

# Tidcombe Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	113339
<b>Local Authority</b>	Devon
<b>Inspection number</b>	357322
<b>Inspection dates</b>	2–3 February 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Joyce Cox

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>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	187
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Neil Hamlin
<b>Headteacher</b>	Simon Green
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	3 February 2011
<b>School address</b>	Marina Way Devon EX16 4BP
<b>Telephone number</b>	01884 252973
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspection team observed nine teachers and visited 15 lessons. They held meetings with members of the governing body, staff and pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at the school improvement plan, assessment information, teachers' planning, pupils' work and safeguarding procedures. They also analysed questionnaires returned by 90 parents and carers, 24 staff and 83 pupils.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The impact of the measures taken to raise pupils' attainment in mathematics and writing
- How successfully staff use assessment information to meet the various learning needs of all pupils, with special focus on boys and pupils with special educational needs.
- The quality of the indoor and outdoor learning experiences for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- The extent of pupils' knowledge and understanding of different faiths and culture and of life for children in other parts of the United Kingdom and globally.

## Information about the school

This is a slightly smaller than average primary school. There are seven classes in the school, and Nursery and Reception children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in a unit called Tidcombe Sunbeams. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those with a statement of special educational needs is broadly average. Pupils are mainly of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is slightly lower than average. There is a privately run daily breakfast club. This is not managed by the school's governing body and is not part of this inspection.

A new headteacher was appointed in April 2010.

**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?**

**3**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

Tidcombe Primary School provides a satisfactory standard of education. It is a rapidly improving school and has made significant strides forward since its last inspection and the arrival of its new headteacher. The impact of his good leadership can be seen in improved teaching and in pupils' accelerated progress and rising attainment, all of which demonstrate a good capacity for further improvement.

The 2010 test results for Year 6 pupils show that attainment has risen compared to previous years and is average in mathematics and reading and slightly below in writing. Assessment data for the current Year 6 pupils show that they make at least satisfactory progress and are on course to attain average standards in the 2011 national tests. Boys' achievement in writing is lower than girls' and the school has introduced effective strategies to remedy this. Pupils' progress over time and their learning are satisfactory, and increasingly good, especially in the Year 3, 4 and 5 classes. Staff, the members of the governing body and leaders at all levels have a much improved capacity to measure pupils' attainment and achievement and to track their progress in all subjects. The headteacher and the governing body carry out detailed and reflective school self-evaluations to improve all subjects and aspects.

Effective support and guidance help ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make sound progress. Pupils behave well and most are keen to learn. Their spiritual, moral and social development is good. There is an increasing amount of good teaching but too many lessons are only satisfactory and so pupils do not make consistently good progress. In some lessons observed, In teachers' expectations of what pupils can do are too low. The quality of marking varies and does not always tell pupils how they can improve their work.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage have a good start to school life. Provision for the youngest children is also improving rapidly and many aspects are good, although increased outdoor activities are required. The warm and caring relationships in the school help all pupils feel safe and secure. The school works effectively with outside agencies to ensure that all pupils, especially the most vulnerable, are cared for well.

Virtually all parents and carers who replied to the inspection questionnaire said they held the school and the new headteacher in high regard. One parent commented, 'Hats off to the headteacher who has made a fantastic impact on this school which has bloomed under his leadership. Behaviour, deportment and general tidiness have improved significantly. Pupils are more respectful and things are also starting to improve on the learning and teaching side.'

About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

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

- Improve the quality of learning in lessons and accelerate pupils' progress by:
  - conducting all lessons at a lively pace
  - making sure pupils do not sit for too long listening to teachers talking
  - giving all groups of pupils sufficiently challenging and exciting and engaging work.
  - ensuring that planned activities are focused sharply on meeting the learning needs of all pupils
  - improving the quality of marking so pupils know how to improve their work.
- Improve the outdoor provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage even further by:
  - providing increased chances to explore and investigate, and establishing an outdoor role-play area.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

<b>3</b>
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All groups of pupils, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, achieve satisfactorily and make sound progress. Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills that are below those expected for their age. Over the last few years, the school's track record shows that by the time pupils leave Year 6, their attainment has been below average. However, because of improved teaching and better use of assessment information, pupils' attainment has risen steadily to broadly average levels in 2010.

Observations during the inspection show that pupils work hard and behave well in lessons where the teacher has high expectations and keeps them actively engaged in their learning. However, pupils' learning in some lessons is only satisfactory because the learning intentions are not planned carefully enough and activities are not exciting or challenging enough. All pupils spoke positively about their teachers and teaching assistants, although a small number said they would like harder work to do. Staff are currently working hard to raise pupils' achievement in mathematics and writing. Year 6 pupils say they would like more challenging work, especially in literacy. They like the small group work in mathematics which 'helps us develop knowledge and bridge gaps'. However, they say they do not like the mixed Year 5 and 6 groups for mathematics and English. Staff work hard to support pupils who have specific, and sometimes quite complex, difficulties and barriers to their learning. These pupils, often amongst the most vulnerable in the school, learn successfully and make equally satisfactory progress.

