



Branscombe Church of England Primary School

Inspection Report

Better
education
and care

Unique Reference Number 113348
LEA Devon
Inspection number 279147
Inspection dates 16 September 2005 to 16 September 2005
Reporting inspector Margaret Hulme RISP

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Branscombe
School category	Voluntary controlled		Seaton
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Devon EX12 3DA
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01297 680339
Number on roll	71	Fax number	01297 680339
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Rev Nicholas Edwards
Date of previous inspection	22 November 1999	Headteacher	Mrs Katie Gray

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is in a village in east Devon and is smaller than most primary schools. Its pupils come from the village and other areas nearby. Most pupils are white British with a few from minority ethnic groups. There are no looked after children or those for whom English is an additional language. The percentage of children who have learning difficulties or disabilities is about average and the proportion entitled to free school meals is low.

Governors have experienced difficulties in replacing the recently retired headteacher. At the time of inspection an acting headteacher had been in post for a week.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school that does well for its children and offers good value for money. Although the school has no substantive headteacher and has an acting headteacher, an effective, caring and sensitive leadership is being provided to which staff and governors contribute. The period of change in leadership has meant that school self-evaluation is not fully up to date, but purposeful direction to the school's work is continuing. The acting headteacher is aware of its strengths and is already working to improve areas of relative weakness. However, children are not sufficiently involved in evaluating their own work.

The teaching is good and children enjoy the wide range of interesting work, which often has a liveliness that inspires them to want to work harder. Reception children make good progress and most reach the goals expected before they start the National Curriculum. The standards children reach by Year 2 and Year 6 are mainly better than those expected for their age, although the school is rightly working to ensure that more children reach higher levels in writing by Year 2. They make good progress, and some do even better. All children, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities, benefit from the good care and support they receive. Children's personal development and well-being are outstanding. Their very good attitudes and behaviour are the result of good and trusting relationships. Parents think highly of the school and are well satisfied with the quality of education provided.

The school has made good progress since its last inspection and takes the necessary action to improve. The good leadership means the school has the capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Continue the emphasis on improving writing in Years 1 and 2
- Involve children more in the process of checking how well they are doing, so that they better understand how to make progress
- Ensure that the school's self-evaluation gives enough attention to the impact actions taken have on progress

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement and standards are good. When children start school their attainment is broadly as expected for their age. The Reception children achieve well and reach the goals expected in all areas of learning especially in language and mathematical development because of good teaching. In the rest of the school the children work hard and are doing well. Annual targets are suitably challenging and are usually met or sometimes exceeded.

The 2004 Year 6 test results in English, mathematics and science were average overall. Although the higher attainers did better in science than in English or mathematics the

steps taken to remedy that weakness have proved successful, and the 2005 results have improved, with more children reaching the higher level – in English twice as many. There is effective support for the more able and talented, who progress very well because they are challenged very effectively and extend their skills. The Year 2 results in reading, writing and mathematics were average, with fewer children reaching the higher level in writing than in either reading or mathematics. Again, 2005 results are better as a result of ongoing improvements to the teaching of writing.

The progress of all groups of children, including boys and girls, those with learning difficulties and those from minority ethnic groups, is at least good and is better in some year groups. The current Year 4 group, for example, are racing away in mathematics because they find learning fun and the level of challenge is exemplary. Displays of work in English, mathematics and science, and other subjects such as art and design, are of good quality and pupils talk enthusiastically of their achievements.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Parents know their children do best if they attend school every day and they have helped maintain a good attendance rate. Teachers have high expectations of how children should behave and have established very trusting relationships with them to ensure they respond well. Children have very good attitudes to school and enjoy the activities. They show respect for teachers and enjoy expressing their views and taking part in decisions made through the school council, or as they did in establishing a community fund to help groups in distress which they see on the news. The youngest children were already making good progress in their personal, social and emotional development after only a week in school because the adults already know them well through the good induction procedures. A relaxed atmosphere that encourages self-confidence and independence is promoted .

The children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. The children respect and try to understand the feelings of others because when any child feels that help is needed anywhere in the world, a school meeting is called and they agree whether to send money, and how much. They may decide to help a disaster appeal or buy a bunch of flowers for someone in the village. Moral and social issues are taught well. Children understand right from wrong, and enjoy helping others and those in the local community. Last year the children held a Harvest Lunch for the senior citizens of the village and cooked the food themselves. Most children feel school is a safe place and understand why there are special rules to help everyone live in a harmonious school community. A healthy lifestyle is planned as part of the curriculum. Healthy snacks and drinks encourage children to eat fruit and vegetables and drink more water. In addition, children choose a healthy meal for school lunch each week and teachers monitor the diet provided.

