

North Tawton Community Primary School

Exeter Road, North Tawton EX20 2HB

Inspection dates

5–6 December 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement It is not good because

- Although they are improving, senior leaders and governors have not focused strongly enough on ensuring that teaching and pupils' learning are consistently good.
- School improvement planning has lacked precision so it has not been possible to assess the progress being made towards targets.
- Judgements made about the quality of pupils' work are not always accurate. Teachers' expectations are sometimes too low, so pupils of all abilities in Years 1 to 6 do not make fast enough progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Too few pupils make better than expected progress because the targets they are set for improvement are not challenging enough.
- Teachers' marking varies too much between classes and pupils are not given enough information about what they have achieved, or clear guidance about what they need to do to improve.
- Pupils have too few opportunities in lessons to take charge of their own learning.

The school has the following strengths

- Children make good progress in the Reception class. The stimulating activities they experience ensure they enjoy their learning and develop good levels of independence.
- Pupils feel safe at school. They are polite, courteous and well behaved, and assume responsibilities in a mature manner.
- Pupils' punctuality and attendance have improved considerably. Attendance is now above average.
- Relationships between adults and pupils in the school are good. The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 14 lessons, of which two were joint observations undertaken with the headteacher.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils and observed them during playtime and lunchtime. Pupils' work was scrutinised and inspectors listened to pupils from Years 1, 2 and 6 read.
- Meetings were held with staff including senior leaders, members of the governing body and a local authority representative.
- Inspectors took account of the 44 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), the school-based parent survey, and the views of parents and carers spoken to at the school during the inspection.
- A number of school documents were scrutinised. These included those relating to the support provided by the local authority, safeguarding, attendance, teaching and learning, curriculum planning, the work of governors and the school's own pupil progress and attainment data.

Inspection team

Alison Cogher, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Bill James

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- North Tawton Community Primary School is smaller than most primary schools.
- The overwhelming majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding provided by the government) is average.
- At 11% the proportion of pupils supported through school action is just above average. The proportion of pupils supported through school action plus or a statement of special educational needs is in line with national averages.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By July 2013, improve teaching in Years 1 to 6 so that is consistently good or better and enables all pupils to make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics, by ensuring that teachers:
 - have high expectations of pupils and that activities in lessons enable all pupils to improve their knowledge and skills
 - improve the quality and consistency of marking so pupils understand clearly what they have done well and what they need to do to improve
 - provide pupils with more opportunities in lessons to work independently and in small groups without close direction from adults.
- By July 2013, improve the impact of school leaders on the performance of pupils and staff by ensuring that:
 - the school improvement plan has clear targets that are to be met within a set period of time, so that progress towards achieving them can be measured
 - information about pupils' attainment is accurate and is used to set challenging targets for improvement, that progress towards achieving these targets is checked frequently and, if necessary, lesson activities are modified so they always meet pupils' needs.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- The achievement of all pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, and those in receipt of the pupil premium funding, requires improvement. Pupils make steady progress but too few are making at least good progress over time. Across Years 1 to 6, there is no marked difference in the progress made by different pupil groups.
- Over the last year, the progress made by pupils in Years 1 to 6 has shown some improvement because the targets set for them have been raised, but expectations are still not high enough.
- Children start in the Reception class with skills and abilities below those expected. They make good progress in all aspects of their learning. The large majority leave Reception at the level expected and are well prepared for their work in Year 1.
- The school's results in the 2012 national tests showed that pupils' attainment by the time they leave the school is broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics. There is no significant difference in the attainment of pupils who are eligible for pupil premium funding and that of other pupils.
- Improvement in the teaching of the sounds that letters make is helping pupils to make better progress in reading and writing. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are enthusiastic about reading and confidently attempt to work out unknown words using their knowledge of letter sounds. This confident approach is also evident in their writing, where they make good attempts to spell all the words they need to complete their sentences.
- Improved teaching is securing better progress in lessons. In the best lessons, pupils make good progress because activities capture their interest and teachers encourage them to apply and develop their skills. For example, pupils in Year 2 looked at real fish to stimulate their imagination as they thought of similes to describe them. This resulted in sentences such as 'the skin is like a sparkling Christmas star', and 'the eyes are like dark blue puddles'. Pupils demonstrate similar confidence when reading and writing in Years 3 to 6.
- Over time, pupils' progress in mathematics in all year groups is similar to that found for reading and writing. In the lessons observed, pupils made good progress when tasks were well matched to their interests and abilities and they were able to use what they already knew to move their learning forwards.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Some good teaching was seen during the inspection in all classes for pupils in Years 1 to 6. Teachers regularly make judgements about pupils' attainment, although these judgements vary in accuracy between classes and do not always reflect the quality of pupils' current work. Consequently the targets set for pupils and lesson activities are not matched sufficiently well to pupils' needs and do not enable all pupils to make the progress of which they are capable.
- Planning for the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics has improved in all classes in response to the training and support provided by leaders, and through teachers working together to devise consistent approaches throughout the school. Planning for pupils to use these skills in other subjects is not yet consistent across the school.
- Teachers mark pupils' work regularly but the quality of marking varies between classes. Too often teachers do not explain in clear, simple language what pupils have achieved and what they need to do next to improve.
- Teaching in the Reception class is consistently good because staff use information about what children can already do to plan activities that will take their learning forward quickly. Expectations are high, and staff know the children well and are fully involved in supporting their learning.
- In all classes, the respect and trust between adults secure supportive relationships. This, together with the effective management of pupils' behaviour, ensures that the vast majority of

lessons move at a good pace and pupils complete the tasks they are set.