All pupils say they feel safe in school because 'any problems are sorted out straightaway now. They are taken seriously and dealt with'. They comment that most pupils behave really well and say that 'behaviour is much better since our new headteacher came'. Pupils have a good awareness of the need for sleep, exercise, healthy food and drink, drug avoidance and good hygiene. They say they enjoy growing their own vegetables and cooking and eating their own produce in soups.

Pupils are proud of, and committed to, their school community. Many older pupils have a leadership role in the school such as helping with assemblies, being librarians and

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answering the phone at lunchtimes. All pupils have a strong voice in decisions relating to their well-being and learning through the school council and they say the headteacher always listens to them and cares about them. Pupils are involved in several projects in community events such as a local litter pick, and during the inspection they received a visit from the local mayor and his attendants.

French is taught throughout the school and pupils develop a good understanding of French language and culture. Pupils' attendance is satisfactory and the school has successfully reduced the number of persistent absentees since the last inspection. There are established links with an inner city school and pupils enjoy receiving letters and photographs from their London pen pals. Pupils' satisfactory academic skills and good personal skills mean they are soundly prepared for later life and learning.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
<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>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<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?**

Relationships between teachers and pupils are predominately respectful and caring, which helps to create calm classrooms. Good teaching was observed in some classes where lessons are conducted at a smart pace and teachers have high expectations for all groups of pupils. Assessment information is used well in these classes to plan the next steps in learning and, consequently, pupils make good progress. However, this high quality is not seen consistently throughout the school. Although teachers' plans detail the activities pupils are to undertake, they do not always make it clear what pupils are expected to

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learn during the lesson. Consequently, in some cases activities are not focused precisely enough on pupils' learning. Because expectations are occasionally insufficiently high, work given to pupils sometimes fails to provide enough challenge. In some lessons, there is too much teacher talk and insufficient time for pupils to engage in practical or exciting activities.

The headteacher and staff are currently working to improve the curriculum. This is manifest in the way pupils are increasingly exploring curriculum areas and making meaningful links between subjects. However, teachers' ability to link different subjects varies throughout the school. Art is a strong feature within the curriculum and many pupils said they enjoyed the subject and spoke confidently about artists such as David Hockney and Friedensreich Hundertwasser. There is a good range of lunchtime and after-school clubs run by staff, parents and the wider community. During the inspection Year 5 pupils played rousing brass band music as part of a local community partnership. Pupils in the Year 3 to 6 classes have good opportunities to attend residential visits to London Wembworthy Forest, Paignton Zoo and Heatree Activity Centre, where they learn teamwork and many new skills in exciting and challenging situations.

Pupils receive good care because each pupil is known and valued. Effective induction arrangements enable Nursery and Reception children to settle quickly. Older pupils have many chances to visit their local secondary school. Staff provide good support to pupils with additional needs. Good partnerships with outside agencies ensure that any pupil requiring additional support, for whatever reason, quickly gets it. One parent commented, 'My child has been given a lot of help and support by all the teachers and teaching assistants. My child is always happy and is totally involved in all aspects of school life.'

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

The headteacher's skilled and enthusiastic leadership has been instrumental in creating an increasingly ambitious staff team who want to improve the outcomes for all pupils. He has the highest expectations for staff and pupils and had clearly conveyed his vision for school improvement to staff, governors, parents and carers and pupils. A constant comment from all groups of pupils is, 'We're all working hard together to improve this school.' Staff morale is good and there is a strong sense of commitment from staff and governors.

The headteacher has instigated a number of successful measures to begin to raise pupils' achievement and attainment. However, while these initiatives have been successful in improving teaching and learning in some classes, there is not enough consistently good teaching throughout the school. Precise information on pupils' progress is increasingly

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being used more rigorously to hold teachers to account for the progress made by their pupils and to provide support for those pupils who are not making enough progress.

The governing body provides good support and challenge to the school. Governors evaluate their work carefully and are constantly looking for ways to improve. They have attended training so that they are in a much stronger position to support the headteacher in evaluating pupils' attainment and achievement. They are not afraid to ask challenging questions if pupil tracking indicates underachievement. The strong links with external agencies to provide support for potentially vulnerable pupils show the school's strong commitment to equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination, which enables all pupils to achieve satisfactorily, whatever their circumstances or difficulties, and breaks down any barriers that might hinder their learning.

