

Bearnes Voluntary Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113400
Local Authority	Devon
Inspection number	357339
Inspection dates	3–4 March 2011
Reporting inspector	Geoff Cresswell

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	46
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Yvonne Short
Headteacher	Nicky Dunford (Acting)
Date of previous school inspection	14 January 2008
School address	Queen Street Newton Abbot Devon TQ12 2AU
Telephone number	01626353980
Fax number	01626 353980
Email address	admin@bearnes.devon.sch.uk

Age group	4–11
Inspection dates	3–4 March 2011
Inspection number	357339

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

T: 0300 123 4234

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2011

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one additional inspector. The inspector observed 11 lessons led by four teachers. Meetings were held with members of the governing body, the acting headteacher, members of staff and a group of pupils. The inspector observed the school's work, and looked at school planning, assessment and attendance data, samples of pupils' work and a number of policy documents. The inspector received 22 questionnaires from parents and carers and also evaluated those from pupils and school staff.

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

- The degree to which the school's plans to boost progress in English, mathematics and science in Key Stage 2 are successful.
- The effectiveness of teachers in challenging more-able pupils to achieve as well as they can.
- The effectiveness of the curriculum and lesson planning in enabling pupils to be competent and confident in applying basic skills by the time they reach Year 6.
- The success of the school in meeting the needs of new pupils who speak English as an additional language or have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Information about the school

Bearnas Voluntary Primary School is much smaller than most schools for primary age pupils. Most pupils come from White British families and nearly all speak English as their main language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is also above average. The range of additional needs is wide and includes learning or behavioural, social and emotional difficulties.

Since January 2010, the school has had an acting headteacher. She is also the headteacher of a nearby primary school with which there is a management partnership. In the last year, there have been a number of staff changes. Three of the four current teachers are new to the school this term. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in a Reception class along with pupils from Year 1 and Year 2. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 are taught together in a single class, as are pupils from Years 5 and 6.

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?

4

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a notice to improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to attainment in English and mathematics, rates of attendance and the ability of pupils to apply basic skills.

Accurate self-evaluation has enabled the school to recognise these weaknesses and, in the last 12 months, decisive action has been taken to address the issues. The low attainment of pupils in Year 6 is a consequence of insufficient progress as they moved through Key Stage 2. ♦ Recent measures have been successful in improving pupils' progress in reading, writing and numeracy, particularly in Years 5 and 6, where progress in these aspects is good. The improvements have been achieved through rigorous tracking of progress by the acting headteacher, who has ensured that individual pupils are targeted for improvement and measures are taken to improve teaching and learning to meet pupils' needs. However, the increased rate of progress has not been sufficient yet to raise the attainment of pupils in Year 6 to average. These pupils still have too many gaps in their knowledge and understanding. Similarly, although a number of good opportunities are provided for pupils to use and apply the basic skills being taught, such as a project studying the history of the school, they are not yet sufficiently confident or competent in applying these skills.

Decisive action has been taken and comprehensive systems established to reverse the downward trend in attendance over the last few years. Again, actions have resulted in success. The number of persistent absentees has dropped dramatically and the attendance rate, whilst still too low, is rising.

A stimulating outdoor area has been made for Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 pupils. Along with effective teaching, this motivating learning environment enables pupils to make good progress during their first three years in school. This is an improvement since the last inspection and is a consequence of the work of the leader for the Early Years Foundation Phase in partnership with the acting headteacher. Another improvement since the last inspection is that more-able pupils now receive work that is appropriately challenging.

Pupils feel safe in the school and incidents of inappropriate behaviour have decreased considerably in the last year because thorough procedures have been put in place to deal with recurring issues. Improvements in the playground facilities have helped in this respect and pupils have taken more responsibility by acting as play leaders.

Although the new members of staff have still to begin contributing to the vision for improvement, the acting headteacher has successfully used the management partnership

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

work to develop all aspects of provision. She has been effective in targeting the most important areas for improvement, in particular accelerating progress in Years 5 and 6 and ensuring that significant progress is being made. In this, she has been ably supported by the governing body and the Early Years Foundation Stage leader. As a result of these indicators, the school has satisfactory capacity to improve further. ♦

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in English and mathematics to at least average by:
 - involving Key Stage 2 pupils in their own learning by giving them more opportunities to discuss together in lessons and evaluate their own and each other's work
 - extending the many stimulating writing activities from Years 5 and 6 lessons at an appropriate level to Years 3 and 4
 - teach number in Key Stage 2 in the context of measuring, shape and space, data handling and 'real life' problems.
- Improve pupils' ability to apply basic skills by:
 - devising topics in the curriculum for Key Stage 2 that offer clear opportunities for pupils to use their skills across subjects
 - planning individual lessons so that skills are not taught in isolation, but are given a purpose and a use, either in that lesson or as the outcome of a series of lessons.
- Improve attendance so that it is at least broadly average by:
 - rigorously pursuing existing strategies and evaluating their effectiveness before the end of the current school year
 - giving parents and carers of pupils whose attendance is not high enough opportunities to come into school and become more involved in their children's learning.
 - making school more motivating for pupils by giving them more opportunities to investigate, problem solve and make decisions about their work.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**4**

