



# Lady Modiford's Church of England (Voluntary Aided) Primary School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 113481  
**LEA** Devon  
**Inspection number** 279178  
**Inspection dates** 7 June 2006 to 7 June 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Lorna Brackstone AI

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Walkhampton
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided		Yelverton
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 11		Devon PL20 6JR
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01822 853277
<b>Number on roll</b>	114	<b>Fax number</b>	01822 855632
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mrs C Taylor
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	22 May 2000	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Gavin Hamilton

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Lady Modiford's is a small church school situated in the village of Walkhampton, on the western slopes of Dartmoor National Park. Nearly all the pupils are of White British origin and most come from favourable socio-economic backgrounds. Few pupils are eligible for free school meals and the proportion with learning difficulties is below average. When children start in the Reception Year, their attainment is average overall although abilities are wide-ranging. Many have good speaking and listening skills and are confident learners. At the time of the inspection, the headteacher was newly appointed and had been in post for only five weeks.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to pupils' overall achievement, the quality of teaching throughout the school and the provision for Reception children.

The overall effectiveness of the school is inadequate, as is the value for money provided. Although standards are broadly average at the end of Year 2 and above average at the end of Year 6, pupils' progress is inconsistent and inadequate overall as they move up through the school. Weaknesses in teaching have resulted in considerable underachievement in some year groups. Shortcomings in the curriculum for the Reception Year, particularly the lack of practical activities and inadequate use of the outdoor area, also result in children making too little progress during their first year in school.

Although the school has significant weaknesses, it also has some good features. It is a welcoming community where pupils' personal development is given a high priority and good care is provided for their personal well-being. Pupils enjoy coming to school, behave well and have good attitudes to learning. Parents are pleased with the school and feel that 'it is a friendly school with a good atmosphere'. The school has made insufficient progress since its last inspection and has declined because it has not used the assessment data available to it to ensure that all pupils do well enough. The main issues identified at the last inspection have not been dealt with properly and the governing body has not held the school to account for this. Currently, with the appointment of a new headteacher, the school is demonstrating that it has the necessary capacity to rectify its weaknesses. This term, regular checking of teaching and learning has been introduced and a process of rapid improvement has begun.

The new headteacher has made an accurate evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses and the school has a clear understanding of what needs to be done. The headteacher has already gained extensive support and involvement from the local authority. He also has the support of the staff and of the vast majority of governors. However, the roles of subject leaders are underdeveloped and governors are not sufficiently involved in moving the school forward.

### What the school should do to improve further

- rectify the weaknesses in teaching to ensure that all pupils do as well as they should in all year groups.
- make better use of assessment data on individual pupils to check how well the school is meeting their needs and to identify how they can improve their work
- improve the curriculum for children in the Reception Year by increasing opportunities for learning through practical and outdoor activities

- develop further the role of subject leaders and governors in supporting school improvement.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 4**

Achievement and standards are inadequate because many pupils are making inconsistent progress and, in some years, are working significantly below their capabilities. Pupils with learning difficulties are the only group of pupils who make consistently satisfactory progress.

Attainment on entry to the Reception Year is average and most children start school with a good vocabulary and high levels of confidence. They do not do as well as they should in the Reception Year because the quality of teaching and the curriculum provision are inadequate. Consequently, they do not start Year 1 of the National Curriculum with the expected levels of attainment.

Underachievement continues for the pupils in Year 1 who share the same class as the Reception children. Pupils make good progress in Year 2 because teaching is good and, as a result, attain average standards in the national tests. However, in relation to their starting points and capabilities, pupils' achievement could be higher. The weaknesses in the Reception and Year 1 provision have resulted in the end of Year 2 results declining in recent years.

Pupils do not achieve as well as they should in Years 3 and 4 because teaching is inconsistent. Good teaching in Years 5 and 6 ensures that pupils reach above average levels in mathematics and science. However, English standards are not as good and this affects the quality of work in other subjects such as history. In the 2005 national tests, pupils did less well than they should have done in English given their starting points in Year 3. The school has failed to set itself challenging targets for improvement in standards and, in particular, has not ensured that its most capable pupils reach their full potential.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils' social skills are particularly well developed during 'circle time' when they sit together to discuss matters of importance to them. Good moral development is evident in pupils' consistently good behaviour. Pupils have a good understanding of the difference between right and wrong and older pupils successfully sort out playground differences as 'peer mediators'. Pupils respond well to opportunities for responsibility.

Attendance is satisfactory but has declined in recent years because of some parents taking their children out of school for holidays. Pupils have good attitudes towards school and this is particularly pleasing to parents. Nearly all pupils say they enjoy school and feel secure. Bullying is not a problem and pupils have a clear understanding

of whom to go to if they ever need help. Pupils are confident; one parent explained that the pupils gain a great deal of their confidence 'from the school's policy of encouraging pupils of all age groups to interact'.

Pupils contribute well to the village community through involvement in school fairs and by inviting elderly residents to join them for lunch. By raising funds for people less fortunate than themselves, pupils gain a good understanding of the wider community.

Pupils understand how to be safe and show a good awareness of what they can do to keep healthy. Overall, pupils build up appropriate basic skills to suitably prepare themselves for later life.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 4**

The quality of teaching and learning is inadequate overall. This is because teaching is inconsistent, resulting in pupils not making sufficient progress in each year. The headteacher has successfully introduced a whole-school approach to planning where the purpose of each lesson is clear; this has started to make a positive impact on learning in some classes. He has inspired the teachers to use interesting activities that stimulate an enthusiasm for learning. For example, while providing added variety and stimulation to an English lesson in Years 3 and 4, a part-time teacher covering absence used the popular notion of a 'superhero' extremely well to help pupils understand the importance of using speech marks in their writing.

