

Shebbear Community School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	113166
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	378658
Inspection dates	1–2 March 2012
Lead inspector	Alison Cogher

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	62
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Derrick Andrew
Headteacher	Sally Strange
Date of previous school inspection	4 December 2008
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Alison Cogher

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector visited nine lessons and observed four teachers. The inspector talked to pupils about their learning and listened to them read. Meetings were held with members of the governing body and staff. The inspector took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at documents including the school improvement plan, curriculum planning and school self-evaluation together with pupil assessment information. The views of staff, pupils and 30 parents and carers were considered, as expressed through the returned questionnaires.

Information about the school

This is much smaller than the average-sized primary school. It has grown by nearly a quarter since the last inspection with pupils being admitted into all year groups. Almost all pupils are from White British families. No pupils are learning English as an additional language and the proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is low. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is average overall, although the proportion with a statement of special educational needs is above average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

The school has achieved the Eco-School Silver and Devon County Council Travel-Wise Silver Awards together with the Full International School Award and the Governor Mark Award.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- This is a good school. By the end of Year 6, attainment is above average in reading and writing and average in mathematics. This represents overall good progress from pupils' starting points. The lower but improving attainment in mathematics is largely because of some pupils' insecure skills in calculation and problem solving in Years 3 to 6. Marking of pupils' work is thorough but, at times, there is a lack of precision in the feedback provided, so it is not clear how the activity completed has moved their learning forwards towards their longer-term goals. The school is not outstanding because teaching is not securing exceptional pupils' progress over time and pupils' attainment between subjects is not yet fully consistent.
- Caution is needed when making generalisations because of the very small number of pupils in each year group. However, lesson observations, school-based data and pupils' work over time shows that all pupils, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, achieve well.
- Good teaching enables pupils to learn well in lessons and over time. The variety of activities and range of resources used captures pupils' interest well. The comment made by a pupil in Year 4, 'Oh this is going to be fun', reflects teachers' success in engaging and motivating pupils to work hard. However, on rare occasions, pupils' progress slows because teachers do not fully explain to them precisely what they are expected to learn.
- Good behaviour is the norm in the school. Pupils say that they feel safe at all times. They enjoy learning, especially when they work constructively with a partner or in small groups in lessons.
- Effective leadership makes good use of accurate school self-evaluation information to manage and improve the quality and consistency of teaching and the overall performance of the school and staff. Productive working relationships between staff and members of the governing body ensure that a good pace of school improvement is sustained.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in mathematics in Years 3 to 6 by:
 - ensuring pupils are provided with frequent opportunities to build up their skills, confidence and competence to make accurate calculations, especially when attempting to successfully solve mathematical problems.

- Improve the impact of teaching on pupils' learning by:
 - ensuring that in all lessons the different groups of pupils always receive precise information about what they are expected to learn
 - ensuring the marking of pupils' work indicates to them how well they have met the expectations of the lesson and how this contributes to their longer-term learning goals.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

There is variation from year to year but typically children start in the Early Years Foundation Stage with levels of personal development that match those expected for their age. However, children's understanding of the sounds letters make and their skills in reading, writing and calculation are often below the level expected. Children make good progress and achieve well with most reaching the expected learning goals by the end of the Reception Year. Pupils in Years 1 to 6, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, make good progress from their individual starting points and they achieve well. Pupils who need additional help receive well-targeted support and progress as well as other pupils. Teaching assistants and volunteers provide much of this support and they work closely with teachers to ensure activities meet pupils' individual needs. Parents and carers express confidence that their children are achieving well. Inspection evidence concurs with this view.

The enthusiasm with which pupils dressed as their favourite book character for World Book Day celebrations reflected their enjoyment of reading. Pupils use a range of approaches, including their knowledge of sounds letters make, to help them read unfamiliar words. By the end of Year 2, pupils' attainment in reading is above average and this is sustained to the end of Year 6. Pupils' progress and attainment in writing has improved since the last inspection as a consequence of improved teaching. Pupils make good use of their reading and writing skills to support their learning in other subjects. For example, as part of a unit of work titled 'Victorian Britain's Got Talent', pupils in Years 5 and 6 researched the life of Robert Peel and then collated their findings to produce an information sheet.

Improvements in the approach to teaching mathematics in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2, including a greater emphasis on practical activities, have secured a rising trend in pupils' progress and attainment. Overall pupils' progress in mathematics is

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good in Years 3 to 6, but the analysis of assessment information has identified gaps in some pupils' learning that are linked particularly to their calculation skills and how to tackle solving problems. Targeted support for these pupils is improving attainment and the progress they make so the gaps in their learning are closing quickly. Inspection evidence confirms that pupils have many opportunities in lessons to work together and are encouraged to ask questions and share their ideas. By working in this way, pupils' learning is given relevance and their personal development is supported well.

Quality of teaching

All of the parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire consider that children are well taught. Pupils also say they have every confidence that they learn a lot in lessons. Inspection evidence supports these positive views.

Good teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is characterised by many opportunities for children to learn through practical activities and planning that strikes a good balance between adult-led and child-initiated activities. Lesson planning elsewhere in school takes account of pupils' previous learning. What pupils are expected to learn in a lesson is shared with them, although the specific goal for each group in the class is not always stated clearly. Teaching ensures pupils have a good grasp of their individual longer-term targets for improvement but the marking of their work does not always make it clear how their learning in lessons is helping them to achieve these.

