

Watcombe Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	113233
Local authority	Torbay
Inspection number	395766
Inspection dates	18–19 June 2012
Lead inspector	Peter Clifton

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	268
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Nik Salter
Headteacher	Adam Morris
Date of previous school inspection	6–7 May 2009
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Peter Clifton	Additional inspector
Alan Jones	Additional inspector
Lesley Leak	Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Twenty-four lessons were visited and 10 teachers observed teaching. Meetings were held with staff, members of the governing body and groups of pupils. The inspector took account of the responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at documents including the school improvement plan, the school's information on pupils' progress, samples of pupils' work and information sent home to parents and carers. The responses to 46 questionnaires from parents and carers, 37 responses from staff and 90 pupil responses were examined and analysed.

Information about the school

This is an average-sized primary school with pupils. There are nine classes, including some with pupils from different age groups. Nearly all pupils are of White British heritage and there are few pupils from minority ethnic groups. The proportion of pupils who are supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above the national average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The Early Years Foundation Stage has a separate nursery and Reception class. The school shares accommodation with a private nursery and children's centre which are not managed by the governing body. They were not included in this inspection. The school has nurture provision which is targeted at pupils' social and emotional development. In last year's assessments at the end of Year 6, the school did not meet the government's current floor standards which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

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	3
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	3
Leadership and management	3

Key findings

- This is a satisfactory school. The school is not yet good because teaching is not consistently good and pupils’ achievement is no more than satisfactory. Children make a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.
- Standards of attainment are broadly average and achievement is satisfactory. Attainment in mathematics is average. Progress is being boosted by additional mathematics sessions and a focus on pupils using and applying their mathematics skills to solve problems. Initiatives to improve writing are helping to raise attainment. However, not enough is being done to help pupils reach the higher levels expected and to write at length. Pupils’ progress is at least satisfactory in all years. Additional targeted support for reading is having a good impact on progress.
- Teaching is satisfactory, although there are examples of good and outstanding practice. It is best in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in the upper end of Key Stage 2. The use of pupil discussion to enliven lessons and help engage the pupils in learning is a common feature in all classes. Planning is not consistently meeting the needs of different groups and there are occasions when learning slows because pupils are not challenged .
- Pupils’ are respectful and courteous around the school and at playtimes. This reflects strength in the school’s nurture provision. In lessons, there are instances of occasional low-level disruption. While most pupils work confidently in groups, a few find it difficult to work independently. Attendance is average and improving.
- The leadership of teaching and the management of performance are satisfactory. There is an appropriate range of support and professional development activities, including monitoring, to strengthen teaching. However,

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these have not been sufficiently robust to embed all of the necessary changes for improvement and ensure that teaching is consistently good. Pupils' progress is regularly tracked and additional support is well targeted.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching from satisfactory to good, by Summer 2013, by:
 - improving planning to meet the needs of different pupils, particularly more able pupils, and ensuring that learning moves on at a consistently brisk pace.
 - promoting better opportunities for pupils to work independently so that they become more involved in their own learning.
 - embedding good quality teaching through further opportunities for professional development and robust monitoring.

- Raise attainment in writing, by ensuring that initiatives are consistently implemented and provide further opportunities for pupils to write at length.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

A substantial proportion of children start school with skills, knowledge and understanding that are below expectations in communication, language, literacy and numeracy skills, and in their personal and social development. They make good progress through Nursery and Reception. In the current Reception, attainment is broadly average, although writing and calculation skills remain weaker areas. Nursery children count confidently to five and are learning about one more and one less. Reception children were seen to take turns in conversations, recite numbers to 20, and choose a variety of activities confidently.

Attainment in reading by the end of Year 2 is broadly average. While proportions of pupils on track to reach the expected Level 2 are above the national average, those expected to reach the higher Level 3 are below. Lower-attaining pupils in Years 1 and 2 use their knowledge of letters and their sounds to help read unknown words. Additional targeted support outside of lessons is enabling pupils in Year 1 whose progress has faltered to gain in confidence and fluency with their reading and make accelerated progress. Writing remains the weaker area and there are too few pupils working at the higher Level 3. Opportunities were missed, for example in Year 2, to help pupils who write confidently at Level 2 extend their writing towards Level 3, for example to write more complex sentences.

The pupils in the current Year 6 are now achieving closer to expected levels. Attainment in reading is broadly average and this represents at least satisfactory progress from their starting point in Key Stage 1. In writing, there are improvements in the way the pupils are developing openings and writing more complex sentences;

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however, attainment is a little below average because too few pupils are working at the higher levels. Inspectors matched writing seen in pupils' books in Year 6 to the school's tracking information and were able to verify its accuracy. This shows that the proportion of pupils on track to achieve the expected two levels of progress is at least in line with the national expectation. While there are some good examples of extended writing, this is not consistent across the school.

In mathematics, basic calculation skills are secure and problem solving and investigation skills are strengthening. Across the school, pupils use different methods appropriately to calculate, including mental skills and more formal written methods. Years 6 pupils, for example, worked out how much 'stock' would be left after a proportion had been sold. Different groups of pupils, with the encouragement of the teacher, chose to tackle this in a variety of ways.

Less-able pupils are frequently provided with additional support across the curriculum and this, together with the additional help to boost reading and numeracy skills, is helping them to make at least satisfactory and sometimes better progress. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make similar progress. Pupils' achievement is strongest in the upper end of Key Stage 2, where accelerated progress has been made. In Key Stage 1 and the lower end of Key Stage 2, progress is satisfactory.

Quality of teaching

Teaching is satisfactory because it promotes at least satisfactory and sometimes better achievement. Relationships in lessons are positive; there is a noticeably calm learning environment in the Early Years Foundation Stage and the upper end of Key Stage 2, where teachers show good class management skills. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, there is a very wide range of activities provided in 'choosing time', including in the outside area. Adults use this time well to develop the children's speaking and listening and their social skills in both Nursery and Reception. Children who find it difficult to concentrate for any length of time are supported effectively.

