

# The Henry Prince CofE (C) First School

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	124263
<b>Local Authority</b>	Staffordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	328092
<b>Inspection date</b>	19 May 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Brian Holmes

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.

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<b>Type of school</b>	First
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–9
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	61
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
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Andrew Taylor-Smith
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sarah Robson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	12 July 2006
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Mayfield Ashbourne DE6 2LB
<b>Telephone number</b>	01335 342613

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<b>Age group</b>	3–9
<b>Inspection date</b>	19 May 2009
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**Fax number**

01335 342613

**Age group** 3-9

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**Inspection date** 19 May 2009

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

## Description of the school

Henry Prince is a smaller than average first school. It has an Early Years Foundation Stage for children of Nursery and Reception age in a mixed-age class. Nursery children attend part-time. It has close links with the local church. Almost all of the pupils are from White British backgrounds. The school has experienced financial and staffing difficulties. At the time of the inspection, the substantive headteacher was absent from school and a headteacher from a local school had recently taken up a position as executive headteacher on a temporary basis. The school has Activemark, the Football Association Charter Standard and National Healthy School Status.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement.

- There has been inadequate progress in making the improvements identified at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils' achievement is inadequate. From the sound start they make in the Early Years Foundation Stage, pupils make inconsistent progress across Years 1 to 4. In writing, their progress is inadequate and they reach standards which are below average at the end of Year 2 and Year 4. Although standards in reading and mathematics are broadly average in Years 2 and 4, pupils' progress is inconsistent and uneven. The achievement of those pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is inadequate and most do not make the progress of which they are capable. These pupils are appropriately supported in lessons but the systems needed to ensure that their specific needs are provided for are ineffective. School leaders and governors do not set a sufficiently clear direction for the school, focused on a clear vision and use of realistically challenging targets to raise standards; parents' comments show that a significant minority have lost confidence in the way the school is led and managed. Systems to support the improvement of teaching and learning and the checking of pupils' performance are ineffective. Governance is inadequate because governors do not sufficiently challenge the school to improve its performance. The school provides unsatisfactory value for money.

The quality of teaching and learning, although showing signs of improvement, is inadequate because it has had too little effect on pupils' achievement. Teachers' skill in assessing pupils' level of understanding to move them to the next level is weak and marking does not make clear to pupils what they need to do next to improve their work. The school is in the early stages of introducing a 'creative curriculum' where links are made between subjects. Although this approach is resulting in greater enjoyment, it has not yet had an effect on pupils' achievement or on their opportunities to use their writing skills in all subjects consistently. The level of care the school provides is satisfactory and makes a positive contribution to pupils' personal development and well-being. However, systems of academic guidance are inadequate because pupils do not have a clear understanding of their longer-term targets and what they need to do to achieve them.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are satisfactory. They have an appropriate understanding of how to live healthily and how to stay safe. Pupils have a clear understanding of nutrition, and salad is popular at lunchtime. They know whom to go to if they have concerns over their safety. Pupils enjoy school and have good attitudes towards school. They like their teachers and say it is reasonably easy to make friends because it is a small school. Behaviour is satisfactory, although there are a few pupils who find it hard to stick to the rules when they are not directly supervised. Pupils make a good contribution to the life of the school and the community. There is an active school council which has worked hard to improve assemblies and contributed to the anti-bullying campaign in school. The weaknesses in pupils' achievement do not prepare them well enough for the future.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 3

The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Leadership and management are satisfactory, with the teacher in charge and the rest of the staff in the unit operating appropriately as a team. Children start school with attainment that is typical of those expected for their age, although this can vary from year to year as there are only small numbers of children involved. Children make satisfactory progress in most areas of learning and standards are in line with expectations by the end of Reception in most aspects of learning. Satisfactory provision is made for children's welfare and they enjoy good relationships with adults that boost their feeling of security. Learning and development are satisfactory. There is a good emphasis placed on promoting children's speaking and listening. For example, children spoke about 'rainbow coloured parrots' seen in an imaginary jungle exploration. The development of children's early writing skills is less effective. Their progress in beginning to form letters and spell simple words is slow and few reach the standards expected by the time they go into Year 1. Through satisfactory use of assessment, an appropriate balance of activities which are directed by adults and those that children choose for themselves is planned effectively. Children are keen to take part in activities but sometimes lack choice over resources or ways of tackling tasks. Children's learning in the outdoor area is limited because adults are not readily at hand to give them support.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Improve standards and achievement in writing across the school by: improving the teaching of letter formation, sounds and words; ensuring that pupils apply their writing skills across all subjects; and informing pupils about what they need to do to reach their targets.
- Accelerate the rates of progress of all pupils and ensure they are consistent across the school by analysing the performance of specific groups so that teaching can address their needs.
- Ensure teachers use assessment information to match their teaching to pupils' abilities and give feedback that helps pupils know what they have to do to improve.
- Improve the management, support and guidance for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.
- Establish a clear direction for the school and ensure that the actions taken by school leaders are effective in improving pupils' achievement.
- Make sure that governors hold the school to account for the standards it achieves and the rates of pupils' progress by providing them with the information needed to make decisions and judge the impact of the school's work.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 4

Pupils' achievement is inadequate at the end of Year 2 and Year 4. Standards are broadly in line with the national average in reading and mathematics at the end of Years 2 and 4 but, in writing, standards are below average and pupils' achievement is inadequate across the school. Although standards are average in reading and mathematics, progress for many pupils is inconsistent and erratic, particularly in reading where some pupils make little progress. Analysis of pupil performance data shows that these inconsistencies have not been sufficiently diagnosed to reveal their effect on specific pupils and groups of pupils. Consequently, the achievement of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is inadequate because their needs have not been sufficiently identified and addressed.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 3**

