



Sherwell Valley Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 113240
LEA Torbay
Inspection number 279121
Inspection dates 22 June 2006 to 23 June 2006
Reporting inspector Roger Sadler AI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Hawkins Avenue
School category	Community		Torquay
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		Devon TQ2 6ES
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01803 613296
Number on roll	551	Fax number	01803 617038
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Rvd A Macey
Date of previous inspection	25 September 2000	Headteacher	Mr R Hughes

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This large, popular, growing school with a roll of 576 admits children from the age of three years. The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage, and English is their first language. An average proportion of pupils are eligible for free school meals. Children enter the school with broadly average knowledge and skills. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is below average but an above average proportion have statements of special educational needs.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Sherwell Valley is a good school where all groups of pupils progress well. Good quality education in Nursery and Reception ensures that children progress well to achieve above average standards at the end of the Foundation Stage. By the age of seven, pupils attain above average standards and standards are also above average overall by the age of 11. Standards in English are higher than in mathematics because, in English, pupils have a clearer idea of where they need to focus their efforts to improve. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are above average because of much improved resources and provision. Pupils' personal development is good. Pupils attend regularly, really enjoy lessons, feel secure at all times and behave outstandingly well.

Teaching is good and well planned and teachers effectively use ongoing assessment to check the learning as lessons progress. Teachers manage pupils very well and establish excellent relationships throughout the school.

Governors and staff are fully aware of areas requiring further development. Monitoring and evaluation of the quality of education are good. Although leadership and management are now good the senior management team has, until very recently, lacked an effective system to ensure that it has a clear overview of the progress of all groups of pupils so that well matched and increasingly challenging targets can be set and monitored. The inspection endorses the school's accurate understanding of its strengths and weaknesses and its effectiveness. The school provides good value for money and has a good capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Help pupils see clearly where and how to improve their work in mathematics.
- Build further on the system for setting challenging targets and monitoring pupils' progress towards attaining them.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement and standards are good overall. Pupils enter the school with average knowledge and skills and, by the time they leave at the age of 11, they attain above average standards.

Children make good progress in Nursery and Reception. By the end of Reception the vast majority achieve the expected levels for their age and a significant proportion exceed national expectations, especially in their personal, social and emotional development and in speaking and listening. Good quality provision, including carefully planned play, teaches children to enjoy learning.

Pupils continue to make good progress in Years 1 and 2, and many exceed national expectations in reading, writing and mathematics. In 2005, national test results for

seven-year-olds were significantly above average and during the current year standards have improved, particularly in reading and writing.

In Key Stage 2, in English, because of good teaching and the effective use of assessment, pupils progress and achieve well. Standards of writing and speaking and listening in subjects other than English are also above average because opportunities to develop these are carefully planned. In mathematics progress and achievement are satisfactory. Standards in ICT are above average due to significant improvements in provision throughout the school. Year 6 test results in science in 2005 were below average but determined work by the staff has raised current standards to at least average throughout the school and above average in some year groups. Statutory targets for 11-year-olds set by the school are challenging. The school has a good track record of achieving these in English but has sometimes failed to reach its mathematics targets.

Throughout the school, pupils with learning difficulties and the very small number of pupils for whom English is not the main language at home make good progress overall. Their progress in English is particularly good because of very careful assessment and effective teaching by teachers and teaching assistants.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils of all ages show a genuine respect for each other and all adults in the school, which results from a strong personal, social and health education programme. Good attendance and punctuality reflect their enjoyment of school. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is good, with strengths in their social and moral development. They have a keen sense of right and wrong. Year 6 pupils have been trained as peer mediators who provide support to all pupils. Older pupils take on a wide range of responsibilities that contribute significantly to the smooth running of the school and the safety of pupils, such as helping younger pupils at playtime. The School Council is regarded by all pupils as being highly effective in representing their views, for example, by discussing with the kitchen staff the need for more healthy lunches. Pupils are well prepared for their future lives through the basic skills and the positive attitudes they are developing.

