

Exbourne Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113410
Local Authority	Devon
Inspection number	357342
Inspection dates	15–16 June 2011
Reporting inspector	Alex Baxter

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	Aliaster Hegarty
Headteacher	Julie M Luckhurst
Date of previous school inspection	7 May 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one additional inspector. The inspector visited nine lessons and various group activities taught by four teachers. The inspector observed the school's work, attended an assembly, observed break times, evaluated before- and after-school activities, and held meetings with representatives of the governing body, staff, pupils, and parents and carers. The inspector looked at plans and policies, records of assessments and the tracking of pupils' progress. In addition, questionnaires completed by 24 parents and carers and 25 pupils were analysed.

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

- The consistency in the quality of teaching and learning, particularly through Years 3 to 6, especially in developing literacy and numeracy skills.
- The use of assessment to meet the needs of individual pupils, especially the more able, and accelerate their progress.
- The work of new leaders and managers, including the governing body, in bringing improvements, including in pupils' achievements.

Information about the school

This is a very small village primary school. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in a mixed Reception and Years 1 and 2 class. The remaining pupils are taught in two groups during the morning; Years 3, 4 and 5 in one group and Years 5 and 6 in another group, and they come together to form one class during each afternoon. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. Currently all the pupils attending the school are of White British heritage and there are no pupils who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. A new headteacher commenced her duties in September 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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Exbourne is a good school, which provides a secure welcoming environment in which pupils feel valued and develop self-confidence. The school is emerging well from a period of change, during which, for the first time in almost a decade, there has been substantial change in the staffing and leadership of the school. This academic year, determined leadership by a new headteacher, aided by a new Chair of the Governing Body and relatively new teachers, has brought a fresh approach, which is building well on the positive attitudes to learning within the caring community, established securely by previous leaders.

The headteacher has re-kindled a fully shared and effective commitment to continued improvement, a drive which is also clearly evident in the governing body's decision to federate with four other schools later this year. Accurate use of assessment and good quality self-evaluation means that Exbourne is again an improving school, a view expressed enthusiastically by the parents and pupils interviewed. As a result, improvement is evident in the pupils' above-average attainment, which represents good achievement, including by pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. In particular, the significant acceleration in pupils' progress in mathematics, especially by more able pupils, and the continuation and wider use of strengths in pupils' speaking and listening and computing skills to advance learning across the curriculum, also show a good capacity for sustained improvement.

Improvement is also promoting good teaching and learning, including more effective use of assessment through Years 3 to 6, to meet pupils' needs and to check their progress. These enable children to make a good start in Reception and to continue their good progress through the school. By identifying clear learning objectives teachers are also improving pupils' writing, which increasingly shows above-average attainment across most age groups. However, inconsistent learning by some older pupils at various times in the past means that writing skills are broadly average currently in Year 6 and reflect satisfactory progress. On occasion, teachers spend too much time in lessons leading whole-class discussions, including in Reception. This reduces opportunities for pupils to develop as independent learners as they move through the school, and this slows the progress for some. In contrast, pupils have good opportunities out of lessons to contribute to the school and community, especially through the large and very active school council. For example, by offering ideas, taking responsibility for charitable events and school garden areas and by managing the library, playtime equipment and the 'tuck shop', pupils are contributing to school improvement and are becoming well prepared for their future economic well-being.

Children behave well and develop a good understanding of how to stay safe and keep fit and healthy. Good safeguarding arrangements and good care, guidance and support,