Planning typically identifies what must, should and could be learnt by different groups of pupils. However, activities are not always sufficiently fine-tuned to meet the needs of different pupils, including for more able pupils. The quality of support provided for different groups of pupils is inconsistent. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs made satisfactory progress in Year 2, for example when they were supported to identify adjectives to improve their sentences. However, in Years 5 and 6, they were supported well in choosing different methods to solve problems because misconceptions were checked and rectified. On occasions, too much direct support is given and this means that learning slows and pupils' independence is not sufficiently well promoted. This was observed, for example, in Key Stage 1 when less-able pupils were given too much support to do sums.

Outstanding teaching seen included the excellent use of letters and their sounds to sound out words using letter combinations in Reception. In this lesson, the pace of

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learning was brisk and purposeful and this led to high levels of engagement. Similarly, learning was excellent in Years 5 and 6, when pupils solved problems and wrote film reviews involving interesting openings. However, there are occasions when the pace of learning slows. Examples of this include lengthy turn-taking in Year 1, introductions which are too long, unchallenging work given to more-able pupils, and interruptions not being well managed in the lower end of Key Stage 2.

A common feature of lessons is the use of discussion to help develop thinking. This was used well, for example, in Year 2 when the pupils constructed electrical circuits, and in Year 4 to help write 'environmentally friendly' paragraphs and consider the merit of different connectives. The use of targets in lessons and through marking is satisfactory, although targets are not always precise enough or written in language the pupils can easily understand. In the questionnaires, most pupils indicated that they knew what to do to improve their work.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

The attitudes and engagement of pupils seen in lessons to a large extent depend on the nature of tasks set and management skills of the teacher. Where activities are stimulating and interesting, pupils respond well. Pupils were really proud of their 'Olympic' hats and the medals they received from their contribution to a Second World War day. In a nurture group activity, boys collaborated well and showed high levels of interest in art work. However, activities do not always engage the full attention of the pupils, particularly in group work when pupils are not given enough opportunities to do things for themselves. Calling out by the pupils is not always well managed and this occasionally slows the pace of learning.

Around the school, pupils are typically well behaved and polite. Older pupils spoken to felt they had a real voice in the school and were able to have some influence on decision making. Pupils say they feel safe in school, a view confirmed by parents. When inspectors asked pupils about bullying, they indicated that any that happened was 'dealt with straight away'. They know about various types of bullying, including that involving the use of information and communication technology or mobile telephones. The questionnaires from parents and carers, pupils and staff provided a generally positive view about behaviour, although some concerns were raised by all three groups.

Leadership and management

The headteacher and senior staff share a common goal to work together for the benefit of the pupils in the school. They have a good understanding of the pupils' social and emotional needs, and programmes to support these are a strength. Initiatives to improve reading and how well pupils apply their skills in mathematics have been largely successful. These have improved basic skills and secured better equality of opportunity for less-able pupils. However, equality of opportunity is only satisfactory because the provision for more-able pupils is not always sharply focused. While there are improvements in writing, weaknesses remain. Leaders can also point

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to an improving trend in attendance, including a decrease in the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent. Strengths in the Early Years Foundation Stage have been maintained. These successes demonstrate the school's capacity to improve.

There are appropriate strategies to improve teaching through support and monitoring. Nevertheless, inconsistencies in the quality of planning to meet the needs of different groups and in the implementation of initiatives remain. Expectations about what pupils should achieve are strong in some classes, but this is not consistent across the school. In the Early Years Foundations Stage, staff work well together and leadership is good. There are strong links with the private provision which shares some of the school's resources and with the children's centre.

The governing body provide a satisfactory level of challenge and support to senior leaders. They recognise that results in 2011 were not good enough and this prompted a strong challenge to senior leaders. They have been active in promoting good relationships with parents. Members have recently completed a safety audit and have clear understanding about their responsibility for safeguarding; arrangements meet statutory requirements.

Curriculum planning covers a broad range of activities and art is a strength in the school. Pupils are very complimentary about the range of extra-curricular activities on offer after school. Pupils' spirituality is promoted in assembly through opportunities for reflection. Links with a contrasting school have been established to develop pupils' awareness of others from different cultures and backgrounds. The questionnaires indicate that nearly all parents and carers would recommend the school to another parent and that they are kept well informed.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data 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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



20 June 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Watcombe Primary School, Torquay TQ2 8NU

We were all grateful to have the opportunity to visit your school and talk to you in your lessons and during play times. Thank you for being so helpful and for your responses to the questionnaire. Your school provides you with a satisfactory education. Changes have been made which are helping you to improve your reading, writing and mathematics. Your headteacher and other leaders have plans which will help you even more.

We visited quite a few of your lessons. Several of you told us in the questionnaires that behaviour was not good all of the time and we agree. Teaching in your school is satisfactory. This means that it can be better. We have asked your headteacher to ensure that the work you are given is at just the right level and that you are helped to learn in all the time available. We have also asked your headteacher to check more closely on how well you are taught in lessons. We particularly liked the 'Olympic' hats you had made and that you were proud of the medals you received from your contribution to a Second World War day.

We recognise that some of you need extra help in lessons and sometimes this is helping a lot. However, on some occasions you are given too much help. When this happens, you are not learning as well as possible. We enjoyed reading your work particularly in your 'big write' books and have asked your headteacher to ensure you get more opportunities to practise your writing skills in longer pieces of work.

You can help by always doing your best work in lessons and concentrating hard when asked by your teacher.

Thank you again for all your help and best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Peter Clifton
Lead inspector

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