Progress through Reception and Years 1 and 2 is good for all groups of pupils. A determined focus on the development of personal, social and emotional skills secures good progress and engenders a positive attitude to learning from all the pupils, clearly evident in the enthusiasm shown during lessons. Year 1 and 2 pupils are also developing a good degree of independence and confidence, readily involving younger pupils in their activities in a positive manner.

Progress is slower in Years 3 and 4, although still satisfactory. The pupils are more dependent on the teacher and do not have an expectation that they will discover things for themselves. This passivity limits progress and is also present in Years 5 and 6. However, in these classes, despite some pupils lacking self-confidence, learning accelerates again because the pupils take part in more stimulating and imaginative

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

activities. For example, a discussion surrounding the water cycle held all the pupils' interest and stimulated numerous questions as they studied the sky for clouds and tried to find the direction of the wind. Progress in science is satisfactory. ♦ Pupils are developing a sound understanding of a balanced curriculum based on first-hand experiences.

The small number of pupils who have behavioural, social and emotional difficulties occasionally struggle to take part in lessons, especially when they perceive that they are failing or not making progress. In all cases observed, they joined in again quickly due to skilful handling by the teacher, and the learning of others was not disrupted. Around the school, pupils' behaviour is orderly, creating a calm environment. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are enabled to make at least satisfactory progress relative to their starting points. The effectiveness of the teaching assistants plays a big part in this.

Pupils for whom English is an additional language are acquiring English quickly. They are happy, motivated and working hard. All pupils take opportunities to contribute to the smooth running of the school, acting as monitors or helping with younger children. Pupils enjoy and talk enthusiastically about involvement in the community such as singing in the choir. The School Council has not yet developed into a strong voice for improving the school.

Pupils are active during the school day and exercise well. They understand what constitutes a healthy lifestyle, but do not always apply this to their choice of food and do not consider themselves to be particularly healthy. Pupils have a good understanding of their own culture, enhanced by the partnership with a village school. Other cultures do not feature as strongly in their thinking, but they do reflect on their behaviour and the pupils' sense of right and wrong is well developed. Spiritual awareness is part of their experience but does not feature strongly. Younger pupils in Reception and Key Stage 1 are developing social awareness well.

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

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	4
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	4
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
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	4
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	4
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

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?

Teaching is satisfactory overall. In Years 1 and 2, teaching and learning are characterised by a consistent drive to provide small groups with sessions that hone in on the particular needs of that group. These sessions are informed by detailed records of pupils' progress so that they are given work at the right level of difficulty to develop their learning from the previous lesson. Teaching assistants are used effectively to enable small groups to progress well. Teaching and learning in Years 3 and 4 are not tailored as closely to the needs of the pupils. Assessment of pupils during the session is not as astute; for example, in a literacy session, it was not picked up that many pupils were copying information directly from a text without fully understanding what they were writing about. Teaching throughout the school enables the more-able pupils to be stretched, and one Year 6 boy commented that this is what he enjoyed most about school. The lessons are also characterised by good relationships, contributing to the good motivation of the pupils and their desire to please the staff. The teaching of reading is effective. Meticulous records are kept and group reading is used effectively to develop skills. Some marking helps the pupils to improve, but this quality is not consistent throughout the school.

The curriculum offers some interesting and exciting enrichment activities for the children. A number arise from the partnership with the nearby village school, such as the residential course for pupils from both schools. The pupils are very appreciative of the good variety of

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

extra-curricular activities available. The curriculum is not, however, planned in such a way as to give pupils specific opportunities to apply the skills that they are learning.

There is a good ethos of care in the school. This contributes to the high number of pupils who are confident that they are safe in the school. Pupils questioned were confident that an adult would deal effectively with any problems that they faced. Academic progress is tracked meticulously by the acting headteacher, but, as yet, the children are not known well by all adults because of the recent arrival of several staff.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The governing body has acted decisively to create an effective management partnership with a nearby school. Members of the governing body have the ambition and resolve to see further improvements in the school. This drive is exemplified in the acting headteacher, who has proven to be resilient and rigorous in her determination to see the school improve. There are a few recently appointed members of the governing body. This is focusing the drive for improvement on a core of members. However the governing body recognises this and has put a mentoring system in place to train the new governors. There is a similar issue regarding leadership amongst the staff. Whilst English and the Early Years Foundation Stage are led well by experienced staff, three of the new staff have not yet had the time or experience to contribute to the improvements.

