



Black Torrington Church of England Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 113372
LEA Devon
Inspection number 279154
Inspection dates 4 October 2005 to 4 October 2005
Reporting inspector Rashida Sharif HMI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Black Torrington
School category	Voluntary controlled		Beaworthy
Age range of pupils	5 to 11		Devon EX21 5PU
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01409 231262
Number on roll	14	Fax number	01409 231262
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Benjie Innis
Date of previous inspection	28 February 2000	Headteacher	Miss Janet Coopey

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an additional inspector.

Description of the school

Black Torrington Church of England Primary School is a very small rural school. Since the previous inspection the school has gone through a period of falling rolls and changes in staffing. Most of the pupils enter Reception with attainment broadly at the level expected for their age.

The school is divided into two key stage classes. The first class has 5 pupils between the ages of 4 and 7 and the second class has 9 pupils between 7 and 11 years of age. Most of the pupils attend the local nursery before coming to the school. All the pupils who attend the school are from the village.

The proportion of pupils identified as having learning difficulties and disabilities is above the national average. About a quarter of the pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals and this is above the national average.

The school provides opportunities to promote family learning and support and is very much a focal point for the community.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Black Torrington Church of England Primary School is effective in providing satisfactory education for its pupils and satisfactory value for money. Pupil numbers have been falling for a number of years. This has resulted in disruption to the teaching staff, and consequently improvements in what the school does are recent. Progress since the last inspection has been satisfactory. The strength of this school lies in its Christian ethos reflected in the respect and value placed on each member of the school community.

Provision has improved significantly since the appointment of the current headteacher, who has an accurate view of the school's effectiveness with which inspectors agree. She has identified what needs to be done in order to improve, such as raising standards in English and mathematics at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory and it is in a sound position to improve further.

Pupils enjoy school and show positive attitudes to their work and each other. Behaviour is well managed and good in both classes. Satisfactory teaching means that pupils make satisfactory progress between Year 1 and Year 6. Pupils do, however need to learn more about cultures other than their own. Good support for pupils with learning difficulties enables them to make good progress. Assessment is satisfactory, but not enough use is made of the information to ensure pupils' progress is tracked effectively. Marking of pupils' work does not always show them how to improve. This means that the work given in lessons is not always matched to pupils' individual needs so that they make good progress.

What the school should do to improve further

- continue to improve the development of pupils': oLiteracy skills and writing in all age groups, but particularly in reading for meaning in Years 1 and 2 onumeracy skills, with a particular focus on application and problem solving
- make better use of information from assessment to track individual pupils' progress and ensure marking provides pupils with specific advice on how to improve their work
- improve pupils awareness of the variety of faiths and cultures in modern Britain.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Most of the pupils enter the Reception Year with attainment broadly at the level expected for their age. From Years 1 to Year 6, pupils make satisfactory progress although those with learning difficulties are given more focused support and make good progress. In English, pupils make satisfactory progress in their writing skills but unsatisfactory progress in reading text with sufficient understanding. Their presentation skills also lack accuracy so that careless errors are made in their handwriting and

grammar. In mathematics, the pupils have sound number skills but their skill in applying these to solve real life problems is not as good.

By the end of year 6, pupils standards are in line with the national average. The targets set by the school for pupils are not challenging enough. However, the school is aware of this and more demanding targets are now being set.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good, although the pupils do not have sufficient understanding of life in a multicultural society. They have little opportunity to learn about other cultures. Relationships are good. Pupils enjoy school and the Christian ethos and the school's mission statement of caring for one another underpins all aspects of school life. Pupils get on well with each other and their teachers. They value the help they receive. As a result, attendance is good and the pupils develop a positive attitude to learning that contributes to their improving achievement and the positive ethos of the school. Behaviour in the classrooms and around the school is good. In lessons, pupils are generally attentive and responsive. However, some pupils in the mixed age and mixed ability groups lose interest when their individual needs are not met and when the work is not challenging.

Pupils understand the need for safe practices and, for example, move sensibly around the school. They know the importance of eating healthily and taking exercise.

