



Watcombe Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 113233
LEA Torbay
Inspection number 279120
Inspection dates 19 June 2006 to 20 June 2006
Reporting inspector Patricia Potheary AI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Moor Lane
School category	Community		Torquay
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		Devon TQ2 8NU
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01803 327419
Number on roll	241	Fax number	01803 322172
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Nik Salter
Date of previous inspection	1 November 1999	Headteacher	Mr Adam Morris

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Watcombe is an average-sized primary school. Some classes are ability based and others are of mixed ability. A high proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, many with emotional and behavioural difficulties. Very few pupils are from minority ethnic groups and all pupils speak English fluently. The school serves an area of significant disadvantage. High numbers of pupils in most year groups join or leave the school each year. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have only been in post for six months.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Watcombe is an effective school where children thrive and develop a host of essential skills well. It provides a good education and good value for money. This view matches that of the school's leadership. Parents hold the school in high regard. Provision in the Nursery and Reception Years is good and children do well, although, because of a low starting point, few reach average standards at the start of Year 1. Pupils throughout the school make good progress and achieve well overall. The rate of progress is not smooth, however, and, as a result, a few pupils of average ability make satisfactory rather than good progress by the end of Year 6. Pupils enjoy what they do because good teaching inspires them to want to learn. They are clear about what they are trying to achieve and what to do to get there. Pupils have very good personal skills and show considerable care for each other. Pupils do well because of the outstanding support and guidance they receive and many improve their behaviour as a result. One pupil said 'I feel comfortable and welcome here. I trust the teachers and they trust me.' A good and very rich curriculum means that pupils find learning interesting. Good leadership and management from the newly appointed team have already begun to improve the school in several key areas. Senior leaders have recognised, however, that the links made between tracking pupils' progress and ensuring that work meets all their needs are not yet strong enough. The school has good capacity to continue improving.

What the school should do to improve further

- Organise the curriculum so that pupils of average ability make the same good progress as their peers.
- Strengthen the way in which information on pupils' progress is used to guide the work of individual teachers, in order to improve the consistency of pupils' learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well. Standards are broadly average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6, although pupils enter Year 1 with below average attainment. Standards are improving each year, although there was a dip for Year 6 in 2005, where almost half of the pupils joined late, many in the last year. The progress and achievement pupils make is good overall and they meet challenging targets well. Children in the Nursery and Reception usually make good progress, although their linguistic and social development begins from a low starting point. Throughout the school, more capable pupils achieve high standards and the high number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities usually progress well. For those with average ability, the picture is more mixed. These pupils tend to do well up to the end of Year 2, then learning slows for a while and speeds up again in Years 5 and 6. A few of these pupils make satisfactory rather than good progress overall. Throughout the school, pupils do exceptionally well in science and well in reading and information and communication technology (ICT). In Years 3

