INSPECTION REPORT

BISHOPS TAWTON PRIMARY SCHOOL

Bishops Tawton, Barnstaple

LEA area: Devon

Unique reference number: 113134

Headteacher: Miss P Isherwood

Reporting inspector: Mr Rob Crompton 7230

Dates of inspection: $27^{th} - 29th$ March 2000

Inspection number:

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 4 - 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: School Lane

Bishops Tawton

Barnstaple Devon

Postcode: EX32 0AE

Telephone number: 01271 343002

Fax number: 01271 343002

Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr Barry Poole

Date of previous inspection: 17th June 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		
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REPORT CONTENTS

]	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
Information about the school How good the school is What the school does well What could be improved How the school has improved since its last inspection Standards Pupils' attitudes and values Teaching and learning Other aspects of the school How well the school is led and managed Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL	10
The quality of teaching is very good and leads to high standards. The curriculum is taught in imaginative ways; pupils have a rich variety of experiences and have opportunities to develop and practise literacy skills in many different contexts. The curriculum is taught in imaginative ways and pupils have a rich variety of experiences. Relationships are excellent and the school successfully promotes pupils' personal development. The school carefully assesses pupils' work to track individual progress and to set targets for improvement.	
WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED	12
Facilities for physical education, drama and assemblies are inadequate.	
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	13
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	14

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school serves the village of Bishops Tawton and also attracts pupils from the outskirts of Barnstaple. The school is smaller than other primary schools. There are 122 pupils on roll, all of whom are white; there are no children from ethnic minority backgrounds. As they enter the school, children's attainment is broadly typical of the age group. Seven pupils are known to be entitled to free school meals. Around ten per cent of the pupils - below the national average - have moderate learning difficulties and are on the school's register of special educational needs. One pupil has a statement of special educational need.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very good school where effective teaching leads to high standards. There is an excellent ethos; pupils work hard and enjoy a rich learning environment. Relationships are exemplary and pupils respond very well to the school's provision for personal development. Parents hold the school in high regard. It gives very good value for money.

What the school does well

- The quality of teaching is very good and leads to high standards.
- The curriculum is taught in imaginative ways; pupils have a rich variety of experiences and have opportunities to develop and practise literacy skills in many different contexts.
- Relationships are excellent and the school successfully promotes pupils' personal development.
- The school carefully assesses pupils' work to track individual progress and to set targets for improvement.

What could be improved

• Facilities for physical education, drama and assemblies are inadequate.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since the school was last inspected in 1996, improvement has been very good. Weaknesses identified in information technology and design and technology have been successfully addressed. Pupils are making rapid progress in information technology and many are achieving good standards. Design and technology is now taught consistently and successfully. The school now carries out regular risk assessments. It continues to seek funding for improvements to accommodation in order to reduce the risk to pupils when walking to lessons in the local church hall and to improve curricular provision. The requirements of The Children Act are now fully met and registration meets current regulations. Governors' minutes have been modified to include more detail about spending decisions.

Standards were found to be broadly average last time. Attainment in English and science is now above average, and in mathematics standards are well above average. Improvements in history and geography are also evident and the good standards in other subjects have been maintained.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11-year-olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

	compared with					
Performance in:		similar schools				
	1997	1998	1999	1999		
English	A	В	С	С		
Mathematics	A	В	A	A		
Science	A*	С	В	В		

Key	
well above average	A
above average	В
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

As they start school, children's attainment is broadly average. They make good progress in the reception class, so, at the age of five, most have good social skills and have acquired a sound basis for subsequent work. Pupils build successfully on this positive start and make good progress in Key Stage 1. By the time they are seven, pupils' reading is usually well above that found in most schools and mathematics is above average.

Eleven pupils took the Key Stage 2 tests in 1999 and the number of pupils in this age group from year to year is too low to identify significant trends in results. However, since 1996, results of National Curriculum tests at Key Stage 2 in English, mathematics and science have been usually above those of most schools. Currently standards in these subjects are above average and pupils generally fulfil their potential. Although the proportion of Year 6 pupils achieving higher levels in English has recently been below that in mathematics and science, the work of the present class indicates that higher attaining pupils are on course to redress this balance.

Pupils make very good progress in most subjects in Key Stage 2. Very good work was seen in literacy and numeracy, and in other subjects including, art, information technology, and music. The school sets suitably challenging targets for individual pupils which most achieve.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils enjoy school are keen, attentive and enthusiastic. They take a pride in their work, their appearance and the school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is very good. Pupils are polite, courteous and trustworthy; they are a credit to the school and to their families. There have been no exclusions in recent years
Personal development and relationships	Relationships throughout the school are excellent. The school is a harmonious community where the atmosphere is relaxed but purposeful.
Attendance	Very good: attendance is above average and pupils arrive promptly.

