

Lynton Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113451
Local Authority	Devon
Inspection number	357354
Inspection dates	18–19 January 2011
Reporting inspector	Martin Kerly

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	86
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Vacant
Headteacher	Jayne Peacock
Date of previous school inspection	11 June 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. They observed eight lessons and saw three teachers, held meetings with pupils, members of the governing body and staff, and informally met parents and carers at the start of the day. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation including the school's plans, policies, records of progress made by the pupils and 33 completed questionnaires received from parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following.

- Recent trends in the rate of pupils' progress and any differences between that of boys and girls.
- Reasons for a decline in attendance and the effectiveness of the school's work to improve it.
- Developments in the curriculum and the increased use of information technology.
- Steps being taken to improve partnerships with parents and carers and the school's contribution to promoting community cohesion.
- The impact of working within a federation on the effectiveness of leadership and management.

Information about the school

The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school. Pupils are taught in three classes each containing two or three year groups. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage share a class with pupils in Years 1 and 2, although they spend much of their time in a separate room. Almost all pupils are White British. There are more pupils with special educational needs and statements of special educational needs than usually found in a school of this size. These needs vary and include specific learning difficulties, speech and language, emotional and physical difficulties. The school is part of the West Exmoor Federation of three schools formed four years ago with Parracombe Church of England Primary and Kentisbury Primary. The federation has an executive headteacher and one governing body. Staff within the federation work across the different sites. 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.

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 is a good school. It is on a sustained journey of improvement and almost all aspects of its performance are good. Pupils make good progress, often from low starting points, and attainment is rising in all the core subjects. The pupils' personal development, including their behaviour, is good, and there are effective systems to ensure all pupils are cared for, guided and supported. Those pupils whose circumstances mean they may be regarded as vulnerable are particularly well catered for. While most of the parents and carers who replied to the inspectors' questionnaire are pleased with all aspects of the school's work, the school does not have the confidence of the parent/carer body as a whole. A small minority disagree with different aspects including the implications of being in a federation and a perceived reluctance by the school to respond to their particular concerns related to their children's needs. During this inspection, inspectors found the school is committed to working in partnership with all parents and carers. They also found many of the school's strengths, including the leadership and the stimulating curriculum, are being enhanced through the effective workings of the federation and the sharing of staff expertise.

Good progress by children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is built on well in older pupils' classes in reading, writing, mathematics and science. This is a result of good teaching and learning, and a stimulating curriculum which motivates and captures pupils' interests. However, despite these improvements and the good progress by pupils with special educational needs, relatively few of the more-able pupils attain standards above those expected for their age, and in a few lessons, their work at times is not sufficiently challenging. Although pupils enjoy school, the levels of attendance have declined and are marginally below the national average. The school is determined to reverse this and to work closely with families and outside agencies. The school plays a pivotal role in the local community and contributes well to community cohesion locally. However, it is aware that links beyond North Devon are more tenuous and its own evaluation has rightly identified the need to strengthen pupils' understanding of the cultural diversity across the United Kingdom.

The school is well placed to continue to improve. It has effective systems for checking all aspects of its performance involving a wide range of staff, the governing body and partners. These give it an accurate view of its strengths and weaknesses. It uses the information well to plan for improvements within the school and across the federation. Such planning has led to sustained improvements, for example in improving the access to computers and ensuring a stimulating curriculum.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of pupils attaining above national expectations for their age in English and mathematics by June 2012 by ensuring all teachers:
 - use time in lessons imaginatively to enable the more-able pupils to work at an appropriately challenging level
 - provide sufficient time and guidance for all pupils to reflect on their learning and to be clear about their next steps to improve.
- Work closely with families and professional agencies in order to improve attendance to the national average by December 2011.
- Strengthen the effectiveness of the school's work in promoting community cohesion by:
 - establishing effective partnerships with, and gaining the full confidence of, parents and carers
 - extending the opportunities designed to help pupils gain a fuller understanding of the cultural diversity of communities across the United Kingdom.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Attainment is rising and progress is good. Pupils achieve well and enjoy the interesting and varied activities provided. Their attainment on entry to the Early Years Foundation Stage is below that expected nationally. Until recently, despite secure and sometimes good progress in their first few years in school, attainment at the end of Year 2 remained below average in reading, writing and mathematics. Evidence from lessons, pupils' books, work displayed in classrooms, discussions with pupils and the school's detailed assessment records show pupils' progress well, as seen for example when pupils were learning to write and interpret explanation texts about African animals. Boys and girls do equally well, and pupils at the end of each key stage are now working at levels securely in line with national expectations. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities respond well to the carefully planned additional help from skilled teachers and teaching assistants. Almost all of them make good progress and many 'narrow the gap' with their peers by the time they leave the school. A few of the more-able pupils make satisfactory rather than good progress in some lessons when they find themselves tied to a whole-class activity rather than being able to work at something more challenging.