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which includes excellent pastoral support from very caring adults, help pupils feel safe and greatly enjoy school. Good links with parents, carers and others widen the breadth of pupils' learning experiences, help to underpin their positive attitudes and have contributed well to the pupils' quickly improving and now average attendance.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' writing skills by the end of Year 6 by:
 - raising expectations of good handwriting and well-presented work
 - ensuring that pupils have more time to write, especially imaginatively, about the things that interest them the most.
- Improve the development of pupils' independent learning skills as they move through the school by:
 - ensuring that teachers spend less time in whole-class discussions so that pupils have more time to learn by following their own lines of enquiry strengthen the way adults in Reception develop new learning from the children's self-chosen activities.
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Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Although the children's levels of knowledge and skills vary from year to year, most children are working at the levels expected for their age when they start school in Reception. Increasingly, as this year, children enter with good levels of general knowledge. The children's enjoyment of school and willingness to learn with and from each other, promoted well in all classes, underpins their good achievement. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, more able pupils and, now, equally boys and girls make similar progress to their peers, in relation to their differing needs and starting points. This is because teachers use assessment well to make sure that learning objectives match pupils' abilities. Typically in most lessons seen this meant that pupils understood the relevance of what they were learning and by making connections with previous work contributed willingly, either by answering teachers' questions or confidently posing their own. For example, in an English lesson in Years 3, 4 and 5, pupils showed high levels of engagement and learnt well as they excitedly offered and exchanged ideas about the storms at sea which led to 'The Wreck of the Zanzibar'. Such enthusiasm also underpinned the good learning seen in all the numeracy lessons observed, for example, in a Years 5 and 6 mathematics lesson, where the pupils' good understanding of fractions and percentages underpinned their lively paired discussions about probability. At times in all classes, too much of the learning is adult led and this limits the pupils' ability to learn for themselves. For similar reasons in Year 6, some pupils show less enthusiasm and ability in writing. This is partially because of previously slowed development of handwriting and punctuation, but also because of lengthy discussions, actual writing begins too late in some lessons.

Pupils say that they feel safe and talk knowledgeably about healthy eating and the importance of exercise. They enjoy physical activities in lessons as well as at playtimes

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and lunchtimes and participate well in a good range of sports clubs. Pupils behaved well around the school, and often in the lessons seen their behaviour was exemplary. Whilst several pupils mentioned in their questionnaires that on occasion behaviour is not always good, all of those interviewed said that it had improved this year. Pupils contribute well to the school and to the local and wider community, particularly out of lessons, by raising money for a range of charities, for example, 'Children in Need'. Discussions in lessons and during assemblies show that pupils reflect thoughtfully upon some of the broader issues in life, such as caring about other people and respecting their values. The pupils' good achievement, numeracy and social skills prepare them well for their future economic well-being.

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	2
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	2
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?

In most lessons, teachers adapt their teaching methods well to match pupils' interests and understanding. This was particularly evident in the small group or one-to-one language support given to pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. It was also seen in the guided reading sessions and during mathematics lessons, where the consistent emphasis on building new learning on children's interests and ideas also underpinned good learning. In all classes, adults used assessment of pupils' progress and their close knowledge of individual pupils well to challenge them through sharp questioning. In addition they lifted pupils' confidence by valuing their responses to move learning forward.

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This was seen, for example, in a mathematics lesson in the Years 3, 4 and 5 class where close discussion about place value led to pupils adding four-digit numbers accurately. Similarly in the Reception and Years 1 and 2 class, the teacher's skill in developing pupils' understanding through precise questioning and encouraging pupils to share ideas with 'talk partners' successfully extended their ability to tell the time. However, on occasion, the pace of learning slows because too much adult-led whole-class teaching limits pupils' ability to initiate their own learning activity or to engage more quickly in writing and other practical activity.

Teachers use visits out of school and base learning on topics, such as 'Coasts' and 'The Sea', which by linking subjects together in this way are successful in using and extending pupils' literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills. At times, though, insufficient time is allocated for independent research and writing. Even so, the curriculum is enhanced by a good range of popular extra-curricular activities which promote the pupils' positive attitudes to learning and good adoption of healthy living. As an integral part of the school's good overall care, guidance and support, pastoral care is a strong feature supporting the pupils' love of school. Good partnerships with outside groups help to ensure good provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and contribute to the regular safeguarding checks which keep all pupils safe. Good relationships and improving communication with parents and carers contribute to pupils' enjoyment of school and are successfully raising attendance, which has varied in the recent past.

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?

