



# South Tawton Primary School

Inspection Report - Amended

**Unique Reference Number** 113263  
**Local Authority** Devon  
**Inspection number** 279129  
**Inspection date** 3 October 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Anthony Shield

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Tawton Lane
<b>School category</b>	Community		South Zeal
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4-11		Okehampton EX20 2LG
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01837 840242
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	180	<b>Fax number</b>	01837 840848
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Peter Brotherton
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Heather Poustie
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	8 November 2000		

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## **Amended Report Addendum**

Report updated to resolve formatting inconsistency

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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

## **Description of the school**

South Tawton Primary School is smaller than most primary schools, and serves a rural community from four local villages. Pupils come from a wide variety of backgrounds, and on entry most pupils' language and social skills are average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is below average.

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

South Tawton Primary is a good school at the heart of its community. Pupils achieve well in an atmosphere of trust and good relationships, reflecting the school's central belief that children learn best in a secure and happy environment. As one parent said to the inspector, 'The school has a wonderfully caring ethos and pupils really care about the school and one another.'

Children get off to a sound start in the Reception Year and their progress is satisfactory. Teaching here encourages good social skills and an excitement about learning, but planning and assessment are not sharply focused enough on specific learning skills to guarantee good progress. Although most children reach expected levels by the time they start in Year 1, not all do. Progress accelerates in Years 1 and 2 as a result of lively and engaging teaching, so that standards at the end of Year 2 are above average in reading, writing and mathematics. Results have varied in recent years, reflecting the attainment of pupils at the end of the Reception year.

Pupils continue to make good progress throughout Years 3 to 6, and by the time they leave, their attainment in English, mathematics and science is above average. Standards in science are particularly good, with a high proportion of pupils reaching higher levels in national tests in this subject. The emphasis the school places on active learning ensures pupils respond particularly well to opportunities to find out about and test ideas in science. However, pupils are also given a very good grounding in literacy and numeracy. Good teaching promotes an enthusiasm for learning, and this is a key factor in pupils' good achievement. Pupils' curiosity to learn is inspired by resourceful and effective teaching. A recent focus on how pupils learn best is ensuring much thoughtful and increasingly effective practice. Pupils are encouraged to think for themselves and work things out on their own when they find work difficult. Pupils said that when they are stuck, teachers 'won't tell you the answer, but put you on the right lines.' This emphasis on developing the pupils' confidence in their capacity to succeed is reflected in the assured way in which they talk about the school and their work. Teachers offer praise when deserved but also question pupils carefully to deepen their understanding.

The school believes that every child matters and places the care and welfare of pupils at its centre. Pupils feel safe and are cared for well. Behaviour is good, and pupils are polite and courteous and sensitive to the feelings of others. They take their responsibilities seriously and use their initiative, for example, taking chairs to the hall where they belong, without being asked. In this respect, their contribution to the community is outstanding. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and their good personal development is very much a strength of the school.

Pupils' progress is tracked carefully and there are effective systems to ensure that pupils at risk of underachievement are identified and supported. The curriculum is broad and balanced, while giving appropriate emphasis to basic skills. The school is adapting its planning to promote more meaningful links across subjects.

The school has a strong sense of shared values and common purpose. The school is well led and managed. Good self-evaluation processes enable the school to have an

accurate view of itself, and the headteacher and her senior staff are committed to further improvement. The school has the confidence of the community it serves and parents are very supportive of what the school is doing: 'My child really enjoys school and the school has been brilliant....this was the best school I could have chosen.'

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Improve planning and assessment in the Reception Year to ensure consistently good progress.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

All pupils do well and by the end of Year 6, standards are above average in English, mathematics and science, with a good proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels in national tests in each subject. Most pupils meet or exceed their targets. Standards by the end of Year 2 are above average in reading, writing and mathematics, and pupils achieve well through Years 1 and 2. Throughout the school, pupils with learning difficulties make good progress.