The school has a number of schemes to encourage pupils to attend school very regularly. However, attendance is a little lower than in most similar schools. There are very few persistent absentees, and some absences are related to family holidays which are taken outside the normal tourist trade season.

Pupils report feeling safe in school and appear confident that staff would intervene quickly and sensitively to help them deal with a problem if it arose. They know about the importance of adopting a healthy lifestyle and most talk knowledgeably about the contents of their lunch boxes and the need to avoid too much chocolate. A Healthy Schools award has been received in recognition of the school's good work in this aspect. Pupils are keen to take on responsibilities around school and become involved in local activities such as the Light-up Lynton Festival. Many help with conservation projects, including recycling and

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composting in school, and the federation councillors, who regularly meet pupils from the other federation schools, talk proudly of their work towards obtaining an Eco Green Flag award. Within their overall good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, pupils' social development is very strong, with boys and girls, and older and younger pupils, playing, learning, and eating happily together at different times of day. Their cultural development is less well developed, particularly in relation to the diverse cultures found across the United Kingdom.

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	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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 curriculum has improved significantly since the last inspection as a result of very effective long- and medium-term planning. It is broad and balanced, is planned to ensure progression of key skills and, wherever possible, as in the current theme of Africa, makes meaningful links between subjects. Leaders and teachers share their plans across the federation exceptionally well, enabling pupils to benefit from a much wider group of professionals' expertise and enthusiasm than would normally be the case in a school of this size. The very recent installation of substantial additional computer technology equipment is helping teaching and learning, and there are advanced plans to provide further staff training to enable them to make the very best use of this new equipment. There is a good balance between enriching special events, such as the visit of conservationists with a barn owl during the inspection, and well-structured, routine

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intensive teaching and learning. A good example of this seen is the daily phonics session when all pupils, in small groups, learn about letters and their sounds to support their reading and writing.

Teachers plan interesting lessons and usually make good use of the skilled and experienced teaching assistants. The new computer equipment is already enhancing the quality of teaching and learning, as seen for example when older pupils were able to see different types of four-digit decimal numbers grouped and re-grouped on a large screen, or when in a phonics session a teacher was able to retrieve on the screen the notes from the previous lessons to remind pupils what they had been learning the day before. There are effective systems for assessing pupils' understanding day to day and over longer periods. Teachers use their assessments well to ensure that most work is carefully tailored to the wide range of abilities in the mixed-age classes. However, on occasions, the more able are required to listen to lengthy explanations and introductions, or to join in review sessions at the end of lessons, rather than work at more challenging tasks. This slows their rate of learning. Pupils are becoming more involved in assessing their own learning and teachers mark work carefully and in detail, frequently providing much useful guidance on how to improve. However, pupils are not given sufficient time or encouragement to reflect on these comments or practise the ideas suggested.

There are good arrangements for the care, guidance and support of pupils throughout their time in school, including sensitive and sometimes individually tailored induction and transition arrangements. The school is successfully deploying an innovative therapeutic approach as part of a local pilot project to strengthen further its work to support potentially vulnerable pupils and this is enabling them to thrive during their time in school. The extensive provision for pupils with special educational needs is well managed with early identification and carefully targeted intervention. Parents and carers replying to the inspectors' questionnaire were confident that the school keeps their children safe and this was endorsed by the pupils in their conversations with the inspectors.

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	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher, supported well by other leaders within the school and across the federation, has a clear vision for the continuous improvement of the school. The united staff team are clear about the sense of direction within the school and their role in this. There are detailed and frequent checks on all aspects of the school's work involving staff and governors, including observations of practice, and discussions with pupils. The school successfully promotes its declared commitment to equal opportunities and careful analysis

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of the progress by individuals and groups of pupils is used to ensure any variations in performance are quickly addressed. These features support the school well in its capacity to improve further. The governing body has played a key role in developing and strengthening the work of the federation. It is kept well informed by the headteacher, other leaders and visits to school, enabling it to ask probing questions and hold the school to account for its actions. There are comprehensive procedures designed to safeguard all pupils and these are implemented rigorously, including recruitment of staff, first aid arrangements and site security.