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Assemblies contribute appropriately to their spiritual development, and their moral development is evident in their sound understanding of right and wrong. A well-established link with a school with pupils from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds helps their understanding of different cultures, and their cultural awareness is generally satisfactory. Pupils enjoy good relationships with each other and their teachers, which results in satisfactory behaviour and good attitudes to school. Attendance is satisfactory, although not as high as in previous years because of recent outbreaks of illness. Pupils enjoy school but say that teachers spend too much time reprimanding pupils who do not concentrate on their work. Pupils show a willingness to undertake responsibilities and contribute to the life of the school through the class councils, which inform the work of the school council.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 4**

Although the lessons observed in the inspection were satisfactory and pupils were given opportunities to work with each other as 'talk partners' to discuss and share ideas, evidence from the analysis of pupils' work and their progress over time shows there are weaknesses in the quality of teaching and learning. These weaknesses have not been sufficiently addressed since the previous inspection. Assessment information is not used to plan learning so that the needs of all pupils are met. Scrutiny of pupils' books shows that marking is regular but does not indicate clearly enough what pupils need to do next to improve their work. Similarly, in the lessons seen, teachers did not always make it sufficiently clear to pupils what they need to do to be successful.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum provides a satisfactory range of learning opportunities which meet pupils' needs. It enables pupils to enjoy their work and to stay safe and healthy. The impact of the curriculum on pupils' learning is reflected in the different rates of progress they make in different subjects. Pupils enjoy the topics that have been introduced as part of the new 'creative curriculum', such as the one linking history and literacy in a study of evacuees in the Second World War. Despite this good practice, the opportunities that pupils have to use and apply their writing and reading skills in all subjects are limited and not planned consistently. The school offers a sound range of extra-curricular activities and clubs, such as the sewing club and the computer club, which are accessible to all pupils. School trips are also used appropriately to enrich pupils' experiences; pupils enjoyed their visit at Cannock Chase.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 4**

The school places a strong emphasis on pupils' health, care, safety and welfare. The daily care provided for pupils is satisfactory and the arrangements to safeguard them meet current requirements. Most parents agree that the school keeps their children safe. The school works

appropriately with others to support pupils and provide for their well-being. However, support for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is ineffective and this contributes to their often slow rates of progress. Staff are uncertain which pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, which reflects inadequacies in the management of support systems. Pupils' academic guidance is inadequate and is a major factor in their slow progress in writing and uneven progress overall. Pupils are unsure about what they are aiming for in the longer term and how to reach the targets they are set.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 4**

The lack of clear leadership and the financial difficulties related to staffing have resulted in the school being unable to improve its performance. A significant minority of parents who completed questionnaires reported that they have lost confidence in the leadership of the school. The acting headteacher has made a fast start in addressing the issues the school faces but she has not been in the school long enough to make a significant difference. Systems to support the improvement of teaching and learning and the checking of pupils' performance are ineffective. The school's self-evaluation is generous and not based on a rigorous analysis of underachievement and inconsistencies in pupils' progress. The governors do not adequately challenge the school to improve its performance. This is partly because they do not receive the information they need to make decisions and judge the impact of the school's work. The lack of clear direction and systems needed to support improvement mean that the school does not have the capacity to manage its own improvement. The school has taken steps to promote community cohesion and there are strong links between the school and the local community. A well-established link with a school in another area has resulted in pupils developing a sound understanding of different communities in other parts of the United Kingdom. However, the inadequate progress of different groups of pupils results in weaknesses in the promotion of equality of opportunity, which adversely affects the school's promotion of community cohesion.

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**Annex A**

## Inspection judgements

<b>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</b>	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	4
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	4

### Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

<b>How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?</b>	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	3
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	3
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	4
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	4

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<sup>1</sup>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

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	3
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	3
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	4

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	4
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?	4

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	4
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	4
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	4
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	4
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	4
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	4
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	4
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	4
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	Yes
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

20 May 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Henry Prince C of E (C) First School, Ashbourne, DE6 2LB

Thank you for making us feel so welcome and for being so helpful when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking to you, looking at your work and finding out about the things you like doing. We discovered that:

- you like your school and say it is a friendly place where most children get on well together
- you like your teachers and the activities they provide for you
- you like the new topics you are learning
- you know how to live healthily and how to stay safe
- you make a good contribution to the life of the school community through the class councils, the school council and the jobs you do.

However, we think that there are several important things that the school is not doing as well as it ought to and so we have decided that the school needs extra help.. This means that inspectors will come to visit your school, probably each term from now on, to help the teachers make things better as soon as possible. These are the things that we think need to be improved:

- how teaching supports your progress in writing
- the progress and support for those of you who find learning difficult
- how teachers check how much you already know and then plan your next lessons to help you progress quickly
- how teachers mark your work so you know what to do to improve it
- how the teachers help you to reach your end-of-year targets
- how the headteacher and the other teachers make sure your learning is good all the time
- how the governors do their work to check that the school is doing well.

I know this is a lot of work but it is very important that the school gets things right for you as soon as possible. You can help by working hard and behaving well and by trying to help the teachers make things better for everybody in school.

Yours faithfully

Brian Holmes

Lead inspector