Pupils' attitudes and values are a positive influence on their learning.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Aged 5-7 years	Aged 7 – 11 years		
Lessons seen overall: 16	Very good	Very good		

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.

Overall, the teaching in the school is very good. In 94 per cent of lessons, the teaching ranged between good (38 per cent) and very good or excellent (56 per cent). No teaching was unsatisfactory. Excellent lessons were seen at both key stages.

The teaching of numeracy is very effective and some literacy teaching is outstanding. The high quality of teaching has a strong influence on pupils' learning and progress. They rise to the high expectations set by teachers and have very good learning habits. Pupils develop independent study skills and work well together, even when not directly supervised. Good teaching is apparent in the pupils' enthusiasm and confidence when using computers, and in their positive attitudes to a range of subjects, such as science, art, music and geography.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. The curriculum is approached imaginatively and pupils' learning is enriched through creative subjects such as art and music.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Pupils who need extra support are identified early and their progress is carefully tracked. Teachers provide work at different levels in the classroom and are ably assisted by learning support staff.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. Religious education and assemblies make a substantial contribution to pupils' spiritual development and there are many opportunities for them to think about meaning and purpose in the natural world and in human achievement. Moral and social development is promoted through the day-to-day life of the school and more formally through the support of charities, residential visits and productions. Art, drama, and literature are used to promote cultural development and multi-cultural awareness is developed through work in geography and links with Tanzania.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school has high regard for pupils' safety and welfare. Sound procedures for child protection have been established.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides strong leadership and an excellent example of classroom practice for other teachers. Key staff are very effective but the time for them to reflect and discuss development with the headteacher is somewhat restricted by her heavy teaching commitment
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Under the able leadership of the chairman, the governors are playing an increasing role in establishing policies and supporting the work of the school. Statutory requirements are met, except for some minor omissions from the governors' annual report to parents and the school prospectus.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Thorough analysis of pupils' progress takes place and teaching is closely monitored. This approach enables the school to refine the curriculum and to set appropriate priorities for teaching and learning.
The strategic use of resources	Resources are carefully allocated in line with the school's priorities.

Effective leadership and management have a positive impact on pupils' attainment and personal development. The school runs smoothly and all staff work together well to achieve high standards of teaching and learning. Governors are increasingly applying the principles of best value in order to make optimum use of available funding.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved		
 Children enjoy coming to school; they are expected to work hard and behave well. The quality of teaching is good and children achieve high standards. The school is well managed, open and welcoming. 	 Some parents are not happy with the amount of homework set. Opinion is equally divided between those who feel there is too much and those who feel there is too little. Some parents feel they are not kept well enough informed about their children's progress. Some parents would like more extracurricular activities for their children. 		

The inspection supported the parents' positive views. There are some inconsistencies in the amount of homework set in each class, but the school tries to ensure that parents and pupils understand what is expected. The school prospectus is under review and there are plans to clarify the homework policy. The inspection found that opportunities for parents to discuss their children's progress are satisfactory and typical of the arrangements made by other schools. In addition to formal consultations, the school encourages parents to raise any concerns as they arise. The school provides an appropriate range of extra-curricular opportunities, given the small number of teachers and the inadequacies of the accommodation.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

The quality of teaching is very good and leads to high standards

The high quality of teaching is a major strength of the school. Teachers are very well prepared and plan work which appropriately challenges all pupils. Good progress was evident during a literacy lesson in the reception class, where groups of children were learning about the structure of stories. Some were looking at how different stories started, others were listening to stories on tape and a group was sequencing pictures. All children worked well and made good progress, particularly the latter group, who, with sensitive encouragement by the teacher and classroom assistant, were able to retell a story in the correct sequence. Later, higher attaining pupils recorded stories on tape, using different voices for different characters.

Teachers are successfully implementing the literacy and numeracy strategies. A very good example was seen in the Year 1/2 class. At the beginning of the lesson, the teacher's skilful questioning drew on pupils' existing understanding of doubles and halves. While some pupils played relevant games to practise skills and reinforce their understanding, the teacher taught the older pupils, showing them how to tackle word problems by identifying the mathematical operations necessary to solve them. The lesson concluded with a high quality discussion, where the teacher asked demanding questions in order to assess the extent of pupils' understanding.

There is an excellent rapport between teachers and pupils, which means many lessons include an appropriate degree of humour. Teachers use this to encourage and motivate pupils and in turn pupils are confident enough to contribute the occasional riposte. The relaxed atmosphere in most classes means that pupils readily admit when they are not sure of something and are willing to offer ideas and suggestions. The impact of this approach is exemplified in the Year 2/3 class, where pupils are highly attentive and keen to contribute in whole-class sessions. A potentially mundane handwriting lesson was brought to life when the teacher began by celebrating the progress that pupils had made since the beginning of the year. Due to the teacher's sensitive approach and use of humour, many pupils' self-esteem was palpably enhanced and they set to work with great enthusiasm.

