

# Parracombe Church of England Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	113382
<b>Local Authority</b>	Devon
<b>Inspection number</b>	357333
<b>Inspection dates</b>	18–19 January 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Peter Clifton

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	25
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Vacant
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jayne Peacock
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	12 June 2008
<b>School address</b>	Parracombe Devon EX31 4QJ
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one additional inspector. The inspector visited six lessons and observed three teachers. Meetings were held with members of the governing body, staff and pupils. The inspector talked to pupils in lessons and at break times. He observed the school's work and looked at school documentation, including development planning, monitoring information and evidence of safeguarding procedures, and pupils' books. He analysed 20 responses to the parents' questionnaire and took account of the views expressed by parents and carers during informal meetings and conversations.

The inspector reviewed many aspects of the school's work. He looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Whether the progress and learning of different groups of pupils is improving and leading to higher attainment.
- How well partnership working across the federation is enhancing learning opportunities for pupils and stabilising provision at the school.
- How effectively work challenges different groups of pupils in the mixed-age classes, and use of targets by pupils.
- The strength of curriculum planning to engage the pupils' interests, including the use of information and communication technology (ICT).

## Information about the school

This is a much smaller-than-average-size school serving the local village and rural community. The school is part of the West Exmoor Federation with two other schools at Lynton and Kentisbury. There is an executive headteacher, who leads the federation, and one governing body. The Chair of the Governing Body resigned at the end of December having moved away from the area. At the time of the inspection the governors had not yet met to elect a new chair. This is the second smallest school within the federation. Staff within the federation work across the different sites. For three days per week, Early Years Foundation children are taught at the school in the same class as Year 1 and 2. For the other two days, along with pupils from Years 1 and 2, they are taught alongside pupils of similar ages at Kentisbury Primary School. The proportion of pupils who are known to be entitled to free school meals is below average. All pupils are of White British origin. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average.

**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

Parracombe is a good school where pupils achieve well. Attainment is broadly average but rising because pupils are making good progress, particularly in the upper years, and the Early Years Foundation Stage. Children in Reception benefit considerably from the joint working arrangements with Kentisbury school. The inspector agrees with parents that their children feel safe and are well cared for and supported. Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning and nearly all say they really enjoy coming to school. Their behaviour in lessons is consistently good and sometimes outstanding.

Pupils show pride in their school and many express themselves with considerable assurance. They have a natural curiosity and interest about the local environment. Pupils get on noticeably well together and there is a strong family atmosphere. They say there are disagreements but they help to sort these out amicably. They have a very strong sense of valuing each other's differences and being treated fairly. However, their understanding of others from different cultures and backgrounds within the United Kingdom is underdeveloped. Leaders are rightly aware that planning to improve this area is at an early stage of development. Several pupils comment how much they like mixing with others from across the federation because this enables them to have more friends.

There is a purposeful learning atmosphere in lessons and teachers manage the pupils well. Planning to meet the needs of each pupil in lessons is based on a secure understanding of strengths and weaknesses. Learning usually moves on at a brisk pace but there are occasions when this slows, for example, when ideas are not moved on quickly enough for the more able pupils. Pupils have individual targets to help them to understand what they need to do to improve, but they are not using these sufficiently well to assess their own work and set personal goals. The curriculum is well organised and offers some memorable experiences. For example, during the inspection visitors brought in a barn owl and discussed conservation work. However, information and communication technology (ICT) is not used on a regular enough basis to support learning in different subjects.

