a good impact on their progress particularly in reading, writing and mathematics. The quality of teaching is good and there are some excellent features. Teachers are clear about what is to be taught and learned and they outline what pupils need to do to be successful. Even the children in the Reception classes when learning new letters and sounds know what they need to do to meet the teacher's expectations. By the time that they reach Year 2, pupils check the success criteria outlined in their literacy books for themselves. In addition, other pupils mark their work to see if all the success criteria are present in their writing. This clarity by teachers helps pupils to learn well. In addition, teachers question pupils well. This too, aids their assessments because they can modify future learning in light of ongoing evaluations of pupils' answers. Relationships are excellent and, as a result, no time is wasted on maintaining discipline. Classrooms are characterised by a calm and purposeful atmosphere where pupils enjoy learning. This, in turn, fosters a strong sense of security and is the bedrock of the excellent progress that all make in their personal development. Teachers make sure that there is a good balance between activities that demand individual or pair and small group working. Current Year 2 pupils' achievement is good. They are on course to achieve standards that are in line with their challenging targets and to maintain the high standards reached in 2007 in reading and writing and the significantly above average standards in mathematics. Standards in science, although above average, are slightly lower.

The curriculum has improved since the previous inspection and is now outstanding. Teachers cleverly link subjects together and ensure that their plans are based, as far as possible, on real life experiences. Hence, good use is made of visits to enliven learning. On the day of the inspection, for example, Year 1 pupils were visiting a local environmental education centre to support their topic work. In addition, many visitors add interest particularly in the arts. Many parents commented positively on the curriculum focus weeks. They say that these added to their children's enjoyment of the school. The rich range of activities include events such as history week when the hall was transformed into a Victorian classroom, pupils made toys, did Victorian dances and looked at pictures of past school life. In addition, all the pupils and staff dressed in character. Other special weeks such as art week, international week and creative writing week enrich learning.

Leadership and management continue to be good. It has some significant strengths. Senior leaders ensure that all current regulations for safeguarding and protecting pupils are firmly in place. Recent improvements in arrangements for tracking progress in English and mathematics enables staff to ensure that each pupil's achievement is regularly checked. This has been an important feature in the improvement in standards in these subjects. However, at present this does not extend to being able to check progress in science in such a systematic way. Taken together with the comprehensive and systematic monitoring of teaching and learning, senior staff develop a detailed understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Subject leaders are well trained and take a key role in the evaluation procedures. They regularly check teachers' planning and pupils' work and they report these outcomes to senior staff and to governors. As a result, the ensuing improvement plans are well-founded and make a positive impact. These demonstrate the school's excellent capacity for further improvement. Governance is good. Governors support the school well and also prompt the school effectively to improve even further. They have good systems in place for checking provision for themselves though this is not yet systematic.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

In both the Early Years and Reception classes, children learn well. They settle quickly because the staff make the children feel secure, valued and confident. Most children enter the Early Years with skills that are well above those typically found and they thrive and make good progress from these strong starting points. Many children in this age group have already achieved the learning goals in the area of personal, social and emotional development before they move into the Reception year. In both year groups, interesting activities are planned and are based on careful assessments that contribute well to the good quality of the teaching. Recent improvements in the outdoor learning environment enables the full range of activities to be carried on outdoors. In both the Early Years and Reception classes, staff ensure that there is an appropriate balance between teacher-led and child initiated activities. In consequence, by the time that they enter Year 1 most children have surpassed substantially the knowledge and skills expected for their age.

What the school should do to improve further

- In order to strengthen achievement in science, extend the arrangements for the careful tracking pupils' progress to include this subject.

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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 effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
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	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	1
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

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	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.

Annex A

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	1
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 tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

21 May 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Prestwood Infant School, Prestwood, HP16 9DF

Thank you for making me so welcome when I visited your school. You were all extremely polite and keen to talk to me about your work and your school.

There are many good things about your school. These are some of them.

- You achieve high standards and make good progress in your learning.
- You behave extremely well and work hard to help others.
- You really enjoy school and the school makes sure that there is an excellent range of things for you to do. I particularly enjoyed talking to you about your Victorian Week!
- All the adults make sure that you are well looked after and cared for.
- Your headteacher, and all the other people who help run your school are very good at making sure that you receive a good education.

I agree with your parents that you go to a good school. However, all the adults want it to be even better. This is why I have said to Mrs O'Keeffe that the staff need to make sure that they check your progress in science in the same way and as well as they do in literacy and numeracy. She already has some good plans to do this.

Thank you once again for being so helpful to me.

With very best wishes for your future

Yours sincerely

Keith Sadler

Lead Inspector