



Shute Community Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 113109
Local Authority Devon
Inspection number 289512
Inspection date 8 November 2006
Reporting inspector Graeme Bassett

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Shute
School category	Community		Axminster
Age range of pupils	4-11		EX13 7QR
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01297 33348
Number on roll (school)	71	Fax number	01297 33348
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Alan Morbey
		Headteacher	Amanda Graham
Date of previous school inspection	12 March 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average village primary school with a rising number on roll. There are three classes each having a mixed age range. The school serves mainly the local area but also accepts an increasing number of pupils from further away, many with learning difficulties and disabilities. Nearly all pupils are White British.

There have been two changes of headteacher since the last inspection. The current headteacher took up her appointment in September 2006.

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. The main reason for its effectiveness is that it is well led and managed. The headteacher, staff and governing body have a clear vision for future developments and build upon previous good progress to make the school even better. Governors carry out their responsibilities well and recently demonstrated this convincingly through their rigorous approach to the selection of the new headteacher. Issues from the last inspection have been dealt with in full. Based upon the good track record of pupils' achievement and the leadership of the headteacher and governing body, the school's capacity for further improvement is good. Standards vary from year to year because of the small size of each year group and because the number of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities in each class varies. Many children enter school with overall standards that are below and often well below the expected level, especially in literacy. As a result of consistently good teaching and learning pupils' achievement is good and standards are significantly above average at the end of Year 6.

Teaching is particularly effective in Years 3 to 6 and because of this pupils' progress accelerates and their achievements are often outstanding in this age range. Good intervention and questioning strategies help pupils to gain new understanding and skills rapidly. Learning support assistants are deployed well to support pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. Pupils' standards in writing in Years 1 and 2, although improving, are not as good as in reading and mathematics. This is because opportunities for pupils to write are not regular enough or structured sufficiently.

The good curriculum includes strong cross subject links and promotes highly effective development of pupils' literacy skills in Years 3 to 6. According to many children, activities in many subjects are interesting and fun. The Reception Year curriculum is good. It includes many stimulating activities to give children a strong start and enables them to make good progress.

Care, support and guidance given to all pupils are good and, as a result, their personal development and well-being are developed well. The care for pupils is good and this is supported by the warm and caring atmosphere within the school. Pupils' behaviour is good and they have a good understanding of how to remain safe and have a healthy lifestyle. All pupils are fully involved in all that the school does. Support for pupils' learning is effective and results in pupils understanding their good targets for improvement. Assessment records are very detailed but are not as easy to use as they might be to enable teachers to check that each pupil is on course to reach predicted standards during each year. Teachers' marking tells pupils how they can improve their work, but teachers do not always give enough encouragement to pupils to correct their work when mistakes have been made.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide more structured opportunities for pupils in Years 1 and 2 to formally record their ideas and discoveries so that they improve the standard of their writing.
- Encourage pupils to correct their work in response to teachers' marking.

- Refine the assessment records so that teachers can more easily and frequently check up on whether each pupil is on course to reach predicted standards.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Although natural variations in the small year groups of pupils lead to standards changing from year to year, pupils' achievement is good. Standards in English, mathematics and science are significantly above average by the end of Year 6.

In most years, attainment on entry to the Reception Year is below the level expected. In some years, children's literacy skills are well below the expected levels, particularly those in early writing. Children get off to a good start in the Reception Year but writing skills are often still below the expected level when children reach the end of the school year and standards in writing remain below average through Years 1 and 2. Throughout Years 1 and 2 pupils make good progress except in their writing skills. Standards at the end of Year 2 have improved well over the past two years and are broadly average in reading and mathematics. Pupils' progress accelerates in Years 3 to 6 and especially through Years 5 and 6, resulting in high standards. Because of this pupils are prepared well for their future lives and their well above average standards of basic skills set them up well for their secondary schools. Throughout the school, the significant number of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities do as well as others in relation to their starting points and capabilities.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and pupils flourish in the positive and caring atmosphere of the school. They are polite, courteous and get on well together. Pupils show good respect for adults and each other and this is reflected in the 'family group' meetings in which older pupils support younger ones well. This enables pupils to play an important part in the pupils' contribution to the school community and they are also actively involved in taking decisions about school improvement. They have positive attitudes to school and enjoy learning but attendance is satisfactory rather than good. This is because a few parents take children out of school for family holidays.