The recent significant improvements in teaching and monitoring ensure the school is promoting equality of opportunity. For example, the school has been rigorous in tracking the performance of individual pupils and tackling any issues that arise. Systems are now well established and give the school a full picture of each pupil. No particular group of pupils is failing to receive its entitlement with respect to other groups. Progress of all groups is at least satisfactory and the information about pupils has been used effectively to make important improvements. Thorough systems are in place to monitor discrimination, and incidents are acted on and recorded promptly. Safeguarding procedures and practice are very thorough and efficient. Risk assessments are detailed and extensive.

The school has used the management partnership with the nearby school very effectively to promote community cohesion, bringing together families who, though close geographically, live in very different environments. The school has undertaken a thorough audit of the way it promotes community cohesion and has prioritised action. Since this has only taken place in the last twelve months, the impact of the plan has not been felt. At present, the improving provision has not had time to raise the outcomes for pupils

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

sufficiently, and the effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money is inadequate.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	4

Early Years Foundation Stage

The strength of the Early Years Foundation Phase lies in the high expectations of its leader. These are communicated to the children who respond well and make good progress. The teacher has created a vibrant atmosphere where children are clearly enjoying the learning process. They enthusiastically choose activities on a learning board, sticking their names next to the appropriate activity and developing independence in the process. They are making good progress in learning to cooperate with one another, helped by the expectation that learning is a shared activity. Basic skills in numeracy and literacy are developing fast through well-focused teaching that is pitched at the right level of difficulty. Imaginative activities are set for these focused times, such as the joint building of a tower whilst counting bricks to the beat of a drum. The school's multi-sensory approach is a strength of its provision.

The well planned outdoor environment ♦ provides good opportunities for developing play that is directed by the children, although sometimes the adults supporting this play do not stimulate the learning with challenging questions. Meticulous records are kept of the progress made by children and there is a good degree of care for the individual wellbeing of pupils, who take part in activities in a safe and secure environment.

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

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

Over half of the parents and carers returned the questionnaires. In the written comments, a few praised the good quality of care provided by the school. However, a very small minority considered that the communication from the school was not enough and were concerned at the high turnover of teaching staff. The inspection found that useful information is now regularly communicated to parents and carers. The high turnover of teaching staff has meant that the new staff have not yet contributed significantly to recent school improvements or gained detailed knowledge of the pupils. The parents and carers had most agreement with the effectiveness of the school in dealing with unacceptable behaviour and the help given to the children to have a healthy lifestyle.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Bearnas Voluntary Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspector received 22 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 46 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	10	45	7	32	3	14	2	9
The school keeps my child safe	13	59	4	18	2	9	1	5
My school informs me about my child's progress	10	45	4	18	1	5	4	18
My child is making enough progress at this school	10	45	6	27	5	23	1	5
The teaching is good at this school	11	50	5	23	5	23	1	5
The school helps me to support my child's learning	11	50	3	14	1	5	4	18
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	10	45	9	41	3	14	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)	7	32	5	23	3	14	3	14
The school meets my child's particular needs	12	55	3	14	5	23	2	9
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	8	36	10	45	2	9	1	5
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	9	41	4	18	1	5	4	18
The school is led and managed effectively	11	50	3	14	3	14	2	9
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	14	64	1	5	5	23	2	9

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.



8 March 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Bearnas Voluntary Primary School, Newton Abbot TQ12

Thank you for being so friendly when I came to school recently. These are some of the good things I found from my visit.

- Your school building has improved a lot in the last year. ♦ One of you even described it as 'new school'. It is particularly good that Class 1 has an outside area for you to play in.
- The Reception children are making a good start in Class 1.
- You know how to keep each other safe and you feel safe in school.
- Most of you are making good progress with your reading, writing and number work.
- Your headteacher has a good understanding of how well you are doing and what you need to do to improve.
- Your teachers do not give you work that is too easy.

However, the school is not doing as well as it could and has been given a 'notice to improve'. This means that there are some important things that need to be done. There are two things that the school should do to make sure you do really well in all your work.

- You should have more time to discuss ideas together in lessons and the chance to work out how well you are doing yourself instead of the teacher always telling you.
- You should use some of the things that you learn to do in order to help you to solve problems, investigate or present your work for someone else to see.

You can always do your bit to make sure you come to school in the morning ready to do your best.

An inspector will be visiting you again to see how well you are doing. I hope you do well in your school work.

Yours sincerely

Geoff Cresswell

Lead inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.