

Lydford Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113257
Local Authority	Devon
Inspection number	357302
Inspection dates	28–29 September 2010
Reporting inspector	Laurie Lewin

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	32
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Poppy Arnold
Headteacher	Linda Wells
Date of previous school inspection	7 July 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one additional inspector. The inspector observed five lessons with three teachers being seen over a period of just over two hours. A further 45 minutes was spent looking at samples of pupils' work. Meetings were held with governors, staff and a group of pupils. The inspector observed the school's work, and looked at school documentation including teachers' planning, assessment information and safeguarding policies. The inspector analysed 22 questionnaires from parents and carers, eight from staff and 19 from pupils.

The inspector reviewed many aspects of the school's work. He looked in detail at the following.

- How well pupils' writing skills are developed across the school.
- How effective the school is in ensuring that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities reach their full potential.
- The extent to which pupils understand the next steps required to improve their learning.
- The success of the school in developing partnerships with external organisations.
- The suitability of the outdoor facilities for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Information about the school

The school is much smaller than average. The number on roll varies from year to year but is currently slightly less than at the time of the previous inspection. The school has maintained a stable staffing situation since the last inspection. Pupils come from the village of Lydford and surrounding hamlets and farms in a very rural area within the Dartmoor National Park. The school has two classes. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in a class alongside pupils in Years 1 and 2. The pupils in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 are taught together in another class. Almost all of the pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average. Most of these receive support at the school action level, with a very small number classified as having severe learning needs. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. Most children starting school have not attended pre-school facilities.

The school has the Healthy School and the Artsmark Gold accreditations.

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

This good school has its sights firmly fixed on doing even better. The staff harness all the potential of a small school environment to ensure that pupils flourish socially and progress well academically. The school has a strong family ethos. The associated high-quality pastoral care ensures all individuals, including those with particular learning needs, become enthusiastic and confident and feel extremely safe at all times in school. Pupils derive a lot of pleasure from learning and working together. They are keen to come to school.

Pupils achieve well. They get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage where they are taught well. Although the very small size of year groups means that attainment fluctuates from year to year, it is never less than average and in some years above average. The progress that pupils make in both classes has improved since the last inspection. This is because staff are good at spotting any weaknesses and applying the right kind of measures to boost pupils' learning.

The headteacher and other teachers regularly monitor each other's lessons. They know that while the large majority of lessons are well taught, there are refinements that will make teaching even better. For example, pupils are not all sufficiently aware of the improvements they need to make to take their work to a higher level. The curriculum in the school is well planned to give pupils an interesting array of work that caters for all individuals. Pupils say, 'teachers work hard ♦ they even make the boring bits of lessons into fun!' Writing was recently identified by the staff as a weaker area of work. They have implemented good strategies to fix this. However, there are currently not enough opportunities across the curriculum for pupils to practise and improve their writing skills.

Pupils are polite to adults and each other and willingly take on many responsibilities around the school to aid the smooth running of activities. They say their school council is 'very good at making the school better' and cite many facilities and areas of work where the council has made an impact. The pupils clearly have an important voice in the way things operate and are proud of their school and their achievements. The pupils all look very healthy and have an excellent knowledge about how to keep themselves that way.

The school is successful because the headteacher does an excellent job of helping the staff work together as a strong, committed and enthusiastic team. The success is also based on the high-quality links established with parents and external organisations. In this way the school is very much the hub of the local community. Both the school and the local community benefit from the strong links forged. For example, the pupils' make very strong gains in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness through their role as 'Custodians of Lydford Gorge' at the same time as aiding the community in preserving the

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natural beauty of the local environment. The vast majority of parents commend the school for its work and are very supportive of all the school's activities.

The school has good capacity to improve further. This is illustrated by the precision with which weaknesses are identified and addressed, the accuracy of the school's evaluation of itself. In addition it is supported by the school's track record of improving and strengthening areas such as pupils' progress, care, guidance and support and areas of the pupils' personal development since the last inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve writing across the school by giving pupils a greater range of opportunities to practise their writing skills across the different subjects in the curriculum (by April 2011).
- In order to move towards outstanding achievement, teachers must ensure pupils have a very clear understanding about what they need to do to reach the next level in their work (by December 2010).