Behaviour is good and pupils have an extremely good understanding of the difference between right and wrong. Pupils say that they feel safe and happy in school and are confident about approaching an adult if they have a concern. They are outward looking and sensitive to the needs of others. This is particularly evident in their enthusiasm about the video conference link to be made with a school in Nepal and the way they were inspired to raise funds towards the earthquake relief fund in Pakistan.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Good planning results in pupils being provided with purposeful and enjoyable activities in lessons. For example, one child on entering the reception classroom said, 'Wow, it's a castle today.' Through such means as making the classroom environment interesting and the use of interactive whiteboards, children are engaged and motivated to learn. There are good examples of pupils developing their skills in writing as they get older but for the youngest pupils this is not always the case. Opportunities are not always provided frequently enough to enable pupils to build on their skills and record their ideas.

Carefully prepared lessons enable pupils of similar abilities, but from different year groups within each mixed aged class, to pursue the same tasks. This effective matching of tasks to pupils' differing needs supports their learning well. The relationships between adults and pupils are good and consequently pupils are confident in lessons and willing to have a go.

Targets set for each pupil are relevant and precise and feature strongly in the teachers' planning. Pupils speak knowledgeably about what they need to do to improve. Teachers do not, however, always encourage pupils to correct their work in response to the comments made in the marking. As a result, there are missed opportunities to move learning on even more effectively.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Pupils' work, which is based upon different themes, involves well planned cross subject links that make topics interesting and meaningful for pupils, and supports them in making good progress. This is particularly strong in Years 3 to 6 in improving literacy skills although the use of information and communication technology is less well developed to enhance these links. The Reception Year curriculum is well organised and promotes effective learning. Good provision is made for children to develop their independence and ability to think for themselves, getting them off to a good start to their personal development. Throughout the rest of the school, the curriculum also contributes well to pupils' enjoyment of school and their personal development. Some

pupils reported that in art they are able to choose what they want to make, 'so we can design our own things'. The school has good links with other schools and also the local community with all pupils taking an active role in the village show. Many clubs ranging from the Spanish club and sports clubs to the gardening club, organised by governors, are well supported by pupils throughout the school. Many pupils take part in sporting activities with other schools.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Staff know the pupils well and, through a range of good assessment procedures and observations, they are able to provide well for each pupil's personal development and well-being. All issues relating to child protection and health and safety identified at the last inspection have been resolved fully. There is now good attention to pupils' personal welfare and there is particularly strong development of their healthy lifestyle. Assessment records are good. They contain accurate information about each pupil's long-term progress which is used well to plan tasks that match the targets set for each pupil to promote their learning effectively within the mixed aged classes. However, the records are not as easy to use as they might be to check that each pupil is on course to reach predicted standards during each year. The pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are cared for and supported extremely well. The school works very closely with parents. They are fully involved in their children's education and many help in the classrooms.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

In the short time since the appointment of the headteacher, she has already evaluated effectively the strengths and weaknesses of the school and gained the good support and confidence of the staff, parents and pupils. The school is continuing to build on the good progress it has made since the last inspection. There has been an effective analysis of the priorities in the school improvement plan in order to raise standards, especially in writing, in Years 1 and 2. A clear vision of how the school can develop further in the future is established and shared by staff and governors. The school recognises that an improved format for assessment information will enable teachers to more easily check each pupil's progress towards their predicted standards during each year.

Leadership and management and responsibilities are delegated well and this is the reason improvement has been sustained for several years now. The governing body has a strong influence upon the development of the school. Subject leaders conscientiously monitor and develop their subjects and have a good understanding of their responsibilities. The checking of the quality of pupils' work and of lessons and the evaluation of whole school performance undertaken by senior staff are accurate.

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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?	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	2
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

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ 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

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	2
The attendance of learners	3
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	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
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.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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 making us so welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking with you and looking at your work. We saw how well you all get on together. We found your school to be a happy place. It is providing you with a good education. These are the things that are particularly good:

- Your school is well led and managed by the headteacher, staff and governors.
- Your behaviour and care you have for each other are good.
- Your teachers teach you well and help you by planning and explaining things to you in interesting ways so that you enjoy your learning.
- By the end of Year 6 you have made good progress and reach high standards.

Even though your school is good, we want it to improve even more and have asked your headteacher and governors to:

- help the teachers to plan more opportunities for the younger children to improve their writing to the same level as their reading and mathematics
- encourage you all to correct your work by following up what your teachers ask you to do when they write comments in your work
- improve the way your teachers keep information about your progress so that they can check up to see if you are reaching the targets set for you at the end of each year.

Thank you once again for helping us on our visit.