The executive headteacher of the federation, with active support from the governing body, has taken positive steps to utilise the expertise of staff from across the federation for the benefit of the pupils at Parracombe. This has strengthened the quality of teaching and is improving learning at the school. Coordinators have led successful initiatives, for example, to improve writing, mathematics and science. The school's success in strengthening provision since the previous inspection and a continuous drive for improvement demonstrate the school's good capacity for sustained development.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make learning more individual by:

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Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

- developing the use of targets in lessons, giving more opportunities for pupils to assess their own work and set themselves goals.
- strengthening the use of ICT.
- Ensure that learning in lessons consistently moves on at a brisk pace.
- ♦ Develop pupils' understanding of others from different cultures and backgrounds within the United Kingdom by finalising and implementing a plan to strengthen the school's work in this area.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****2**

Children typically start school with skills, knowledge and understanding that are in line with those expected for their ages, although this fluctuates with the very small numbers in some years. Attainment at Year 6 over the past three years in English, mathematics and science has been broadly average. However, the most recent results were stronger and in the current Years 5 and 6 pupils are working consistently at or above age-related expectations. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make similar progress to other pupils. Teaching assistants provide valuable individual support, for example, in reading, and this is helping pupils to accelerate their progress. Pupils tackle mathematical investigations confidently and write well for a range of purposes.

While pupils maintain their concentration well to complete tasks, their presentation of work is not always as good as it should be. During the inspection, good learning was observed in all classes. Older pupils persevered well to develop multiplication skills and applied these with assurance to a new method which is used widely in Ethiopia. In Years 1 and 2, pupils use speaking and listening well to develop their ideas for writing. Older pupils gained in confidence when using new computers to draw information from the internet about the structures of houses.

Pupils say that behaviour is good nearly all of the time and the inspector agrees. They feel safe and listened to by adults. Pupils are clear about the possible dangers of using the internet and procedures to keep them safe on visits. They play sensibly together, often enjoying energetic games in the playground. Pupils know about the sort of foods they should be eating and the take-up of healthy school dinners is good. Many take part in extra clubs and activities which include sport, although a few comment that they would like to use the playing field more regularly. There are a number of activities which are promoting a good understanding about the environment, including growing food and making bird feeders. Pupils comment that the link with the school in Uganda has given them insight into how fortunate they are. Their personal development and acquisition of core skills prepare pupils well for the next stage of their education.

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*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	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
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

<sup>1</sup> 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?

Planning is distinctive for different levels of ability within the mixed-age classes. Teachers frequently use questioning well to promote thinking, giving time for the pupils to discuss their ideas with each other and respond in depth. Older pupils in particular 'spark' ideas off each other, confident that their views will be respected. Time is used effectively because pupils respond quickly to requests. However, there are a few occasions when the pupils are kept together as a single group for too long, and when this happens, the learning of some pupils slows. Pupils know their individual targets but are not being given sufficient opportunities to decide for themselves what they have achieved in their work and to identify personal goals.

Provision to promote aspects of pupils' personal development, including being safe and keeping healthy, is good. Learning is made relevant by making links between subjects. Key skills, for example investigation and problem solving, are planned for effectively as the pupils move through the school. Provision has been improved through better opportunities for pupils to use mental mathematics skills, and the use of 'blueprint' plans to help with extended writing. Spelling and grammar are supported well through a daily 'phonics' session. The use of computers to support learning and research is underdeveloped, mainly because of weaknesses in resources, which have recently been upgraded.

Pupils and their parents are known individually and given a warm welcome on arrival at the start of the day. There is currently no pupil in the school who is persistently absent

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and regular attendance is promoted strongly through newsletters. Arrangements for children starting school in the Early Years Foundation Stage are flexible. Enhanced arrangements are in place to ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or difficulties make a smooth transition to secondary school.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has been supported effectively by strong teamwork across the federation and this has been a major factor in the school's successful drive for continuous improvement. Staff have embraced new ideas and sharing of expertise is now embedded. This has benefited Parracombe School because there is a larger pool of expertise to draw on which has stabilised what the school can provide. Leaders track the progress of all pupils closely and take swift action to prevent anyone from falling behind. Provision to secure equal opportunities and tackle discrimination for all pupils is good because gaps in the performance between different groups are closing.