to 6, most pupils make satisfactory rather than good progress in mathematics and writing, although both of these subjects show recent improvements.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' good personal development and well-being is shown by the keen enjoyment of school and appreciation of lessons by the great majority. One reported that 'Teachers don't just tell us ...they do practical things to help us learn.' Attendance is below average but improving each year due to the effective efforts of the school with a small group of pupils. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Each day, children enjoy opportunities to share their ideas and feelings or express amazement at something new. Pupils have a well developed sense of what is right and fair and they usually behave respectfully and kindly to each other and to adults. For some pupils, progress in learning how to behave well, feel confident and work with others is outstanding. Pupils usually act safely and report feeling very safe at school, stating that, although bullying has occurred in the past, it rarely occurs now. Pupils contribute well to the community in many ways, for example, through the school council, or helping with the recycling project. They are currently all involved in designing the new outside environment. Pupils have a sound understanding of how to keep themselves healthy through keeping fit and eating well, although several do not choose to bring healthy food at lunchtime. Pupils are helped well towards their future work by developing good basic social and personal skills.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching is good overall and leads to generally good learning and progress for pupils. Thorough assessment, including good self-assessment by pupils, is used carefully to match work to different pupils' needs. All pupils know what they are supposed to learn and how well they have done afterwards. This includes those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who are gifted. Teaching assistants make a significant contribution to the good learning taking place. Teaching is generally very engaging with plenty of imaginative activities and pupils really enjoy what they do. In a few lessons, pupils are not encouraged enough to do things for themselves and their learning slows while they wait for help. In addition teaching skills in certain elements of mathematics and writing are satisfactory rather than good. For example, activities to demonstrate the practical use of mathematics are not strong in some classes. However, senior managers have identified the aspects of teaching that could be improved and good support is being given to address these.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The good curriculum ensures that all pupils build their knowledge systematically from year to year. It is generally planned well so that pupils of different interests, ages and abilities find their work stimulating. However, a few pupils of average ability are not motivated to work hard enough during the time they spend in a lower ability class. They therefore do not do as well as might be expected, but senior managers have identified and are planning to address this issue. There are improving links between subjects which encourage pupils to develop key skills, except for ICT, which is not used sufficiently well as a tool for learning. Senior leaders have already planned to develop this. The curriculum is enriched very well through visits, visitors and plenty of lively lunchtime and after school clubs, such as judo and a knitting club. The curriculum to support healthy living and helping pupils to keep safe is good overall. The curriculum prepares pupils well for the next stage in their education, especially by enabling them to work together in groups and improving their basic skills.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Pupils receive outstanding care, guidance and support to keep them safe and help them do well. Extensive child protection and other procedures ensure that pupils feel, and are, secure. There are excellent systems for monitoring pupils' personal development and pupils themselves contribute to this by monitoring their own behaviour and taking collective responsibility for supporting each other. The information is used very effectively by teaching assistants who are trained as learning mentors¹ and who develop a high level of trust with the children and parents with whom they work. This is greatly appreciated by parents, who think the results are 'brilliant'. Excellent links with outside agencies add to the success of the school's work with the high number of vulnerable pupils. The newly developed and high quality system for tracking pupils' progress is already resulting in improvements. Each pupil is now guided towards reaching relevant but challenging targets and for pupils of average ability this is beginning to have a positive effect.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good, ensuring that the school is a well run and happy community, seeking the best for all pupils. In the short time that the headteacher and deputy have been in post, they have accurately identified and begun to improve key areas. Improvements to ensure that higher ability pupils do well and to raise standards in science had already begun and have been sustained. More recently, the new leadership team has targeted the teaching of writing and mathematics, which has also improved. This is beginning to show in the quality of pupils' work. There is good capacity to continue improving. Senior managers have consulted widely with parents, pupils and others and have acted effectively in addressing issues raised. A marked

improvement in behaviour during breaks and at lunchtime is one result. Senior leaders have developed a comprehensive system to regularly monitor where improvements in pupils' progress are needed. However, these findings are not yet linked strongly enough to managing the performance of individual teachers. This is already recognised by the school as the next step in raising standards further. Equal opportunities are good overall. Good supportive governance ensures that the school is held to account and continues to improve. Resources are used well to enhance teaching and learning. The high quality accommodation has been beautifully developed and the Nursery and Reception area is particularly spacious and attractive. Links with local schools are very strong and have led to several joint initiatives, such as sporting and drama activities, which benefit pupils greatly.

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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	3	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	2	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?	1	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

Dear Pupils Thank you for being so helpful and welcoming to us when we visited Watcombe; we enjoyed the time we spent with you very much. We can see why you find the school such a good place to learn. We also enjoyed meeting the staff and joining you for lunch and some of your lessons. Here are some of your school's highlights:

- How much you learn and how much you enjoy your work.
- The way in which your teachers help you do well and make good progress, especially in science and reading.
- The good work you do to help look after the school and the environment.
- The mature way you behave, help others, and work so hard in lessons.
- The interesting subjects and activities you undertake.
- The excellent way that the staff really care for you and guide you in your work.
- The way senior staff work hard to keep improving the school.

What we have asked the school to do to improve even more:

- Organise the curriculum so that all of you make the same good progress every year.
- Use information about how well you are doing to ensure that all teaching is well matched to what you need to learn.

We wish you all the very best in the future. Yours sincerely Lead Inspector