Children in the Reception class are given a satisfactory start, but progress during this year is not as good as elsewhere. Improvements have been made since the last inspection, and learning is now more practical and exciting, but there is more to be done to ensure consistently good progress in acquiring literacy and numeracy skills.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal development is good and some aspects are exemplary. Pupils are enthusiastic about school and are keen to do well. Attendance is broadly average but no better because increasing numbers of parents are taking holidays in term time. Behaviour is good and a number of acts of kindness and thoughtfulness were observed. Pupils report that bullying is very rare, although as one Year 5 pupil remarked, 'we occasionally have little fall-outs.' The school has been awarded both the Healthy Schools Award and the gold award for its Travel Plan. This has done much to raise awareness amongst pupils of the benefits of a healthy lifestyle and physical activity. They even know how to exploit the sloping football pitch to their advantage! Pupils feel safe and know there is an adult they can turn to for help. Pupils respond particularly well to opportunities to take responsibility. Older pupils behave with maturity, enjoying the opportunities, for example, to be sports leaders and help the younger pupils in their playtime activities. Pupils know their views will be respected, and the school council is a valued forum for discussion.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

Confident teaching through Years 1 to 6 ensures good progress. Learning is well managed and resources effectively used. In a Year 3 lesson, for example, the use of finger puppets to demonstrate the proper use of speech marks captured the pupils' imagination and attention. Good relationships encourage confident responses from pupils. Pupils know that teachers and teaching assistants will help them, but also know that they are expected to work things out for themselves first. This emphasis on pupils becoming self-reliant learners has been a key factor in the school's success. Lessons are usually well planned to meet the wide range of needs. Teachers ask questions skilfully and make sure pupils think carefully about their answers.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 2

The curriculum in Years 1 to 6 is well planned, and gives appropriate time to literacy and numeracy, but also ensures that pupils have good access to all subjects. The school is working to link subjects to make learning more meaningful. Some good practice already exists. A history topic on the Victorians in Year 5, for example, was used to encourage descriptive writing and art work, as well as teaching historical enquiry skills. Pupils speak enthusiastically about their involvement in the wide range of extra-curricular activities. The curriculum is generally well planned to cater for the range of abilities, including pupils with learning difficulties. The school is rightly seeking to extend its provision for gifted and talented pupils. Planning in the Reception class is not precise enough to ensure good progress in literacy and numeracy.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 2

Teachers know pupils very well and are committed to their well-being. The school cares deeply for the welfare of every child, and its family ethos ensures pupils and staff care for one another. Effective procedures to ensure pupils' welfare ensure that they feel safe and well looked after. Child protection procedures are fully in place and risk assessments are carried out conscientiously. In Years 1 to 6, academic progress is checked on regularly and guidance is good, enabling effective intervention to prevent possible underachievement. Assessment in the Reception class is not carried out regularly enough to ensure that all children are making the best possible progress.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The school's good leadership and management are characterised by shared values and a clear focus on both the academic and the personal development of every child. Because of this, the school was able to maintain the good quality of its work during the recent period of staff absences and changes. The headteacher is giving a clear lead and all staff have responded with energy. There is a tangible sense of a school on the move. Staff at all levels are making a good contribution. They know the school well because of effective procedures for monitoring and self-evaluation. All staff work in curriculum teams, which provides a good forum for discussion and the spreading of good practice. There are regular procedures for checking teaching, and feedback is carried out thoughtfully. The school improvement plan is detailed, is driven by targets and is a good basis for further development. A committed team of governors provide good support and challenge. High standards have been maintained since the last inspection and the school has good capacity to improve further.

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## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

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

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

### The quality of provision

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

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

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you for welcoming me to your school. I enjoyed meeting you and your teachers and watching you learn. I especially enjoyed talking to some of you and thought you spoke clearly and sensibly about your school. Yours is a good school and does almost everything very well.

What I liked most about your school

- You are very enthusiastic when you join in lessons and out-of-school activities.
- You are well behaved and take good care of each other.
- Yours is a happy school and everyone gets on well together.
- You are being given plenty of opportunity to try to sort things out for yourselves when you get stuck.
- Your teachers take very good care of you and help you to become mature and responsible.
- Good teaching is giving you a chance to learn lots of exciting things and make good progress.
- Everybody in the school is working hard to make your school even better.

What I have asked your school to do now

- Make sure that activities in the Reception class are planned to enable all the children there to make good progress.

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