The governing body has been influential in determining a strategic direction for the federation and close working relationships. Their review and evaluation of community cohesion and safeguarding arrangements are satisfactory. Safeguarding duties are met, and staff training in relation to child protection in place. However, the school is aware where safeguarding procedures need to be further improved. It has yet to have a coordinated approach to deepen pupils' understanding of their wider community within the United Kingdom. Leaders are fully aware that some parents are not convinced about the benefits of working in the federation and have taken a number of positive steps, including meetings and an 'open door' policy, to allay any concerns that remain.

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*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make good progress and by the time they join Year 1 most reach or exceed levels expected across the areas of learning. At both Parracombe and Kentisbury the children play with each other confidently and are learning to take turns. Letters and their sounds are taught well and used to help the children read simple words. Writing opportunities are woven securely into play activities. For example, at Kentisbury, the children much enjoyed using chalks in the outside area to write messages. At Parracombe the children wrote party invitations and on receiving one, a child said, 'That's wonderful.' Adults in both settings promote good use of language through engaging the children in conversation. The children made particularly good progress at developing their number and calculation skills because teaching was closely targeted to their needs and learning moved on briskly.

The outdoor learning area at Kentisbury is well developed to promote all areas of learning. The children much enjoyed riding on scooters and trikes and making bird feeders. At Parracombe this area is smaller and less well developed to promote learning. The children's development is carefully tracked through records and 'learning journeys' record 'wow' moments. There are many opportunities for parents to be involved with their children's learning through special events and meetings.



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*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
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

Questionnaires from most parents and carers, and those spoken to during the inspection, indicate that they think their children enjoy coming to school, are kept very safe and that teaching is good. The inspector agrees with these views. Several parents and carers wrote substantive comments giving their opinions. Some of these indicate that parents and carers value opportunities for their children to work with others of similar age in different schools. A few others indicate that communication with the school is not good enough and that they are dissatisfied with leadership arrangements. Some comments relate to the school 'having its own headteacher'. The inspectors looked at a number of newsletters, which were informative, regular and had a separate section with information specific to Parracombe. Meetings are arranged regularly for parents to find out more about how their children learn. The inspector was impressed by the way leaders work together across the federation to strengthen provision at Parracombe, and opportunities for the pupils from different schools to work with each other to share facilities, particularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Parracombe 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 20 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 23 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	8	40	12	60	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	10	50	10	50	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	5	25	10	50	3	15	2	10
My child is making enough progress at this school	5	25	12	60	1	5	2	10
The teaching is good at this school	5	25	14	70	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	3	15	12	60	1	5	4	20
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	4	20	11	55	4	20	1	5
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)	5	25	14	70	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	5	25	12	60	2	10	1	5
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	4	20	14	70	2	10	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	3	15	12	60	1	5	4	20
The school is led and managed effectively	4	20	7	35	4	20	5	25
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	6	30	11	55	3	15	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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

## 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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



20 January 2011



Dear Pupils



**Inspection of Parracombe Church of England Primary School, Barnstaple EX31 4QJ**




Thank you for welcoming me to your school and for talking to me so readily about your work. You expressed your views with great confidence. You go to a good school, and I agree with you that the teaching is good and you are well cared for. Here are some of the things I particularly liked about your school.

- Children make a good start in Reception and benefit from going to Kentisbury to learn.
- Your positive attitudes and good behaviour help you to learn well. You express your views with great confidence and are proud of your school.
- Your behaviour in lessons is good and sometimes excellent. You help each other to learn.
- You get on well together and there is a distinctive family atmosphere.
- Your teachers provide you with many different and interesting activities to help you to learn.
- Your headteacher and other leaders have worked closely together to ensure that your school has improved.

To help you make even faster progress, I have agreed with your headteacher that you need help to use targets more to assess your own work and have better opportunities to use computers. We have also agreed that your teachers will be asked to make sure that your learning always moves on briskly. Lastly, we have agreed that you need more opportunities to work with others from different backgrounds and cultures, for example, in different schools.



You can help your teachers by always doing your best work. 

Yours sincerely



Peter Clifton  
Lead inspector

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