

Bearnes Voluntary Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	113400
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	385854
Inspection dates	21–22 March 2012
Lead inspector	David Edwards HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills (HMCI) the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	55
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Clare French
Headteacher	Nicky Dunford
Date of previous school inspection	3–4 March 2011
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

David Edwards

Her Majesty's Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector visited three class teachers and observed nine lessons. In addition, discussions were held with two groups of pupils, the headteacher, the senior leader, teachers, teaching assistants, the Chair and other representatives of the Governing Body, the family support worker and a local authority representative. 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 information about pupils' performance, the school development plan, minutes from governing body meetings, school policies, and curriculum planning documents. In addition, questionnaires were scrutinised from nine parents and carers, nine staff and thirty two pupils.

Information about the school

This school is much smaller than most schools for pupils of primary age. Most pupils come from White British families. A few pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is also above average. The range of additional needs is wide and includes learning and behavioural, social and emotional difficulties. At the time of the previous inspection, the school was subject to a notice to improve. There have been significant changes in staffing and leadership since the previous inspection. An executive headteacher has been appointed and the school has entered into a federation with another local primary school. The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set out minimum requirements for pupils' attainment and progress.

The school roll is now increasing and the number of pupils in each age group varies widely. Each class, including the Early Years Foundation Stage, contains more than one year group.

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

- In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement. Bearnas Voluntary Primary is a good school, which has made significant improvements in all key areas of its work since the last inspection. Leaders and managers now possess an accurate understanding of the school’s effectiveness and what it needs to do to improve further. It is not yet outstanding because standards of attainment for all pupils and groups are not yet in line with national averages for all pupils. This is because improvements to teaching and leadership have not had sufficient time to eradicate the legacy of underachievement still present within the school.
- Pupils’ achievement is good. Almost all pupils sustain good progress in English and mathematics. They now apply their developing skills effectively in reading, writing, communication and mathematics across the curriculum.
- Pupils are typically considerate, respectful and courteous to each other, staff and visitors. Most behave well in lessons and show good attitudes to learning. Incidents of poor behaviour are managed well and the school works closely with partner agencies to meet the needs of pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable.
- The quality of teaching is now typically good throughout the school and sometimes outstanding. Strategies to promote pupils’ independence in learning, especially in understanding how well they are doing and in next steps for improvement, have been successfully introduced. However, they are not yet fully embedded across all subjects. Similarly, strategies to allow pupils to take more responsibility for the things they learn about are at the early stages of implementation.
- Leaders and managers, including the governing body, are highly ambitious for the school and lead by example. They base their actions on their well-informed

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understanding of the school's performance. Effective work has taken place to provide pupils with an enriched curriculum that offers highly positive and memorable experiences, which further promotes pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Leaders have introduced very effective strategies for engaging with parents and carers.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the attainment of pupils throughout the school to bring their achievements in English and mathematics at least in line with the national average by:
 - extending strategies that allow pupils to reflect in lessons on their work and their teacher's marking not only in English and mathematics but across the whole curriculum
 - providing pupils with increasing opportunities to contribute in lessons and take more responsibility for their learning.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Children make a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage as a result of the good quality care and good teaching they receive. Most children begin school with knowledge and skills that are well below age-related expectations. However, the school is quick to ensure that provision is focused on developing children's personal, social and emotional development through good teaching that gives regular opportunities for children to take turns and play cooperatively together in a well-resourced learning environment. Parents and carers spoke positively in their questionnaires about their satisfaction with the school. One response captured the findings of this inspection and reflected the comments of parents. 'I am very happy with the school and would recommend it highly to other parents.'

Observations of pupils' learning in lessons and their work in books confirm that the school is now effective in ensuring all pupils and groups make at least good progress, relative to their starting points. Although pupils' attainment by the end of Key Stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics remains below average, any gaps are rapidly closing. Pupils throughout Key Stage 2 are similarly making good and sustained progress in developing their reading, writing and mathematics skills. As a result, pupils' attainment is drawing closer to the national average by the end of Year 6. This success is due to the very careful monitoring of pupils' individual progress that provides teachers with an accurate understanding of the skills pupils need to develop and the knowledge they need to acquire in order to maintain their all-round progress. Pupils' attitudes towards their learning have improved significantly and are now good. Pupils say they enjoy lessons, especially when given practical tasks to complete. For example, this was evident in a Key Stage 2 mathematics lesson when pupils had the chance to look for and discover right angles in the school buildings.

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Any variance in attainment between groups identified by the school as potentially vulnerable to underachievement is carefully monitored. As a result, all pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, receive appropriate support and remain on track to achieve their challenging end-of-year targets.

Quality of teaching

Pupils are making greater progress than in the past because the quality of teaching has improved significantly and lessons are now typically at least good. This is also the view of the majority of parental comments received by the inspector. All teachers are new to the school since the previous inspection. They possess good subject knowledge and work in close collaboration to plan lessons and provide a curriculum that more closely matches the needs and interests of pupils. Teaching also develops pupils' sense of enjoyment and fascination in learning about themselves, others, and the world around them. Pupils say they appreciate the efforts teachers put into making lessons fun. For example, in a recent 'careers day', members of local businesses, including a farmer with his tractor and sheep dog, came to talk with pupils and provide insights to the world of work. One pupil summed up the views of many by saying, 'We learn more by doing things like dressing up as scientists. It's fun!' The regular monitoring of pupils' progress provides teachers with reliable data that allow them to target interventions specifically at those pupils who need it most. The majority of parents' and carers' questionnaires indicate they are pleased with the progress their children are making and acknowledge the many changes that have taken place in the past year to improve teaching.