After a difficult period of change, leaders and managers have established a good drive and ambition to improve the school. This is evident in the headteacher's accurate monitoring of the work of the school, which identifies the right priorities for improvement, seen, for example, in the pupils' higher attainment in mathematics. The governing body's intention to take the school into a federation of schools in readiness for the next academic year also reflects a decisive commitment to further improvement. Currently though, the governing body is undergoing a period of change and is soon to be replaced by one body representing five schools. This has weakened the role of governance in monitoring the school and in challenging the school's leadership on pupils' achievement. Even so, safeguarding checks are securely in place and, for example, safe recruitment of staff and risk assessments of premises and trips ensure that pupils' welfare is secured well.

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The school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination well, as seen, for example, in the equally good progress made by pupils, now including those with more ability, as they move through the school, which also represents good value for money. The school promotes community cohesion well, especially through regular participation in church and other local events, such as singing at the market and dancing in the village fête. Frequent contributions to charities, such as the Haitian Earthquake Appeal, and work undertaken and different communities experienced during residential and other visits ensure that national and international aspects of community are also covered effectively.

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	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
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	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

After a difficult period of change, leaders and managers have established a good drive and ambition to improve the school. This is evident in the headteacher's accurate monitoring of the work of the school, which identifies the right priorities for improvement, seen, for example, in the pupils' higher attainment in mathematics. The governing body's intention to take the school into a federation of schools in readiness for the next academic year also reflects a decisive commitment to further improvement. Currently though, the governing body is undergoing a period of change and is soon to be replaced by one body representing five schools. This has weakened the role of governance in monitoring the school and in challenging the school's leadership on pupils' achievement. Even so, safeguarding checks are securely in place and, for example, safe recruitment of staff and risk assessments of premises and trips ensure that pupils' welfare is secured well.

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church and other local events, such as singing at the market and dancing in the village fête. Frequent contributions to charities, such as the Haitian Earthquake Appeal, and work undertaken and different communities experienced during residential and other visits ensure that national and international aspects of community are also covered effectively.

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

There was a slightly above-average response rate to the questionnaire. Most parents and carers, including those who spoke to the inspector, expressed positive agreement with all the statements. A majority of the written comments were equally positive and are endorsed by inspection findings, typically for example, 'I think we are all very lucky to have such a good local school.' A small minority of parents and carers expressed disagreement about how the school deals with unacceptable behaviour and there were a few others who expressed concerns. The inspector noted recent improvements and found that concerns about the management of pupils' behaviour were not evident during this inspection.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Exbourne C of E 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 24 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	42	12	50	2	8	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	14	58	8	33	2	8	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	14	58	10	42	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	11	46	8	33	3	13	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	14	58	10	42	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	10	42	10	42	3	13	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	8	33	14	58	2	8	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	42	11	46	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	10	42	9	38	2	8	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	7	29	10	42	5	21	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	9	38	14	58	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	8	33	10	42	3	13	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	10	42	11	46	2	8	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	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 2010 to 31 December 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 2010/11 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.



16 June 2011

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Exbourne Cof E Primary School, Okehampton EX20 3SQ

Thank you all for welcoming me so warmly and helping me during my recent inspection of your school. Particular thanks to the members of the school council and the group of pupils from Years 5 and 6 who talked to me so sincerely and informatively about the school. You told me that you are proud of your school and really enjoy coming to school because you have lots of friends and because the adults look after you so well. I was interested to hear how you have adjusted to recent changes and note your generally positive views in your questionnaire responses. I agree with you that Exbourne is a good school, which is now improving again.

These are the other main things I found.

- You make good progress as you move through the school and do particularly well in mathematics and show confidence and good skills when speaking and using computers.
- You are good at adopting healthy lifestyles, greatly enjoy sporting activities and know about healthy eating.
- You behave well and are good at learning in lessons and make very good contributions to school life out of lessons.
- Teaching is good and shows particular improvement in extending your numeracy skills. This is because adults give you specific lesson objectives and use questioning well to develop your ideas.
- Your headteacher, staff and governors work well together and with your parents and people out of school to make your learning interesting and to help the school to improve.

To help you to make even better progress I have asked the teachers to give you more opportunities to set up and follow your own learning activities as you move through the school. I have also asked the headteacher to give you more time to write, especially about the things which interest you the most.

You can help by showing the same enthusiasm and effort in writing as you do during discussions when talking about your ideas.

Yours sincerely,

Alex Baxter

Lead Inspector

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