Positive relationships between teachers, teaching assistants and pupils help to ensure that a 'can do' atmosphere permeates lessons. Teaching is often challenging and motivating, and embraces pupils as active participants in the process. For example, during a mathematics lesson in Year 3 and 4, groups of pupils compiled lists of the words to describe two- and three-dimensional shapes. This list was then shared by all pupils to support and enhance the knowledge and understanding of the whole class. Similarly, pupils in Year 2 worked together to describe vegetables and then to sort them into leaves, stems, flowers and roots. Pupils confidently ask for help when they need it and will try out ideas and possible solutions without fear of failure. They welcome the evaluation of their work by other pupils through peer-assessment and give and receive this type of feedback in a mature and respectful manner. This reflects the importance placed by the school on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

The teaching of key literacy and numeracy skills is good. Reading and writing are supported effectively by the systematic teaching of letter sounds. However, pupils do not presently have sufficient opportunities to build up their confidence to use their calculation skills successfully when attempting to solve mathematical problems. The broader curriculum is organised well to provide a wide range of learning experiences. Pupils are encouraged to contribute to the planning of their learning. This approach helps pupils to develop independence and ownership of their learning. A wide range of resources, whole-school activities, visits and visitors are used to stimulate pupils'

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enthusiasm for learning. For example, a whole-school Victorian day where pupils experienced what it was like to go to school during these times contributed much to pupils' knowledge and understanding of the culture of Victorian England.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

The overwhelming majority of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire were confident that the school looks after their children well and keeps them safe. Most also consider that behaviour is good in the school, with a number noting that if behaviour does fall below expectations, it is tackled quickly and effectively. Pupils feel safe at school and have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe. Pupils spoken to during the inspection believe behaviour to be generally good. This was also very clear from pupils' questionnaire responses. They say that instances of bullying of any kind, including physical, name-calling or cyber-bullying, are very rare events. They are confident that adults respond speedily to address any difficulties they may have. Older and younger pupils mix harmoniously and engage in joint activities with pleasure. For example, pupils enjoyed working in mixed-age teams during the whole-school World Book Day quiz.

Pupils' attendance is above average and they are keen to begin their lessons at the start of the day. Almost all pupils work consistently hard and respond well to the support and advice they are given in lessons. Pupils have a clear understanding of right and wrong and the school's expectations of them. They exhibit good levels of tolerance and respect, and take good care of each other. Pupils readily accept responsibilities, such as being members of the school or Eco-council. Taking on these roles enables them to actively contribute to school improvement work such as the review of procedures for managing pupil behaviour and the sustainable development of the school grounds.

Leadership and management

The good leadership and management of the headteacher, staff and governors have ensured that issues from the last inspection have been fully addressed. The curriculum meets pupils' needs well. Attainment in writing has improved partly because more opportunities are now provided for pupils to write in other subjects. Leadership roles have been allocated to staff and they have the skills necessary to enable them to conduct accurate reviews of school activities and teaching. Many more opportunities, including well-established links to a school in Zambia, are enabling pupils to gain first-hand knowledge and understanding of cultural diversity. These changes, together with improvements secured to the quality and consistency of teaching, demonstrate the school's good capacity to improve further.

Morale is high and there is a shared whole-school commitment to ongoing improvement. Leaders and managers at all levels work closely with the skilled and well-informed governing body to conduct a range of monitoring activities, including the analysis of pupil assessment data and the evaluation of teaching and learning. Information derived from this work guides school improvement planning. The impact

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of actions taken is rigorously evaluated. Staff professional development is linked closely to the school improvement plan. For example, all staff received training to improve the quality of guided reading and guided mathematics sessions. The impact of this can be seen in the improved quality and consistency of teaching and learning in these sessions.

School leaders and governors ensure safeguarding arrangements meet requirements. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated by staff and school leaders who also ensure that the school is an inclusive community where equality of opportunity for all pupils is threaded through all activities. All pupils have access to teaching that is well informed by accurate assessment information and staff's knowledge of pupils as individuals. The organisation of the curriculum into overarching themes provides a clear framework that gives relevance to, and supports, pupils' enjoyment of learning. This is enriched further by the opportunities pupils have to attend a wide range of after-school clubs.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well through the curriculum, adult modelling of constructive and supportive relationships, and the school's expectations for good pupil behaviour. Strong links with the local area include a weekly invitation to older members of the community, which a good number accept, to have lunch with pupils. This sort of activity, together with links to local churches and visiting speakers from different ethnic and cultural communities and a variety of professions, make a good contribution to pupils' learning and their personal development.

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	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



3 March 2012

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Shebbear Community School, Shebbear, Beaworthy
EX21 5SG**

Thank you very much for making me feel so welcome when I visited your school. I enjoyed talking to you, reading your questionnaires, hearing some of you read and looking at the work you do in lessons. Your school is giving you a good education.

There are many things that are good about your school and these are some of them.

- Your attendance is good and you enjoy your time at school.
- You work hard and are good at helping each other in lessons.
- You read well.
- You are making good progress because you are taught well.
- You feel safe at school, behave well and take good care of each other.
- The headteacher, all the staff and governors are working together well to make sure that your school continues to improve.

These are the things I have asked the school to do to make it even better.

- I have asked your teachers to help those of you in Years 3 to 6 to make even better progress in your mathematics work and build up your confidence to make calculations and solve mathematical problems more successfully.
- I want your teachers to make it very clear what they expect you to have achieved by the end of a lesson. I also want them to make sure that when they mark your work it is made clear to you how well you did in the lessons and how well you are progressing towards achieving your individual targets.

All of you can help by continuing to work hard and by doing your best to follow your teachers' advice about how you can improve your mathematics.

Yours sincerely

Alison Cogher
Lead inspector

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