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils thoroughly enjoy school and this is reflected in the high level of their attendance. Children's skills on entry to school vary a lot from year to year but in recent times have been below average. Excellent behaviour and motivation from the pupils means that all lessons are conducive to providing good progress. All groups of pupils, including those who are gifted and talented as well as those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, do well. In one good literacy lesson seen for the older age ranges, pupils worked very hard with the good-quality new systems the teacher had instigated to help improve their writing. All individuals worked at a rapid pace and achieved well. In an excellent mathematics lesson seen for the same class, because work was so well matched to the ability levels of different groups, all individuals were very effectively challenged by the work and produced their best efforts. The pupils with special educational needs and/or learning disabilities thoroughly enjoyed the work in this lesson. They benefited a great deal from the strong support and visibly grew in self-confidence as the activity progressed. In a good lesson for the younger age class of pupils, the clarity of presentation and good level of discussion meant that all individuals participated fully in their reading activity with good levels of concentration. Occasionally, where teaching is satisfactory, expectations are not as clearly set as they could be to enable pupils to understand what they have to achieve in the time frame and, at these times, their concentration wanders.

Writing across the school is the weakest strand of pupils' work. Staff know this and have already energetically embarked on addressing this key area. A view of pupils' work and discussions with them show that they sometimes struggle in finding the right vocabulary to express themselves, and in developing ideas for their stories and accounts.

Pupils become good young citizens. They show a degree of social awareness beyond their years. This is seen in the sensitive and friendly way in which they support and interact with one another. Sitting with them at lunchtime is a wholly pleasant and entertaining experience, very much like a large family sitting down to dine together. At such times, pupils are confident in talking and presenting their views candidly so that staff gain very clear feedback about how individuals are feeling and thinking. This in turn serves to inform

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the way activities in the school are geared to pupils needs. Pupils develop a deep understanding about global issues and respect for the environment. This is inspired through work in the curriculum, fund-raising work for charities and the good range of practical projects in the local area, including growing produce in the school garden. Pupils have an excellent understanding about how to keep themselves safe and healthy and discussions with them shows that they apply this understanding in their everyday lives.

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	3
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	1
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?

The high quality of pastoral care and vigilance in ensuring pupils are kept safe is, in part, due to the excellent organisation and office administration of all procedures and systems. No stone is left unturned in recording and detailing all information relating to risk assessment and checks on all of those who come to work with pupils in the school. There are very good links with outside agencies to ensure that pupils in need receive exactly the right kind of support. The arrangements for supporting pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are excellent so that these individuals progress as well as their classmates. Transition arrangements for pupils changing year groups are excellent. Everything possible is done to ensure smooth transition of pupils from Year 6 into the local secondary school, with especially good liaison between staff who are responsible for nurturing pupils with severe learning needs.

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Teachers work well with teaching assistants to ensure that learning is lively and interesting for all individuals. The excellent relationships between adults and pupils around the school ensure that all individuals engage well with activities and feel encouraged to do their best. As a result pupils develop a strong desire to move forward with their learning. Teachers use assessment information well to inform their planning and to understand how well each individual is progressing. In addition, pupils are given appropriate targets to guide them through the small steps to improve their work. However, teachers rightly recognise that pupils do not have a clear enough understanding about the main areas of improvement needed to take their work up to the next level. For example, some older pupils spoken to knew their writing was at Level 4, but did not have a clear understanding about how to achieve a Level 5 standard.

The curriculum is engaging and exciting for the pupils. They are especially enthused by the prospects of the adventurous outdoor pursuits that occur within their annual week-long residential stays at a centre on Dartmoor. The Healthy School and Artsmark Gold accreditations are evidence of the good-quality support given by the school, which successfully promotes pupils' personal development and their creative work. The school has a good range of extra-curricular activities for its size and maximises strong links with external agencies to boost these. Although good-quality measures have been implemented to improve pupils' writing during the literacy hour, not enough opportunities are provided for pupils' to practise and extend their written skills in other areas of the curriculum.

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 staff are passionate about getting the very best out of the pupils and they are well supported by the governors in their work. All of them work together as a strong team. The headteacher is especially effective in ensuring that the drive for constant improvement is very much part of the fabric of everyday life in the school. There is clear understanding of the main priorities for future development with the constant improvement in teaching kept at the top of the priority list. Governors have improved the way they carry out their roles since the last inspection so that they now have a clear understanding of the quality of work in the school based on their regular monitoring of lessons. Although they are fully familiar with the school's self-evaluation and development planning documents, they are not as fully involved in the processes of developing these areas as they could be. Staff and governors strive constantly to ensure that equality of opportunity is fully emphasised in all school activities. This is seen in the extent to which pupils who are gifted and talented are encouraged, for example, to participate in high-level sports activities outside of school.

