

Membury Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113101
Local Authority	Devon
Inspection number	289508
Inspection date	23 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Michael Barron

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	17
School	
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Samantha Dare
Headteacher	T C Weatherley
Date of previous school inspection	5 March 2001
School address	Membury Near Axminster EX13 7AF
Telephone number	01404 881491
Fax number	01404 881491

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a very small village primary school. Pupils come from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds. The number of pupils with learning difficulties is about the national average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school which provides pupils with a satisfactory education.

Attainment on entry to the Foundation Stage is broadly average but varies from year to year because of the small number of children entering the school. Children make satisfactory progress as a result of satisfactory teaching and usually reach the expected standards in all areas of learning by the time they enter Year 1. The quality of teaching is satisfactory throughout the rest of the school and ensures that most pupils make satisfactory progress. However, pupils with learning difficulties make good progress because of the good quality of targeted support they receive. Whilst standards in Year 6 are presently average and represent satisfactory achievement for this group of pupils, the school is aware that standards in writing are lower than in mathematics in nearly all year groups.

Pupils enjoy school and say that they feel a part of a large family. They have a good community spirit and describe their school as a happy place. Their personal development and well-being are good and this is reflected in their outstanding behaviour and positive approach to their work. They display responsible attitudes and respect for others. They make sensible and healthy choices and have a good awareness of the need to keep safe. Pupils say there are very few instances of bullying and that they feel well looked after. Parents value the good level of care and support the school offers their children and this was reflected in positive comments in parents' questionnaire replies.

The curriculum is satisfactory and is enriched by a range of additional activities that further develop pupils' skills and their enjoyment of learning. However, pupils do not have enough opportunities to develop their understanding of the multicultural nature of British society. Whilst provision for pupils with learning difficulties is good, there is less provision for gifted and talented pupils. The level of care, guidance and support for pupils is good, although teachers' marking does not always give pupils enough guidance on how they can improve their work.

Leadership and management are satisfactory and the school displays a satisfactory capacity to improve. The headteacher has led and managed the school well through a recent period of considerable changes to the governing body. She has ensured that the school has analysed its performance satisfactorily in order to develop a realistic understanding of what it needs to do to improve. This is reflected in both the relevance of school improvement planning and the way in which the school has tackled many of the issues raised during the last inspection.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop and implement strategies to improve pupils' achievement in writing.
- Increase pupils' awareness and understanding of the multicultural nature of modern British society.
- Ensure that marking consistently provides pupils with effective guidance about how to improve their work. A small proportion of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Children's standards when starting school in the Foundation Stage vary from year to year but are broadly average overall. Pupils make satisfactory progress in all year groups because of satisfactory teaching. Standards in Year 6 are presently similar to the national average although the school's results in the Year 6 national tests have varied in previous years because of the small number of pupils involved. The school has recently introduced strategies to successfully improve achievement in mathematics. However, pupils' progress in writing still lags behind their progress in other subjects and the school recognises this as a key area for development if standards are to improve.

Pupils with learning difficulties make good progress and achieve well because their needs are clearly identified at an early stage and they receive a consistently good level of support from the school.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are friendly and polite and their behaviour is outstanding. They display a great deal of care for each other's welfare, especially when they play together in the school's sloping playground. As one older pupil put it, 'We try to take care of the younger children'. Pupils know there is always someone to turn to if they have a problem and say that they feel safe and that adults deal quickly with rare instances of unkind behaviour.

Pupils make satisfactory progress in developing their literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills in preparation for the next stage of their education. Their attendance is good and they have positive attitudes towards learning. Pupils talk excitedly about their favourite subjects, especially mathematics, although they are less enthusiastic about science and religious education.

