



Musbury Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 113102
LEA Devon
Inspection number 279093
Inspection dates 3 November 2005 to 3 November 2005
Reporting inspector Anthony Shield RISP

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Musbury
School category	Community		Axminster
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Devon EX13 8BB
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01297 552687
Number on roll	43	Fax number	01297552687
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Dr Carol Woodhouse
Date of previous inspection	10 July 2000	Headteacher	Mr Clive Salmon

Age group 4 to 11	Inspection dates 3 November 2005 - 3 November 2005	Inspection number 279093
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one additional inspector.

Description of the school

This small school serves the village of Musbury and draws its pupils from the immediate, socially mixed area and beyond. All pupils are from White British backgrounds. When the youngest children start school, their attainment is below average. A small proportion of pupils have learning difficulties or disabilities. The school has recently received the Healthy Schools award (2004) and the Travelwise award (2005).

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Musbury Primary is a good school, offering good value for money. The school, designated as causing concern by the local education authority in November 2002, has improved significantly in the last two years and is poised to improve further. Key to its success are the energy and drive of the headteacher who, since his appointment two years ago, has given the school fresh impetus and sense of purpose. Governors, staff and parents have all come together to take the school forward from a period of difficulty and drift. While the legacy of some underachievement remains, pupils are now achieving well as a result of good teaching. Provision for the youngest children is good and they make good progress in the Reception Year. In Years 1 to 6 standards are broadly average in English, mathematics and science. Pupils achieve well, but some, particularly the more able, could be doing better in writing, not just in English, but in subjects across the curriculum.

Good relationships and good attitudes and behaviour characterise this caring, family school. The school is at the centre of the community it serves and is highly valued by parents. The oldest pupils are mature and sensible, reflecting the good attention given to their personal development.

Overall leadership and management are good. The school know itself well through its thorough analysis and evaluation of what works and what needs to be improved. However, it is trying to tackle too many things at the moment and needs to be sharper in deciding on the main priorities.

What the school should do to improve further

- extend opportunities to write in all subjects to improve standards in this area, particularly for the more able pupils
- sharpen the school development plan so that it has a much clear focus on the most important actions that will improve achievement.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Until recently, there was some underachievement at all levels in the school, but this has been rigorously tackled by the headteacher and staff, and pupils are now making up lost ground. Children start in the reception class with below average skills. They quickly settle and begin to blossom achieving average levels at the start of Year 1. Pupils in Years 1 to 6 are achieving well and standards are broadly average overall. However, there is some variation in how well pupils do in different subjects. Standards in mathematics and science are generally higher than in English. The main reason for this is that, while pupils do well in reading, they do not achieve as well in writing. There are weaknesses in spelling and presentation and pupils lack confidence in tackling longer pieces of writing.

The steady decline in performance in national tests at the end of Year 6 has been reversed. Although results in English do not yet match those in mathematics and

science, particularly for the more able pupils, most pupils are making good progress. Boys and girls make similar progress and pupils with learning difficulties also achieve well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The school's heart is its caring and family atmosphere. This is demonstrated well in the way pupils in all years support and care for one another and the very good relationships amongst the whole school community. Pupils feel safe and enjoy coming to school. 'The teachers are great' was the comment of one pupil. Pupils like their teachers, behave well and try to do their best. Pupils enthusiastically join in the wide range of after school activities, particularly the homework and art and technology clubs. They have good attitudes and find learning interesting, particularly enjoying art, mathematics and drama. Pupils know the difference between right and wrong and are confident that there is someone in the school who will listen to them if they have a problem.

Older pupils speak with maturity about their school. They take their responsibilities as members of the school council seriously, and see it as a good opportunity to have their say and improve the school. They are particularly proud of the installation of a buddy bench in the playground, which was their own idea.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good, and pupils have a growing awareness of life in multicultural Britain through activities such as their involvement with the London gospel community choir. Pupils show careful consideration for each other and for the environment and clearly know the importance of eating healthily and of taking regular exercise. The school's 'fruit break' reinforces this message effectively.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching is good. The headteacher has fostered a strong sense of teamwork thus ensuring that teachers and their assistants work well together. As a result a very positive climate for learning is established.

