

Creech St Michael Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123793
Local Authority	Somerset
Inspection number	327990
Inspection dates	9–10 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Ken Bryan

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	220
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ruth Farrow
Headteacher	Edward Gregory
Date of previous school inspection	22 May 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Hyde Lane Creech St Michael Taunton TA3 5QQ
Telephone number	01823 442898

Age group	4–11
Inspection dates	9–10 June 2009
Inspection number	327990

Fax number

01823 444002

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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 where almost all pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. This includes profound learning and physical disabilities. Pupil mobility is lower than average. The children enter the school aged four into the Reception/Year 1 classes that form part of the Early Years Foundation Stage. From Reception to the end of Year 5, pupils are taught in mixed-age classes. The school manages a well-attended breakfast and after-school club.

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. The pupils and adults have developed very positive relationships within a climate of trust and respect. Pupils' personal development is outstanding. Behaviour and attitudes are exemplary and make a significant contribution to their good achievements. Pupils demonstrate courtesy and kindness to others that speak volumes about the overall calm, inclusive and purposeful ethos of the school. Systems for the care, guidance and support of pupils are good. The very caring and nurturing environment enables pupils to make good progress to reach average standards by the time they leave school. This is a rapidly improving picture following a period of decline in standards in Key Stage 1.

On entry to the school, children's language and social skills are below age-related expectations. Children make good progress throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage because of outstanding provision. As a result, most enter Year 1 with average skills. Following two years of declining standards in Key Stage 1, this trend has been reversed, and pupils are now on track to achieve at least average standards by the end of Year 2. By the end of Year 6, most children achieve broadly average standards in English, mathematics and science, and many exceed this, especially in reading. This is a rapidly improving picture, with many pupils on course to achieve above average standards. Pupils in Key Stage 2 make good progress as the result of the good teaching they receive, especially in Year 6. Nevertheless, good teaching is not consistent across the whole school, and levering up the quality of teaching to that of the best is rightly a priority for improvement.

Pupils achieve well and enjoy learning because of the rich and well-planned curriculum. The school is developing its systems to provide more effective academic guidance and many children know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. However, this is not evident in all classes. Feedback, including marking on how well pupils are doing along with advice on how to improve, is not consistently good. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are served well through the effective use of additional support and intervention programmes. Their level of progress is broadly in line with that of their peers and sometimes better, especially in Key Stage 2.

Good leadership and management underpin the school. Leadership provided by the headteacher, his newly restructured senior team and governors provides a clear direction. The school's self-evaluation has effectively identified appropriate priorities, and action taken to secure improvements, particularly in Key Stage 1, has been successful. As a result, there is a good capacity to improve further. The school makes a satisfactory contribution to community cohesion. While there are strong community links locally, the school's work to promote an understanding of living within a cultural diverse Britain is underdeveloped.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Exemplary provision for children in the Reception/Year 1 classes means they get off to an excellent start. Parents remarked that their children are 'very happy and look forward to going to school' and that 'the children are very well cared for and treated as individuals'. The children quickly learn new routines and develop highly positive relationships with each other and with adults. Whatever their starting points, outstanding teaching enables all children to make extremely good progress, especially in their language and social development. Regular and

effective assessment of each child's progress gives staff a clear view of children's attainment, so they can plan to stretch them further. Children experience a rich, well-planned curriculum, with all three classrooms providing vibrant, well-resourced learning environments. Pupils have great fun in all their learning, especially during child-initiated activities. They make very good progress in writing and in understanding letters and sounds. Exciting cross-curricular themes, such as travelling by land and water and studying the story 'Where the Wild Things Are', stimulate children's interests. Teachers and teaching assistants use an excellent range of outside equipment in the school grounds to excite learning. Additional learning needs are identified quickly and measures are implemented to ensure that all children make equally good progress. Excellent liaison with pre-school providers ensures the smooth transition of the children, who make a very settled start to school.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve feedback on how well pupils are doing, including marking, and ensure pupils know how to improve their work.
- Ensure that the school's provision to promote community cohesion includes links with diverse communities in Britain.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils enter the school with skills and attitudes in the areas of communication, language and literacy and personal, social and emotional development that are below age-related expectations. Pupils then make good progress from the start of Reception to the end of Year 6. Evidence from school data and inspectors' observations confirms that pupils in each key stage are on course to reach average standards as the result of good teaching and a well-planned curriculum. A few pupils reach above average standards. This is a rapidly improving picture. Most pupils in Key Stage 1 are on track to achieve the challenging targets set for them in reading and mathematics, although their progress in writing is relatively slower. Good progress continues in Key Stage 2 so that standards in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 6 are broadly in line with national averages. Current data and inspection evidence indicate that pupils in Year 6 are on course to do really well, particularly in English. Most pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because teachers provide high quality support for them.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils clearly enjoy their education and they have developed extremely positive relationships with adults and with one another. Bullying and racist incidents are rare, and pupils report that they feel extremely safe. They make an outstanding contribution to the local village community and parents remarked on the school's 'excellent link with village life'. Pupils also make an excellent contribution to the school community, as when older pupils care for younger children at the friendship bench in the playground. Pupils know how to stay fit through healthy eating and by taking exercise. Pupils play with energy at playtime, particularly as they hurtle through the 'super ground' activity trail. The school council and monitors make a strong contribution to the school community. The pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is outstanding. Pupils demonstrate a clear understanding of right and wrong and show a mature sensitivity to spiritual themes. In addition, pupils enjoy coming to school and attendance is above average.