Lessons move at a brisk pace and teachers ensure a good balance of activities. This balance was evident in the Year 5/6 class where pupils were involved in a variety of work relating to their study of rain forests. Groups were researching using reference books, writing extended accounts of life in the forest, sketching in preparation for a presentation in assembly, designing covers for their geography folders using a computer graphics program and engaging in dramatic role play. This lesson provided many opportunities for pupils to think for themselves; they were not spoon-fed ideas, but had to make their own decisions, some working independently, some co-operating in groups – and all purposefully engaged throughout.

Classroom assistants make an important contribution to many lessons. In a Year 4/5 art lesson, for example, the class teacher and support assistant worked well as a team, successfully combining the teacher's good classroom skills and the assistant's considerable expertise in art. In other lessons, assistants provide effective support for individuals and groups of pupils, especially those with special educational needs.

The curriculum is taught in imaginative ways; pupils have a rich variety of experiences and have opportunities to develop and practise literacy skills in many different contexts.

The curriculum is carefully structured to ensure all that has to be taught is covered, while at the same time linking work across a range of subjects. Plans outline what pupils are expected to learn and teachers interpret these imaginatively. The headteacher provides a very good lead in this respect. During an excellent lesson in literacy in the Year 5/6 class, pupils were highly motivated because of their interest in the activities. During first part of the lesson, a group of pupils was reading *The Lottie Project* and discussing various aspects of the novel such as the genre, theme and style of writing. Other pupils were reading a humorous version of the *Old Testament* and relating this to their study of Judaism; one group was researching contrasting climates using a variety of books and computer resources and another was focusing on the imagery within a narrative poem, communicating with each other through a multi-listening station. The main body of the lesson was equally effective. Based on their knowledge of the rainforest, pupils wrote their own poems. The headteacher skilfully prompted the use of poetic devices – such as alliteration and onomatopoeia – and pupils were eager to share their efforts with the rest of the class. Boys were just as keen as the girls - an indication of the success of the school in motivating them to do well in English, against the national trend. Pupils' eagerness and success in reciting *The Highwayman* with remarkable pace, rhythm and expression, was a further example of the headteacher's highly significant contribution to their attainment and quality of learning.

A lesson on literacy in the Year 2/3 class provided another illustration of the effectiveness of the lively and dynamic approach that characterises the teaching. A very positive atmosphere was established from the very beginning when the teacher praised the work one boy had done at home. The other pupils showed genuine interest and appreciation, an indication of the positive relationships which underpin the teaching and learning in this class. In order to develop pupils' understanding of the way writing is used for different purposes and is aimed at different audiences, they were asked to write instructions for a game of tag rugby. The teacher used a video of a tag rugby game to generate interest and to encourage the use of appropriate language. Pupils were keen to participate, responding positively to the teacher's use of humour and there were cries of 'Great!' and 'Yes!' when they were told the lesson would continue after break. There was a similar reaction during a later lesson in numeracy when the teacher showed pupils how to use a Slovenian abacus.

Throughout the school, there is evidence of the rich experience pupils enjoy. Displays of art work show how they have created images of the rain forests using acrylic colours, fantasy pictures of castles using a dry paint technique, book covers from pictures scanned and manipulated using a computer, and action figures sculptured from clay. Music adds a further dimension to the school's life. Most older pupils play an instrument and enjoy playing in various ensembles. Three pupils provided a guitar accompaniment for the hymns in an assembly. The high quality of singing during lessons and in assemblies is a further indication of the school's success in promoting interest, enthusiasm and high standards across a broad range of subjects.

Relationships are excellent and the school successfully promotes pupils' personal development

The school is a harmonious community. Adults and children are open and friendly, while at the same time they show a respect for one another. Pupils enjoy school, and are keen, attentive and enthusiastic. Relationships are excellent, they provide the security pupils need to ask questions and explore ideas. Within the formal curriculum, pupils listen carefully, making comments that are

relevant to the discussion. Their written work is imaginative; older pupils are encouraged to experiment with different ways of recording ideas, which results in individual responses rather than pupils producing very similar work. They are confident enough to express more personal feelings when this is appropriate, such as in assemblies, religious education lessons or informal chats with their teachers. There are many opportunities for pupils to think about meaning and purpose in the natural world and in human achievement.