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The staff and governors are very successful in cementing the relationships between the school, parents, local community and external partner organisations. This results in many benefits to help support and boost the pupils' learning. The very useful parent forums held, for example, ensure that parents have a firm understanding of the areas the school is keen to progress and have a chance to influence the way in which this happens.

The school has worked very well in auditing all areas connected with promoting community cohesion. In particular, this has done much to instigate actions to ensure that pupils have a very good awareness about how people from other cultures and ethnic backgrounds live. Many good actions are underway and a very clear awareness is evident about what needs to be done next to strengthen community cohesion still further.

All staff and governors work very effectively to ensure that the safeguarding procedures are rigorously maintained. The training provided for all individuals concerned goes well beyond the basic level required.

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 settle quickly and easily in the Early Years Foundation stage and make good progress. This is because of the very friendly and supportive atmosphere in the school. In addition, the good induction arrangements and well-organised provision ensure children feel safe and secure from the moment they step into the classroom. Although there is much variation from year to year, in recent years children have started school working at levels below those expected for their age. From these starting points, the children achieve good levels in most areas of their learning by the end of the Reception Year. While they work well within the full range of curriculum provision provided for them, they also benefit from working alongside pupils from Years 1 and 2. This gives them a clear understanding of the expectations of the work that lies ahead and helps them quickly gain an

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understanding about learning routines. Planning is skilfully undertaken to dovetail activities with the other age groups and ensure they are pitched at the right level of challenge. For example, during one whole-class science lesson on floating and sinking, the Reception children worked enthusiastically with a voluntary support assistant exploring and investigating which familiar objects floated and sank in the water tank. Full provision is in place to ensure that any learning difficulties are identified at an early stage and the right kind of support provided.

In its rigorous self-evaluation, the school identifies the provision of outdoor play facilities as a weakness, with the school's listed building status being an impediment to full development. Observation during the inspection shows that although areas for sand and water play are a little restricted, the school mitigates this well with lots of good-quality play equipment and facilities for role play evident in the playground.

The children progress well in all areas of learning, but do less well in writing than other areas. This is because they do not always have enough opportunity to practise and apply their writing skills. Although writing activities are provided, this area is not readily selected as one of the independent activities they choose. Staff are aware of this and are taking action to improve the situation.

Provision is well led and managed. Staff work very well together to ensure that, although the numbers of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is very small, they nonetheless receive all of the provision required for this age group. Arrangements for ensuring good personal development and that children are safe at all times are especially good.

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

There was a high return of questionnaires. The overwhelming majority of parents are clearly very pleased with what the school has to offer and particularly like the 'approachability of all staff' and feel that the school is well managed. Inspection findings agree with the views of the parents.

These were just a few of the accolades typically paid to the school by parents: 'The school is very good at working to and encouraging children's strengths' ; 'my child has received a full and varied education' ; 'Lydford School is a great school'; 'the support provided by the staff is second to none'.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Lydford 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 inspector received 22 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 32 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	14	64	8	36	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	15	68	7	32	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	12	55	9	41	0	0	1	5
My child is making enough progress at this school	12	55	10	45	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	18	82	4	18	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	15	68	6	27	0	0	1	5
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	16	73	6	27	0	0	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)	11	50	8	36	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	13	59	9	41	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	13	59	8	36	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	10	45	11	50	1	5	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	17	77	5	23	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	15	68	7	32	0	0	0	0

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.



30 September 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Lydford Primary School, Lydford EX20 4AU

Thank you for making me feel very welcome in your school. You were very polite and friendly and I enjoyed talking to you. I agree with you that your school is a good.

Here are some of the good things that I found in your school.

- You do well in Reception, make a good start to school and progress well in your work.
- There are lots of smiling faces when you arrive at school and I can see that you enjoy being there
- You are fit and healthy and know a lot about how to stay this
- Good teaching provides interesting lessons for you so that you progress well through all the year groups in the school.
- Your behaviour is excellent in all activities in the classroom and around the school and in the playground. It was a pleasure to sit and enjoy lunch with you and have a good chat!
- You all feel very safe in school. The adults in the school are excellent at taking care of you.
- The headteacher, staff and governors work well to keep the school improving and help you to have lots of good links with the community to boost your learning.

This is what I have asked the school to do now.

- Help you improve your writing by practising more in different areas of the curriculum.
- Ensure that you have a really clear idea of the main things that will help you improve your work to the next level. ♦

You can play an important part in helping the school to improve by continuing to work hard, especially with improving your writing skills.

Yours sincerely

Laurie Lewin
Lead inspector

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