Teachers are keen to make learning interesting and relevant. They use resources well, including the interactive whiteboard, to inspire and generate ideas. In this respect, science is particularly well taught. A demonstration of changing shadows generated enthusiastic and thoughtful discussion about light sources and the conditions necessary for a fair test. Effective teaching of mathematics is characterised by good pace and a careful checking of progress step by step. Marking is consistently good and pupils are given clear guidance and know what they should be aiming for and how to improve their work.

Teaching assistants offer sensitive and focused support. Basic skills are taught well although pupils are sometimes asked to work for too long on one task and as a result they lose interest. Some pupils remarked that they find writing too difficult because teachers do not always make the lessons lively enough. In general, however, teachers use their knowledge of how well the pupils are doing to plan well for the range of abilities and ages in each class.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is well planned to meet the specific needs of pupils, including those with learning difficulties. There is a strong emphasis on the teaching of key skills in literacy and numeracy, but a good balance is maintained and appropriate attention is given to all subjects. The school has rightly identified the need to extend opportunities for pupils to write at length both in English and in other subjects. Although physical education suffers because of the lack of a suitable indoor space, the school compensates by providing a good range of outdoor activities and games as well as swimming.

Visitors to the school and imaginative planning for the use of the local environment make the curriculum more stimulating. Gifted and talented pupils have access to a range of special courses, and all pupils have good opportunities to learn through visits and residential activities. In the Reception class, the curriculum for the youngest children is well planned within the limited space available, and the move to a more formal curriculum is seamless. Particular attention is paid to developing children's social and personal skills, as well as early literacy and numeracy. Throughout the school ICT is being used with increasing effectiveness to support learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care of pupils is good and all aspects of their health, safety and welfare, including child protection and risk assessments, are given high priority. Pupils feel safe and have confidence in their teachers. The very few incidents of bullying are dealt with quickly and effectively.

The system for checking pupils' progress is good and ensures that any potential underachievement is dealt with promptly. Test results are used to set individual pupil targets and these are reviewed every half term to ensure they remain both challenging and realistic. Parental links are strong and parents are confident that their children are safe and well cared for. Pupils' reports provide detailed and comprehensive information on how their children are getting on.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher leads with energy and commitment. He has successfully transformed the school from one causing concern to one that is providing an effective education

and is confident in its success. This has been achieved because of his ability to inspire staff, governors and pupils to work with him to bring about improvement. This has resulted in improved standards at the end of Year 6 in each of the last two years. All staff are making an increasingly effective contribution to school improvement.

The school knows itself well A thorough analysis of test results ensures that issues for improvement are clearly identified. Procedures for checking teaching and regular scrutinies of pupils' work provide opportunities for discussion and professional development amongst the staff. As a result, the quality of teaching is improving. Governors are fully involved and make an effective contribution to forward planning and checking how well the school is doing. They ensure legal requirements are met.

The three-year school development plan is a detailed document which provides a good basis for further improvement. However there are too many targets for the school to manage comfortably. Having already secured improvement across many fronts, the school now needs to focus on what is most important. The headteacher has done much to establish a culture of support and challenge, and the school is well placed to continue its improvement.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Musbury Primary School Church Road Musbury Axminster Devon EX13 8BB

4 November 2005

Dear Pupils,

Thank you for welcoming me into your school. I enjoyed meeting you and your teachers and watching you learn. I particularly enjoyed talking with you. I know you will be interested in what I thought about your school.

What I liked most about your school

Your teachers are good and as a result you are making good progress, particularly in mathematics and science.

You work hard in lessons and show great interest in your work.

You are very well behaved and polite. You take good care of each other.

The school gives you lots of extra clubs and others things to take part in, not just lessons, and you told me about some activities that you really enjoy.

Your teachers take good care of you and help you to grow up.

What I have asked your school to do now

Give you more chances to do longer pieces of writing in different subjects.

Make sure that the teachers are not trying to improve too many things at once.

Thank you once again for your help during the inspection. Good luck in the future!

Yours sincerely,

Mr Tony Shield Lead Inspector