Of particular note is the positive contribution to the community that has enabled children to develop skills that contribute to their future economic well-being. For example, replanting an apple orchard on the site of an old orchard in the village was a very big task but children knew the National Trust would be able to help them. In

their letters to the children the villagers have expressed their appreciation of the children's vision and dedication that really make a difference to the future life of the community. Working with the National Trust has also helped the children respect their environment.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching ranges from good to very good and overall it is good. Most children make good progress and show very good attitudes to their work because of effective teaching. Teachers are good at explaining to children what they are going to learn in a lesson and consequently children know what is expected of them and do their best to complete the tasks they are given. Children told inspectors that teachers were friendly, listened to them and helped them a lot. In all classes, there is a good working atmosphere where very good relationships are based on mutual respect and children work hard and are encouraged to succeed. Those with learning difficulties and disabilities are mainly taught alongside others and they respond well to the encouragement and general support they receive. Throughout the school the particularly good teamwork ensures teaching assistants support children's learning and help them succeed with their work. Teachers know what children need to learn next because they observe them carefully, listen to what they say and talk to them about how well they are tackling activities. Teachers' marking is often good and helps the children to improve their work. All teachers use assessment information effectively to ensure that children's work is matched well to their capabilities. Teachers provide targets for improvement but some children were unsure about how to use them. The children say they particularly enjoy lessons when they work in pairs or groups because can they share lots of different ideas and the work is more interesting.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is well planned and all children are eager to join in work that covers a wide range of activities because they find it stimulating. Teachers' good use of national and local guidance in planning lessons means that children are well prepared for the next stage of education. The school has overcome the difficulties associated with the site, which were badly affecting the curriculum and children are excited by opportunities to use the new library and the refurbished information and communication technology (ICT) suite. Younger children use information technology when changing library books. The older children have used computers to produce high quality play scripts and everyone loves the drama productions. Visitors and visits to the locality enhance the quality of experiences offered to all pupils. Children were expecting a Japanese visitor to teach them and talked excitedly of what they hoped to learn. Their work with The National Trust has given them a greater appreciation of their local environment and how it can be protected. The healthy eating initiative, together with sports, improves

children's fitness and well-being. The high quality artwork on display bears out an emphasis on creativity. French is taught as an additional subject, which children enjoy and is extending their confidence in speaking another language. The opportunities for enrichment extend children's learning, but overall, the curricular provision is good rather than the school's evaluation of outstanding.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The very committed staff know the children well. They gather their information sensitively and use it well to provide care, support and guidance for the children. There is an acceptance by staff that every child learns in different ways and children with specific needs are provided for effectively. Parents are very positive about the school. One parent, writing about her child's learning difficulties, pointed out that without the school's support her child's transition from home to school would not have been so smooth. Although children told inspectors they had a book of targets they were unsure about how these were used to help them improve. However, they did understand the purpose of teachers' comments for improvement in their books and some were able to show better work as a result. Children are well supervised indoors and out. The school is a very attractive environment, which is well maintained. Children are encouraged to take responsibility for their environment and draw the attention of staff to any aspect they think may be unsafe or in need of repair. Children know their teachers will resolve any bullying should it arise. Child protection procedures are firmly in place and reviewed regularly. The good relationships with outside agencies provide effective support for children. There are good procedures for health and safety.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The quality of leadership and management and the school's capacity to improve are good. Despite the lack of a permanent headteacher and the appointment of a new chair of governors, all involved are working effectively together to ensure the school continues to have clear direction that will lead to improvement, and that children and their families receive the advice, support and guidance they need to achieve as well as they can. The acting headteacher is determined to maintain and further improve the good quality of education offered to the children. She is keen to maintain the focus on raising standards. The subject leaders play an important role, particularly in using assessment information to track the children's progress and how well they are doing. The school has proved itself well able to make improvements because when there is weakness it determines the best way to remedy and improve it. This is illustrated by the improved standards in English and mathematics national tests, particularly for higher attainers. It responded well to the previous inspection issues and now offers children a better quality of education through improved resources and facilities for independent learning. Governors now influence the work of the school through support and challenge.

The acting headteacher had worked with the school before her appointment but had no involvement in the school's evaluation of its effectiveness. It gives a largely accurate picture of much good provision, but sometimes fails to make clear what the outcomes are for the children and governors have already set about revising it. Although the monitoring of performance is satisfactory the school is bringing greater rigour to its procedures. Children are just becoming involved in assessing how well they are doing and staff are planning to make them more aware of their individual targets and how they can improve. More could also be done about securing parental views through consultations.

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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	3	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?	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	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	1	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	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	3	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	NA
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

The inspectors enjoyed visiting your school and seeing your work. We think you have a very happy school. Thank you all for contributing to the inspection, by talking to us about your work, your life in school and all the fun you have.

This is what we found out about your school

You all help one another, behave very well and play well together

You work hard in lessons, make good progress in what you learn and as you get older take great care in making your work look interesting

You have good teachers and other adults who work hard to help you in lessons so you can understand what you have to do and get your work finished

Although you do not have a headteacher at present, the acting headteacher and governors are making sure you get lots of interesting things to do and find the activities fun

You organise some really super activities to help your community or people in need and try hard to look after your local area

Although we thought your school was good and an exciting place to be, we have asked the acting headteacher to continue to improve three areas:

The Year 2 children have been trying hard to improve their writing but need a bit more time to make it really good for the national tests

Some children told us they weren't sure about targets to help them improve so we have asked teachers to plan time for this. Then you will have a better idea of how well you are doing and the teachers will know what your views are

When the teachers plan things to improve the school we want them to look carefully at how these things affect your progress.

We hope you carry on helping your teachers and all the other adults in the school.