- Teaching assistants are well briefed by teachers so they have a clear understanding of lesson aims and of targets for the groups or individuals they are to work with in lessons. This ensures that they make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning.
- Pupils respond well to the help they are given. This ensures that disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are able to tackle the tasks they are set and develop good levels of personal confidence. At times, however, adults provide too much structure and support for pupils who have the ability to take responsibility for their own learning. Opportunities for all pupils to build their independent learning skills are not fully developed in Years 1 to 6.
- Adults make good use of questioning to check pupils' understanding and to challenge them to explain their thinking or clarify their views. In the Year 5 and 6 class, this ensured that pupils thought deeply and were able to appreciate the impact of having too little water on life in an African village.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils are courteous and well mannered. The overwhelming majority behave well in lessons and as they move around the school. Pupils who find behaving well more difficult are well managed and there is little disruption of any kind in lessons.
- Pupils have a good relationship with adults at the school, whom they consider to be fair and supportive.
- Relationships between pupils are good. When disputes do occur, pupils are quick to engage the support of peer mediators who, in the vast majority of instances, swiftly and successfully resolve the situation to the satisfaction of the pupils involved. Pupils report that instances of bullying are very rare and that the school's response ensures issues are resolved quickly.
- Pupils work together well. They listen carefully to each other, respect each other's views and opinions and are keen to share their ideas.
- Pupils readily accept responsibilities and work in a mature manner in carrying out the roles they are given. For example, school councillors monitored pupil behaviour at lunchtime and, as a result, the roles and deployment of adults were modified. The actions taken resulted in improved behaviour both in the lunch hall and in the playground.
- All those parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire consider that the school keeps pupils safe. Pupils report that they feel safe at school and are confident that if they have a concern, adults will take them seriously and help them to resolve the situation.
- Pupils have a good awareness of how to minimise the risk to themselves in a range of situations, including from cyber-bullying and other online hazards.
- Since the last inspection, attendance rates have improved significantly. Overall attendance is now above average and reflects pupils' enjoyment of school.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- School improvement planning is informed by a range of information, including data related to pupils' attainment and progress. Key priorities for improvement are identified but are not sufficiently well defined. There is no clear indication of the time in which actions are to be completed, so leaders cannot track progress towards meeting the targets that are set.
- Senior leaders have been helped to develop the skills necessary to monitor the quality of teaching and learning successfully. However, they do not gather specific enough information to be able to assess accurately the consistency of practice across the school in areas such as teachers' marking.
- Senior leaders regularly review information about pupils' progress and attainment. However, they pay too little attention to ensuring that teachers' judgements about pupils' attainment are

accurate. Teachers are not involved enough in reviewing the information gathered over time. As a result, their lesson planning does not fully reflect pupils' current levels of attainment, and so does not always closely match the needs of all pupils.

- The local authority has worked with the school over the last year to provide senior leaders and teachers with appropriate support to improve the quality of teaching and learning. This has resulted in better procedures for setting pupil progress targets, and an increase in the proportion of good teaching in the school.
- Pupil premium funding has been spent mainly on providing individual and small-group support for reading, writing and mathematics. This has been provided both in class and through support for individuals and small groups to, for example, enable pupils to improve their knowledge of letter sounds. This has helped them to achieve as well as their peers.
- Performance management and ongoing professional development are linked to the school's improvement plan and have secured a higher proportion of good teaching and better pupil progress over the last year.
- The range of subjects taught is planned appropriately, with a focus on supporting pupils to develop their skills in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well and is reflected in their good behaviour, the positive relationships they develop, and in their care and consideration for others in their local and the wider community.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance requires improvement. With the support of the local authority, governors are now beginning to acquire the knowledge, understanding and skills needed to enable them to challenge school leaders to improve the school's performance. They have a clearer understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and its position on its journey of improvement, and how well it is doing compared with other similar schools. They are increasingly active in monitoring pupils' progress. Governors are clear about how the school's spending, including that of the pupil premium funding, has helped to secure improved pupil performance this year. Governors understand how the performance of staff is being managed, how targets for improvement are decided and how salary increases need to be justified by better teaching.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	113259
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	401351

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	157
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Philip Wagstaff
Headteacher	Nicholas D'Agorne
Date of previous school inspection	22 March 2010
Telephone number	01837 82284
Fax number	01837 89140
Email address	admin@north-tawton-primary.devon.sch.uk

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