Pupils are well prepared for future study and life outside school as a result of their skills and attitudes, their skills in information and communication technology (ICT) and their ability to independently raise and manage funds during their numerous charitable endeavours.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The overall quality of teaching is good, with some outstanding elements, especially in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Year 6. Strengths include the use of assessment to ensure good progression within mixed aged-classes. In addition, very good relationships are clearly evident in each classroom, which results in excellent behaviour and positive attitudes. Well-trained teaching assistants effectively support pupils with their learning. There have been significant improvements in the quality of teaching and learning, particularly in Key Stage 1. Many parents appreciate the 'dedicated staff who provide the best learning opportunities' for their children. Robust systems to track pupils' progress ensure that teachers understand their pupils' needs and well-targeted interventions are provided to support pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Pupils' involvement in target setting is less well developed and constructive comments on pupils' work are inconsistent. Although teachers know the pupils very well and many lessons are modified to meet their varied needs, many pupils are unsure about what they need to do to improve because marking is inconsistent.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is broad, balanced, well planned and engages pupils well. It is supplemented by a good range of enrichment activities that significantly enhance pupils' learning and enjoyment. These include day and residential educational visits, visitors, swimming lessons, and after-school clubs. In addition, the school makes full use of its lush and well-resourced school grounds to enhance the curriculum and to help pupils appreciate the beauty of the countryside. The school is justly proud of its Forest School provision. Pupils from Year 2 to Year 6 benefit from the provision of French, and the teaching of music is a significant strength of the school. The forthcoming production of 'Robin Hood' looks likely to be a blockbuster! The introduction of a programme to develop the social and emotional aspects of learning has positively contributed to the overall school climate. The provision for ICT is good and particularly effectively used in Year 6. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides a safe and nurturing environment where pupils do well. The provision of good physical and pastoral care results in the children feeling well supported, safe and happy. Safeguarding arrangements are fully in place and policies and procedures are followed. The school's systems for gathering and analysing assessment data are particularly robust and are effectively managed by the school's leadership team. Consequently, pupils' achievements are carefully monitored and interventions are both effective and timely. Parents are kept well informed about the progress of their children.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Clear direction is provided by the headteacher, his senior leaders and the governors, who clearly understand the school's strengths and weaknesses. The headteacher keeps a constant focus on raising standards whilst nurturing the whole child. The school is well led and managed on a day-to-day basis and the overall tone is one of care, purpose and harmony. The restructuring of the school's leadership team, consisting of assistant headteachers and subject leaders, has significantly impacted upon improvements in achievement and standards. They work well as a team and each subject leader contributes effectively to the development of the school improvement plan. The school's self-evaluation is accurate and based upon secure data. Systems for the recording and tracking of individual pupils' progress are particularly robust. School governance is good, with governors being well informed and effective in their monitoring and support. Governors have developed excellent links with outside agencies to develop the school grounds. The school's outstanding pre- and after-school club is a clear indication of governors' commitment to encourage an inclusive community. The school contributes to community cohesion through its excellent links with the parish and the local community. However, the school has no strong links with culturally diverse communities within Britain.

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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?	1
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?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
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

¹Grade 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?	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	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
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 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**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

11 June 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Creech St Michael Church of England Primary School, TA3 5QQ

I am writing to tell you how much we enjoyed our visit to your school. Thank you for giving us such a warm welcome and for helping us during the inspection. You are obviously very proud of your school and you are happy and very well supported by all of your teachers and other adults. We liked the way you behaved around the school and the way that you help one another. Here are some of the highlights we found.

What we particularly liked about your school:

- The teachers work hard to provide interesting lessons and as a result you make good progress as you move through the school.
- Your behaviour and attitudes in class and around the school are excellent, which certainly helps you to learn. You are growing up into very sensible young people.
- You are very caring to one another and you are well supported by the adults.
- You clearly enjoy the wide range of clubs, school visits and other activities provided by the school, which includes the breakfast and after-school club and the way you use your wonderful school grounds.
- You clearly know how to eat healthily and lead healthy lifestyles.

The school runs very smoothly. The headteacher, the staff and the governors are a very good team. They have a clear idea about how well the school is doing and what needs to be improved. We have asked them to work on two things to make the school better.

- Make sure that teaching is good in all classes by marking your work carefully and letting you know what to do to improve.
- Make better links with other schools and communities in Britain.

You can help make these things happen by working hard and continuing to care for one another.

Yours sincerely

Ken Bryan

Lead Inspector