Pupils have a good understanding of the importance of keeping fit and making healthy choices, especially about what they eat. They enjoy taking part in activities such as the wide range of after-school clubs on offer from such a small school. They talk enthusiastically about the school's good links with the community, including events like the annual sports day and village barbecue.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is good and pupils have developed a good understanding of right and wrong. Visits to places of interest, for example Kilmington Farm and Brownsea Island, help bring learning alive and provide pupils with experiences of life outside their immediate locality. However, pupils do not all have a realistic understanding of the multicultural nature of modern British society.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Lessons are well structured and teachers use a variety of approaches to try to make learning interesting. Pupils with learning difficulties are well supported and make good progress as a result. However, although teachers usually try to ensure that pupils in the school's two mixed-age classes are provided with appropriate activities, there are instances when the work set for pupils does not match their learning needs. Pupils say that sometimes the work is either too hard or

too easy. When this happens, pupils are not sufficiently challenged by their work and this slows their progress.

Children in the Foundation Stage make satisfactory progress because they are provided with a suitable range of activities which often blend independent learning with teacher directed tasks.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Provision in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory and contributes to children's enjoyment of learning and their developing independence. However, the lack of suitable outside facilities limits opportunities for children to build up the skills associated with outdoor play.

Throughout the rest of the school, the curriculum suitably ensures that the school's topic cycle takes account of mixed-age classes. ICT facilities, criticised by the previous inspection, are now satisfactory and pupils have opportunities to learn French. Provision for personal, social and health education is good and ensures that pupils become aware of the importance of fitness and well-being. Pupils talk enthusiastically about the extra-curricular activities the school provides for them, especially the popular football coaching sessions. Interesting visits and visitors to school increase their enjoyment of learning and their knowledge of the immediate world around them. The good links between the school and the village community further enrich their learning opportunities. However, pupils are not provided with enough opportunities to broaden their understanding of the customs and traditions of people in Britain from different cultural backgrounds to themselves.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

There is a real family atmosphere about the school and this contributes well to pupils' enjoyment of learning and their sense of well-being. Parents feel very welcome in the school and comment about the 'very caring attitude' of the teaching staff. Induction and transfer arrangements are good and help pupils to quickly settle into new routines. Health and safety arrangements are good and risk assessments meet current government guidelines. Robust child protection procedures are understood and followed by all staff. The school works well to ensure that pupils who have particular learning needs are well supported and is in the process of developing links with outside agencies in order to support gifted and talented pupils.

Procedures to track pupils' progress are thorough and pupils know and understand their learning targets. However, the quality of teachers' marking is variable and does not consistently provide pupils with effective guidance about how to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher is an effective leader with a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. She has worked well with her staff to develop a vision of what the school needs to do to improve. Recent initiatives have already led to an improvement in standards in mathematics, although the school is aware there is still a need to raise pupils' achievement in writing.

The governing body has gone through a period of enforced changes since the last inspection and was, for a short time, unable to fulfil its statutory duties. Since its reconstitution, many governors have become involved in school life and the governing body is now once more beginning to offer the school the support it needs and offer constructive criticism when appropriate.

The school works closely with parents and regularly seeks their views. However, some parents do not feel that the school takes enough account of their views. Good links with external agencies, for example educational psychologists, help to support pupils with learning difficulties effectively.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

¹ 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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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

23 May 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Membury Community Primary School, Membury, EX13 7AF

Thank you for making me feel very welcome when I visited your school. I really enjoyed my day and especially enjoyed seeing you work in lessons and talking to some of you about what you like the most about your school.

Here are some of the things I particularly like about your school:

- Membury Community Primary School gives you a sound start to your education and makes sure you make satisfactory progress.
- You really enjoy being at school and like most of the subjects you are taught.
- You are very friendly and you behave really well.
- The school looks after you well.
- Your headteacher, staff and governors are working to make sure that your school continues to improve in the future. I believe your headteacher and teachers can do some things to make your school better. I have asked them to:
 - Help you to improve your writing skills.
 - Make sure that when your teachers mark your work, they always give you ideas about how you can improve.
 - Help you to find out more about the customs and traditions of people living in this country who are from different cultural backgrounds. You can help your school to get even better by continuing to work hard.

I wish you the very best for the future.

Yours faithfully

Michael Barron Lead inspector