Recently, teachers have encouraged pupils to play a more active role in their learning by sharing thoughts with partners and using signals, such as 'thumbs up' to show that they have understood the lesson. Pupils with learning difficulties are supported well by teaching assistants who have a good understanding of their specific needs.

In several year groups, teachers have an inadequate understanding of all pupils' needs. They fail to ensure that work is at the right level or to create an exciting environment in the classroom that supports learning. In some classes, lessons are dull, move at a slow pace, and there is too much use of low-level worksheets. As a result, pupils are insufficiently motivated, do not do as well as they should, and the more capable ones underachieve. The headteacher has helped teachers to improve the quality of their marking and this is reflected in the feedback given to the pupils during the past few weeks.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum is satisfactory overall and the requirements of the National Curriculum for Years 1 to 6 are satisfactorily met. Provision for personal, social and health education is good and contributes well to pupils' personal development. However, opportunities

for pupils to apply and develop their literacy skills are not fully exploited, particularly in classes where too many worksheets are used.

Many pupils benefit from the very good range of after-school activities, which contribute to their enjoyment of school and provide opportunities for them to keep healthy. Visits such as the residential trip to Dartmoor and trips to Normandy enhance their learning and provide pupils with good stimulation. A strong feature of the curriculum is the 'Wake and Shake' club held every morning to motivate pupils and prepare them for the day's learning. This ensures that pupils are alert and well prepared to learn each day.

Although the curriculum is adequate for pupils in Years 1 to 6, it does not meet the needs of children in the Reception Year. This is because the children are not given sufficient opportunities to learn through practical activities that reinforce key skills. The outdoor area is not used to provide learning opportunities for these young children.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 3**

The quality of care, guidance and support for pupils is satisfactory, making a positive contribution to their well-being and enjoyment of school. Child protection arrangements are secure. The headteacher has ensured that systems to monitor health and safety and risk assessments are now properly established. Since the arrival of the present headteacher, much-needed improvements have been made to the school building and the surrounding site. A clear plan of action has been drawn up to make further improvements. Guidance for pupils about health and safety is good and, as a result, they feel safe and have confidence in the adults in school.

Having recognised shortcomings in the way pupils were supported in their academic work, the headteacher has introduced consistent systems for marking books. In conjunction with staff, he is developing a more rigorous system for tracking pupils' progress and identifying challenging targets for them in subjects other than English. Although pupils with learning difficulties make better progress than other pupils, their targets in individual education plans are very broad and success is not easily measured.

Links with parents to support their children's needs are improving and most parents are pleased with an increase in communication this term. In the past, reports to parents have been inadequate because they have not provided guidance on how parents can support their children. However, in recent weeks the staff have developed a new report system which addresses these issues.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

Improvements have taken place this term, which reflect a satisfactory quality of leadership and management. The new headteacher is already providing the school with a clear educational direction. A number of important weaknesses within the school have been accurately identified and effective action is being taken to bring about

improvement. Where necessary, the headteacher has liaised closely with the local authority to gain further support. Improvements are being seen in better quality lesson planning, a safer start to the school day and improved communication with parents.

The teaching staff feel 'inspired' by the action taken this term and morale has improved. A new team spirit is starting to flourish. Staff have gained a clearer picture of their roles and responsibilities and are now poised to lead and manage within their subject areas. Most, but not all, parents are pleased with the changes being made.

The chair of governors and other key governors work well in conjunction with the headteacher. However, despite making a successful appointment in the new headteacher and the majority of them supporting the changes, not all governors are sufficiently focused on rectifying the school's weaknesses. Over time, governors have not held the school to account for the decline in standards in Year 2 and the underachievement of pupils overall.

Self-evaluation is now satisfactory. It was previously inadequate because there were no procedures in place to monitor the performance of teachers, the quality of learning or to analyse whether pupils were making enough progress in relation to their starting points and capabilities.

The school's progress since the last inspection has been inadequate. However, on the basis of the effective action taken this term, and the support that the headteacher has from staff and the vast majority of governors and parents, the school is demonstrating that it has the capacity to improve.





## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</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>	4	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	4	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	No	NA

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	4	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	NA

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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	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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	4	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	3	NA
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	3	NA

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	4	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	4	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	4	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
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 Children

Thank you for the part you played in the inspection of your school. We very much enjoyed meeting you and getting to know your school.

These are the things we found that your school does well:

your new headteacher knows what needs to be done to make sure that all of you have the best possible education

you like school and you know that the adults in school will listen to your worries and concerns

you are well behaved and show high levels of respect for each other

your personal development is good; for example, you understand the importance of keeping healthy by exercising regularly and eating sensibly.

These are the things we have asked the school to do to make it better:

ensure that all your lessons are taught well so that you achieve as well as you can

make sure that your teachers check on your progress and that you are given regular help on how you can improve your work

make sure that the learning for the younger children is exciting and interesting, with well-organised opportunities for practical activities and outdoor work.

ensure that the teachers and all governors are involved in the way the school is run.

Thank you again for helping us find out more about your school and best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely Mrs Lorna Brackstone (lead inspector) Mr Don Kimber (team inspector)