Behaviour is consistently of a very high standard. Pupils are eager to learn and concentrate very well. Playtimes are happy and productive. Pupils use the play equipment responsibly for healthy exercise and enjoy the wide range of sports available.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is good and ensures pupils make good progress. Effective planning means that lessons meet the learning needs of all pupils. Teachers use assessment information well to challenge pupils with varying needs. Where assessment is used well, pupils are

helped to review what they have learned and to know what further is expected of them. In English in particular, pupils know how to improve their work because both marking and the setting of targets give them good information upon which to act. The use of assessment in mathematics is not yet having the same impact and pupils are less clear about where to concentrate their efforts.

Relationships and pupils' behaviour are excellent and pupils concentrate very well, assisting them to learn effectively. Lessons are lively and interesting, providing a variety of activities so that each pupil can learn in the way that suits them best. The use of ICT, including interactive whiteboards, is consistently good. For example, in a Year 4 science lesson, a video clip of 'The Incredible Man' enabled pupils to analyse clearly how the body moves. Teachers' efforts are successful in inspiring pupils, who are very clear that the best thing about their school is that, 'teachers make learning fun'.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. An appropriate focus on basic skills ensures good overall progress in learning. Teachers succeed in providing pupils with linked lessons so skills learned in one subject can be practised in other subjects. Pupils then understand the practical relevance of what they are learning. English and ICT are particularly well used in other subjects, but mathematics is not used to the same extent in subjects across the curriculum. Visitors to the school and visits to a wide range of places add to the breadth of the curriculum. Horizons are also broadened by residential visits, and it is characteristic of the school's arrangements that pupils report that if they are not going on such visits they will have some 'great activities' instead. Pupils are particularly enthused by the range of clubs open to them and many benefit from these activities. Very good attention to personal, social and health education throughout the curriculum ensures that pupils learn to be happy, safe and healthy.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The good care, guidance and support for pupils are a significant strength of the school. Effective procedures are in place to ensure that they feel safe and secure at all times. Child protection procedures including staff training are good. Pupils are confident that they can seek help and advice from teachers and other adults when they need it, and the 'secrets' box further ensures that important concerns are unearthed and tackled quickly. Risk assessments are thorough. Pupils speak sensibly about how they feel safe in school. Teachers monitor pupils' progress within their class very effectively and they are especially good at involving them in evaluating their own progress and understanding the targets set for them to improve in their English work. Pupils with learning difficulties have action plans that are tailored to their needs. The school works well with parents and other agencies to ensure that learners make good progress. Parents recognise and appreciate the high level of care and support.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good overall. The headteacher has established a staff team who work hard with a shared sense of purpose. Unit and subject leaders promote improvement well in the areas for which they are responsible. Subject leaders have clear and effective action plans for their subjects that are helping to improve learning. Monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning are effective and teachers are given clear guidance and support to help them continually improve their work and learn from each other.

The senior leadership team (SLT) has a very clear overview of the school's strengths and weaknesses in but until recently lacked the means of setting accurate and challenging targets to further improve pupils' current good progress. Good work has already begun to put this right and governors and staff are beginning to be able to identify areas where progress could be accelerated. Governors have developed good ways of finding out about the school so that they can provide both support and challenge. They receive key information from the SLT, undertake first hand observations of the school's work and have identified link governors for each subject. The school is well placed to make further improvements.

The school as a whole places high priority on good quality relationships and behaviour and these are outstanding throughout the school. Parents and pupils hold the school in high regard. Their views are carefully gathered and influence change, for example in improving parents' understanding of what is taught in literacy and numeracy so that they can give additional support. When pupils, in the past, raised concerns about bullying, the school took the matter seriously, and as a result of effective action taken pupils report that the problem has been resolved.

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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	2	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	1	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	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	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?	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

We enjoyed visiting your school and meeting you. Thank you for being so friendly, polite and helpful. We agree with you that yours is a good school and liked many of the things we saw. Here are some of them:

You are making good progress with your work and are keeping fit and healthy.

You arrive on time, attend regularly, and enjoy school. You also work hard and behave very well.

Adults teach you and look after you well and your headteacher, staff and governors lead the school well.

There are just one or two things that teachers need to do to make your school even better:

Help you clearly see where and how to improve your work in mathematics.

Improve the system that the school uses for checking that you are all doing your very best in your work.

We wish you all every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Mr Sadler Lead Inspector