The promotion of an effective working partnership with the pupils' families and wider community cohesion remain two aspects that are satisfactory rather than good. The school has a number of procedures intended to support the working partnership with parents and carers, with frequent newsletters and opportunities for meetings with staff. Examples include the recent mathematics workshop and the detailed homework learning packs that pupils take home. However, it is clear from the small turnout at some of the meetings, and the strength of feeling from a few parents and carers expressed in the inspectors' questionnaires, that the school is yet to gain the confidence and support of the entire parent/carer body. Further afield, the school has identified the need to strengthen pupils' awareness of the wider community across the United Kingdom. While the bi-annual trip to London is a good feature, the school is yet to have a coordinated approach to deepen pupils' understanding of communities beyond their own locality.

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	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children get off to a good start. Careful and sensitive induction arrangements enable them to quickly feel confident and at ease in school, and they soon begin to make significant progress, as seen when a small group were enjoying sounding out newly learnt letters

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found in words to describe a picture of Cinderella. Children enter the school with skills and abilities that are below those typical for their age, particularly in their personal and social development and early language skills. Historically, they have remained a little below expectations by the end of the year, but in the last two years their attainment has risen. Last year a higher than normal proportion attained all the learning goals expected for this age. This good progress reflects the good teaching, learning and assessment. The teacher, who also manages the learning for pupils in Years 1 and 2, along with the teaching assistant, and helped by the skilled Early Years federation leader, has introduced good systems for observing, assessing and recording each child's learning. This is enabling effective planning from day to day. There are times when the children are in a large class with the older pupils in Years 1 and 2, and although sometimes this provides good role models, there are a few occasions when the activities are not sufficiently tailored to their particular needs, and this slows their learning. The designated secure outdoor area is small and this restricts the range of experiences routinely available to the children. The school is aware of this and is considering ways of improving the children's access to a larger area to improve the opportunities and extend their learning.

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

Almost all the parents and carers responding to the inspectors' questionnaire reported that their children enjoy school and the school keeps their children safe. The very large majority were also positive about the teaching and learning, the care and guidance and their children's good personal development, especially their understanding about adopting healthy lifestyles, and they concluded that overall they are happy with the school. Inspectors endorse these positive views. However, a small minority expressed serious concerns about some aspects of the school, including the leadership arrangements, especially in relation to the demands of the federation, a lack of effective communications and a perceived reluctance by the school to respond to their individual needs. During this inspection, the inspectors looked at a number of newsletters, homework guidance and the federation website, all of which are informative and have separate sections with information specific to Lynton. Meetings are arranged for parents and carers to find out more about how their children learn and the inspectors were impressed by the way leaders work together across the federation to improve the provision for all the pupils.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Lynton Church of England 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 inspection team received 33 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 86 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	19	58	13	39	1	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	15	45	17	52	1	3	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	12	36	16	48	2	6	2	6
My child is making enough progress at this school	12	36	14	42	3	9	1	3
The teaching is good at this school	13	39	13	39	3	9	1	3
The school helps me to support my child's learning	13	39	14	42	2	6	1	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	13	39	18	54	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)	10	30	19	57	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	11	33	18	54	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	9	27	16	48	2	6	2	6
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	12	36	15	45	1	3	2	6
The school is led and managed effectively	9	27	16	48	3	9	3	9
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	13	39	14	42	4	12	1	3

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).

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">■ 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.



25 January 2011

Dear Children

Inspection of Lynton Church of England Primary School, Lynton EX35 6AF

Thank you for helping us when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed talking to some of you and looking at your work. You told us you like school and that it is a good place to be. We could see why. It is indeed a good school. We were impressed by the way you all get on together. Here are some of the things we particularly liked.

- You enjoy nearly all your lessons, work hard and make good progress. This is because teachers plan interesting things for you to do and regularly think carefully about any extra help some of you may need.
- Your behaviour is good in lessons and at such times as assembly or playtimes.
- You know a lot about conservation and recycling, and your federation councillors were proud to tell me about new ideas you have to get a special award for this.
- The headteacher and other leaders work closely together, with the support of the governors, to think of ways to keep improving the school.
- The links with Parracombe and Kentisbury Schools and the joint activities, such as the trip to London, help to make a difference for you all.

We have asked the headteacher, staff and governors to work together on three things to make the school even better.

- Ensure that teachers help more of you to attain even higher standards by providing more ways to challenge those of you who find your work relatively easy, to give you all enough time to think about how to improve and to consider what teachers have written when they have marked your work.
- Work together with your families and other experts to reduce the number of days many of you are absent from school.
- Find ways of working in partnership with your families and help you to get to know more about people's lives across other parts of the United Kingdom.

All of you can help by continuing to work hard and by doing your very best to come to school every day.

Yours sincerely

Martin Kerly

Lead inspector

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