Teachers' marking in books has been a major focus for improvement and has been successfully introduced across the school. It is supportive and highly focused on providing pupils with guidance on how to improve their work in English and mathematics. All pupils now have regular opportunities to reflect on their work and respond to their teachers' carefully written comments. All staff are committed to this process which is why pupils are making such secure progress in developing their core skills. However, senior leaders are also aware of the need to develop this good practice into other subjects so that pupils might begin to take more responsibility for all aspects of their learning. Similarly, opportunities for pupils to take a more active role in planning activities that closely match their needs and interests are in the early stages of implementation.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, adults are confident in the delivery of daily phonics sessions (linking letters with the sounds they make) that provide children with regular opportunities to develop secure reading and writing skills. Children's attitudes to learning are good and the children are frequently excited by the activities provided for them, which is helping them to develop good attitudes to learning. For example, following an introductory mathematics lesson about shape, children showed sustained concentration and carefully cut up real pizzas and cup cakes to show they understood about halves and quarters.

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Behaviour and safety of pupils

The behaviour of pupils in class and around the school is good. A scrutiny of behavioural records, discussions with pupils, and responses by parents and carers show that this is also the case over time. The inclusive culture within the school is evidenced through its effective commitment to pupils' spiritual, social, and moral development. Pupils' behaviour is not outstanding because some pupils still require significant support from adults to maintain motivation and concentration in lessons. Opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their learning are in the early stages of being developed. The school is fully aware of the need to encourage all pupils to take a growing self-responsibility for their learning. To this end weekly assemblies explore an aspect of learning, such as resilience, and then teachers incorporate these messages into their lessons to reinforce the strategy. This approach has been highly successful in improving pupils' attitudes to learning. As a result, for the majority of time, pupils are fully engaged in lessons and they are beginning to contribute with a growing confidence their own ideas and opinions.

The school works successfully with other agencies where necessary to support pupils whose circumstances or learning needs may make them vulnerable. Parents and carers reported that standards of behaviour are typically good in the school and believe that all reasonable steps are taken to keep their children safe. One parent summed up the majority by writing, 'Since my child has been at this school her confidence, learning and behaviour has been outstanding.' Pupils report that bullying in any form is rare. They are confident that the school keeps them safe and ensures that they understand what constitutes unsafe situations and they have a good awareness of internet safety. One pupil commented, 'It's really good here because teachers are strict on bullying and they deal with it straight away.'

Adults work effectively together in the Early Years Foundation Stage to provide a stimulating learning environment for children, both indoors and outside, so that children develop their basic skills effectively across all areas of learning. Throughout the day, staff are vigilant for the safety and well-being of pupils and take every opportunity to support and reinforce expectations of good play and behaviour. Similarly, in lessons, teachers plan creative activities that grasp and maintain pupils' good concentration.

Leadership and management

The new executive headteacher has successfully appointed a cohesive team of enthusiastic and highly aspirational professionals who are demonstrating the ability to provide mostly the right learning experience for all pupils. Regular and rigorous monitoring of all aspects of the school's work now promotes a culture of high aspiration and self-challenge. The recent federation with another small local primary school has had a markedly beneficial impact on community cohesion within the local community and beyond. The school's administrator is exceptionally vigilant in keeping records and close communications with parents and carers. All adults are

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appropriately trained and regularly updated in the procedures for safeguarding pupils. Consequently, the school cares and provides very well for the safety of all pupils.

The newly-formed federated governing body plays a significant role in the life of the school. Members know the school well, carry out their responsibilities efficiently and rigorously hold the school to account. Self-evaluation is accurate and, with effective communication systems well established, these enable the school to channel its energies with growing success in providing a good curriculum that promotes pupils' strengthening spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. Leaders and managers have successfully addressed the areas for improvement identified at the time of the previous inspection. The school's commitment to equality is evident, for example in the incisive actions taken to improve attendance since the previous inspection and to reduce the achievement gap for pupils identified as requiring additional support. These actions demonstrate the school's capacity for further improvement is good.

Through the federation and links with the local community, the school makes good use of the local environment to ensure pupils have regular opportunities to play an active part in the wider community. Parents' and carers' questionnaire responses confirm parents and carers hold positive views on the school. A few raised concerns on the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) regarding inappropriate behaviour. These were shared with the school and, where appropriate, are commented on in this report.

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.

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23 March 2012



Dear Pupils

Inspection of Bearnas Voluntary Primary School, Newton Abbott TQ12 2AU

Thank you for making me welcome when I came to inspect your school recently. In particular, thank you to those of you who completed the questionnaire, shared your work and spoke with me about what you think about your school. It was all very helpful. I have decided your school has improved a lot since the previous inspection and is now a securely good and improving school. Here are some of the best things about the school.

Your headteacher and all the staff work very well together and care effectively for you all. They monitor very well the good progress you all make in your learning. Your teachers plan lessons that you find interesting and they help you to think carefully about your learning. I was very impressed with how many of you are developing 'learning journeys' to help you reflect on your work and that of your class mates. In this way you are gaining a clearer understanding of what you need to do next to improve your work. Also, younger children settle quickly to learning and make good progress because adults help them to learn effectively, even while playing. Your attitude to learning is positive and your behaviour around the school is good. Also, your attendance has improved a lot. Well done and keep it up!

There are just a few things I would like your school to do further to help you reach higher standards in English and mathematics. I would like your teachers to maintain high expectations for all of you in lessons and provide more opportunities for you to become involved in marking and reviewing your work in other subjects, not just in English and mathematics. I also think you are ready now to take more responsibility in planning for what you learn about in lessons. In this way, you will develop the skills necessary to become even more successful learners. Of course, you all have a part to play yourselves by working hard and encouraging everybody to get better each day.

I wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

David Edwards
Her Majesty's Inspector

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