The school successfully promotes high standards of social behaviour. Adults provide very good role models and pupils learn what is appropriate behaviour in different situations. They are polite and courteous with adults and each other. For example, lunchtime is a pleasant social occasion; older pupils quite naturally take on a leading role, helping younger ones and sometimes coaxing them to finish their meals. When someone falls over in the playground, other children anxious to offer help and comfort soon surround him or her. Pupils know the daily routines of the school and willingly organise resources for lessons such as art and music, without necessarily being asked.

In addition to developing moral values through their day-to-day life in the school, pupils often take the initiative in trying to help others in less fortunate circumstances. They are quick to respond to requests from charities and take on complete responsibility for fund raising - generating ideas, publicising events and sending on the money raised. Residential visits and other educational trips provide opportunities for pupils to develop and demonstrate their maturity and trustworthiness.

The success of the school in promoting pupils' personal development is evident in their positive attitudes. One parent remarked that she had to 'drag' her son away at the end of the day. Pupils take an obvious pride in their work, their appearance and their school.

The school carefully assesses pupils' work to track individual progress and to set targets for improvement.

A well organised system enables the school to track individual progress and to monitor standards from year to year. Each pupil has a record of achievement file containing samples of work. This file is readily accessible to parents and pupils and gives them the opportunity to see how work has improved over time. It provides a good incentive for pupils and reassurance for parents.

As the number of pupils in each year group is relatively small, it is difficult for the school to interpret year-on-year National Curriculum test results in order to identify trends. However, the teachers' indepth knowledge of individual pupils, together with the careful analysis of test results, enable the school to identify any aspects of the curriculum which need more emphasis and to set suitably challenging targets for each group of pupils.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

Facilities for physical education, drama and assemblies are inadequate.

The school works extremely hard to overcome the difficulties which result from not having a suitable hall. Although a local church hall is used for indoor physical education lessons, this arrangement is far from satisfactory. Pupils, including those in the youngest class, have to walk alongside a busy road in all weathers in order to receive their entitlement to physical education. The hall has basic equipment, but this is not sufficient to enable older pupils to fully develop their potential in the subject. The lack of a school hall also means that pupils and teachers miss out on the sense of community that can be generated through more regular whole school assemblies. Other aspects of the curriculum are

restricted. Opportunities are very limited for dance and drama, and for pupils to perform in musical ensembles or to take part in impromptu work that needs a large space. Although use is made of a condemned building on the school site, this accommodation is wholly unsatisfactory.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

The school should continue its efforts to acquire more suitable accommodation for physical education, dance, drama and music.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	16	
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	18	

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
12	44	38	6	0	0	0

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		122
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		7

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		15

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	9
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	12

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.7
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0
National comparative data	0.5

 $Both\ tables\ give\ the\ percentage\ of\ half\ days\ (sessions)\ missed\ through\ absence\ for\ the\ latest\ complete\ reporting\ year.$

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	1999	7	11	18

National Curriculum T	est/Task Results	Reading	Writing	Mathematics
	Boys	7	7	7
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Girls	10	11	11
	Total	17	18	18
Percentage of pupils	School	95 (90)	100 (90)	100 (90)
at NC level 2 or above	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Asse	essments	English	Mathematics	Science
	Boys	7	7	7
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Girls	10	11	11
	Total	17	18	18
Percentage of pupils	School	95 (90)	95 (80)	100 (90)
at NC level 2 or above	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

 $Percentages\ in\ brackets\ refer\ to\ the\ year\ before\ the\ latest\ reporting\ year.$

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total	
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	1999	5	6	11	

National Curriculum T	est/Task Results	English	Mathematics	Science
	Boys	3	4	4
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Girls	6	5	5
	Total	9	9	9
Percentage of pupils	School	82 (65)	82 (59)	82 (69)
at NC level 4 or above	National	70 (80)	69 (81)	78 (84)

Teachers' Asse	essments	English	Mathematics	Science
	Boys	3	4	4
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Girls	5	5	5
	Total	8	9	10
Percentage of pupils	School	73 (63)	82 (64)	91 (69)
at NC level 4 or above	National	68 (81)	69 (85)	75 (86)

 $Percentages\ in\ brackets\ refer\ to\ the\ year\ before\ the\ latest\ reporting\ year.$

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	107
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR - Y2

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	5.2	
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23	
Average class size	24	

Education support staff: YR - Y2

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	53

Financial information

Financial year	1998/1999	
	£	
Total income	199255	
Total expenditure	202880	
Expenditure per pupil	1691	
Balance brought forward from previous year	15818	
Balance carried forward to next year	12193	

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	122
Number of questionnaires returned	104

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	58	36	6	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	55	36	6	1	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	51	40	8	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	25	45	17	12	1
The teaching is good.	63	29	7	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	35	47	13	4	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	55	31	4	5	5
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	62	34	3	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	27	56	10	3	4
The school is well led and managed.	50	38	5	0	7
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	44	48	8	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	28	33	20	7	12