The school provides good opportunities to promote family learning and this leads to a good response from the local community. Pupils are developing a wider sense of responsibility to the community through charity fundraising activities and developing sensitivities to those who are less fortunate than themselves. For example, they raised substantial funds for Children in Need and the Tsunami relief effort.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching in meeting the full range of learners' needs in the mixed age and ability classes is satisfactory. Most lessons have a clear purpose and ensure that pupils understand their work. The headteacher is the only full-time member of staff but all teachers have good subject knowledge and are fully committed to enriching the lives of the pupils. They question pupils effectively to develop their thinking skills; however, there is not enough emphasis on developing pupils' independent learning skills so that they are critical of their own work and know how to improve it further.

The school has recently developed, and is effectively using, individual assessment to inform teachers' planning. Teachers give realistic praise and pupils feel safe, secure and valued and have good knowledge of pupils' social and emotional needs. Pupils

with learning difficulties are supported well and make good progress. The consistent application of the behaviour policy helps pupils to learn. At its best, teaching is characterised by good relationships, knowledge, enthusiasm and high expectations. The school is now working with pupils and parents to set realistic and more challenging individual targets for pupils' achievement.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum in the first class gives pupils a sound start. There is a good balance provided between formal learning and learning through structured play. However, across both classes the school has rightly identified that literacy and numeracy are not as well developed as they could be. For example, writing and reading for meaning across the curriculum and for a range of different purposes needs to be improved. The curriculum is enriched with a range of well attended after school activities, including arts and crafts, recorders, gardening and cookery. The school makes good use of its recently refurbished classrooms and corridors by using the space effectively to display pupils' work.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school cares well for its pupils and is doing a good job to safeguard health and welfare. The school provides good support for, and monitoring of, pupils' personal development. It has good arrangements for dealing with any incidents of bullying that might occur. The school works effectively with individuals from a wide range of outside agencies, for instance, the school nurse and the speech therapist, to provide the best support it can for all its pupils but particularly for those with learning difficulties. Pupils get on well with the adults in school and know they would have someone to turn to if they were worried. They learn about the importance of exercise and a healthy diet and school meals encourage pupils to eat healthily. The school building is clean and secure, and there are good systems for ensuring pupils' safety. Child protection policy and procedures are good. Staff and governors receive regular training to ensure that child protection procedures are implemented effectively.

Monitoring of the pupils' academic development is satisfactory. Work is marked regularly, but the comments are not always sharp enough to ensure pupils of all abilities are clear about what they need to do to improve further. Also, pupils' progress is not tracked rigorously enough to ensure the right additional support and advice is always given.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher has helped the school to improve after a period of staff change, which affected pupils' progress, especially in English and mathematics. With help from the local education authority, the headteacher, staff and governors are working well

as a team. Improvement in recent times has been satisfactory and the school is soundly placed to improve further. The headteacher has a clear vision for improving standards. She ensures that all pupils fully participate in all the school offers and has accurately identified the strengths and areas for further development of the school.

The hardworking governors have recently participated in training to bring them up to date on their roles and responsibilities. They recognise the strengths and areas for improvement of the school. They are diligent about pupils' health and safety. Finance is well managed and the school ensures that purchases provide best value. The monitoring of teaching and learning is mostly thorough but does not consistently provide advice which is specific enough to help teachers to improve. Priorities for school improvement are sensible and parents and pupils are regularly asked to contribute their views. The school listens and takes action where appropriate.

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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?	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	3	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?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	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	2	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?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	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?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	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	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	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

Black Torrington CE Primary School Black Torrington Beaworthy Devon EX21 5PU

Wednesday 5 October 2005

Dear Children

Thank you for welcoming me to your school. I really enjoyed talking to you and visiting your lessons. You are very polite and helpful and I can see why you like coming to school. You get on well with each other and the adults who look after you. Thank you for sharing your ideas and your work with me and telling me what you enjoy about your school. I think you have done a really good job with the nature garden, which I know you help to grow things in and keep tidy.

To make your school even better, I have asked your headteacher and governors to look at how you could improve your work in solving mathematical problems, reading and writing. I think some of you need to learn more quickly in your lessons. I have asked your teachers to make sure their marking comments tell you how to improve your work and to watch your progress more carefully. I also think you need to know more about people who come from different cultural backgrounds than you.

I think that you are very lucky to be at your school and that you have lots of opportunities to do exciting things in your lessons and after school. Thank you again for being so helpful and friendly.

Yours faithfully

Rashida Sharif (Lead inspector)