The system for tracking pupils' academic progress is effective so that any pupil who is not making enough progress is identified quickly and support is put in place. Safeguarding policies and risk assessments are of a good quality and constantly reviewed to ensure pupils' safety at all times. The headteacher and staff have worked hard to build strong partnerships and trust with parents and carers and this is reflected in the high parental questionnaire returns. Many parents and carers wrote to praise and thank the school and, in particular, the new headteacher.

Community cohesion is successfully promoted at a school and local community level. Pupils have a developing understanding of life for pupils in other parts of the United Kingdom and there are plans in place to improve pupils' knowledge and understanding of life in different global communities.

*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	3
<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>2</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>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>



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## Early Years Foundation Stage

Most children enter the Nursery with skills that are below those of other three-year-olds, especially in their language development. Good leadership and management, effective teaching and loving care ensure that most children achieve well, although not all attain the expected levels for their age on entry to Year 1. The Early Years Foundation Stage leader has successfully evolved a way of tracking children's progress from the time they start Nursery till the time they leave Reception. She has also correctly decided to separate the Nursery and Reception children every morning so she can concentrate on providing good learning and development opportunities to the older children whilst the nursery teacher can concentrate on ensuring the youngest children have appropriate play and learning activities. Reception children do well in learning to say sounds and recognise letters because of skilful teaching with good use of the interactive whiteboard to capture children's interest.

Staff make learning fun and enjoyable and children work together well. For instance, during the inspection, children were engrossed in their topic called 'Once upon a time'. They have helped design and make an attractive swan and a cygnet as part of their learning about 'The Ugly Duckling' and are clearly enthralled with wolves at the moment after listening to 'Little Red Riding Hood'. Children's interests and ideas are valued and linked to their learning. Parents are also involved as they record 'WOW' moments that have happened at home.

There is a superb mix of carefully planned adult-led and child-selected learning. The outdoor area immediately outside the classroom is quite small. It has been refurbished and provides good outdoor learning opportunities for small groups of children. Staff take all the children outdoors daily to play and learn in the playground and ensure they experience outdoor activities in all the areas of learning. This is mostly successful as staff are enthusiastic play partners and promote children's language and social development successfully. There is a need to extend this by expanding the Forest School area so children can explore and investigate in a larger space.

Reception and nursery staff have a good knowledge and understanding of the personal and learning needs of young children. Consequently children make particularly good progress in their personal, social and emotional development. A strong partnership is quickly formed with parents and carers. A pre-school group called 'Tidcombe Toddlers' meets weekly in the Early Years Foundation Stage, which is an ideal way for parents and carers and their children to be introduced to the school and each other. Parents are very happy and feel their children have a 'good start'. One parent commented, 'My child settled in really quickly and loves Nursery, which can only be a credit to the staff.'

*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	2

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Stage	
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## Views of parents and carers

Almost two thirds of the 127 families at the school responded to the questionnaire, which is an above average proportion. Parents and carers expressed high levels of satisfaction with many aspects of the school. All parents and carers feel that their children enjoy school, that they are informed about their child's progress, that teaching is good and that their children are well prepared for the future. They also all believe that the school meets their child's particular needs, that the school is led and managed effectively and that they are happy with their children's experience at this school. Inspectors agree with most of the parents' and carers' positive views. However, they found that the quality of teaching varies throughout the school and although there is some good teaching, it is satisfactory overall. A small number of parents and carers raised other concerns which were summarised and raised with the school without identifying any individual.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Tidcombe 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 90 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 187 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	64	71	22	24	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	60	67	29	32	1	1	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	44	49	43	48	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	49	54	37	41	2	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	51	57	38	42	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	42	47	43	48	1	1	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	43	48	45	50	1	1	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)	39	43	45	50	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	51	57	37	41	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	39	43	45	50	1	1	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	36	40	42	47	1	1	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	54	60	35	39	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	63	70	27	30	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	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.**



4 February 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Tidcombe Primary School, Tiverton, EX16 4BP**

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school. We enjoyed coming into lessons and talking with you about school life. We have judged your school to be giving you a satisfactory standard of education.

These are the things we found out.

- You enjoy school, feel safe and your behaviour is good.
- Teachers help you to make satisfactory progress in your work.
- Nursery and Reception children have a happy and successful start to school life.
- Your headteacher is a good leader and many of you said how much you liked him and you told us how he has improved the school in so many ways.
- You have good relationships with your teachers and you work hard for them.
- You go to a caring school. Everyone has your best interests at heart and wants you to be safe and happy, and to do as well as you can.

We have asked the headteacher, staff and governors to do two main things to help the school improve further.

- Help teachers to make sure you always have good lessons, and to always take care to tell you how to make your work better, and so help you make even more progress in all subjects.
- Enhancing the outdoor learning experiences for Nursery and Reception children so they have more chances to investigate and explore.

You can help by always working hard and continuing to behave well. We wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Joyce Cox Lead inspector

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