



# Shirwell Community Primary School

Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 113167  
**Local Authority** Devon  
**Inspection number** 289531  
**Inspection date** 25 January 2007  
**Reporting inspector** Alexander Paul Baxter

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	School Lane
<b>School category</b>	Community		Shirwell
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4-11		Barnstaple EX31 4JT
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01271 850295
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	38	<b>Fax number</b>	01271 850295
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	David Thompson
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Theresa Winter
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	7 May 2002		

<b>Age group</b> 4-11	<b>Inspection date</b> 25 January 2007	<b>Inspection number</b> 289531
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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

## **Description of the school**

This very small primary school accepts pupils from the village and further afield. No pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and with a statement of special educational need is above average. The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic groups and who have English as a second language are below average. Children's attainment on entry varies, but their skills and experiences generally match those expected for their age.

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

This school provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. It is beginning to re-establish more effective achievement for the pupils after a period of uncertainty in staffing. Care, guidance and support are good. A warm, caring ethos contributes well to the pupils' good personal development and well-being. The pupils' behaviour is excellent and they apply themselves with increasing diligence as they grow older. Their good attendance reflects their enjoyment and wholehearted involvement in school. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe and how to live healthy lifestyles. Most parents speak highly of the school. They appreciate its warm and friendly atmosphere and report that pupils feel well cared for and grow in confidence.

Standards vary each year, reflecting the range of individual abilities, often within very small year groups. Provision for children in their Reception year is satisfactory and ensures that most children develop the skill expected for their age. Standards in Year 6 are broadly average showing that most pupils achieve satisfactorily. Mathematics is an exception, where pupils achieve well and attain above average standards. Pupils with complex learning difficulties progress well in relation to their capabilities because they are very closely supported by learning support assistants. Despite some improvement, the pupils' writing, and their investigative skills in science, should be developed further.

Leadership and management is satisfactory overall. The headteacher's absence during the past year weakened the focus on improving pupils' academic achievement. Leaders became less clear about variations in achievement and expectations through the school. This constrained pupils' achievement more than the school's view of its good effectiveness would suggest. Since her return the headteacher has, through committed teamwork, re-established a satisfactory quality of self-evaluation. This is seen, for example, in the strengthening focus on improving pupils' writing. The roles of subject co-ordinators and governors are still not fully developed in terms of their contribution to monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the school.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory and enables pupils to make sound progress. In some lessons, for example, in mathematics, good teaching moves pupils' learning on at a more rapid rate. However, sometimes, teachers do not use marking precisely enough to show pupils what they need to do to improve. As a result, some more able pupils do not always achieve as much as they should in writing. The curriculum is satisfactory. It is enriched by well attended clubs. These are proving beneficial in developing the pupils' good personal qualities. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to develop their enquiry and investigative skills and this is limiting their achievement in science. Overall, there has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection and the school is demonstrating a satisfactory capacity to improve further.

## What the school should do to improve further

- Raise pupils' achievement and standards in writing, particularly punctuation and spelling in Years 3 to 6, and investigation skills in science throughout the school.
- Improve teaching and learning to match the quality and consistency evident in mathematics.
- Develop the roles of subject coordinators and governors and strengthen their contribution to monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the school.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 3

Standards are currently average in Year 6 and, with improved stability in staffing, achievement is satisfactory by the time pupils leave the school. Pupils with complex learning difficulties and disabilities generally make good progress in relation to their capabilities because of the additional adult support they receive.

Children make satisfactory progress in their Reception Year. Children do well in their personal, social and emotional development. Overall, most reach the standards expected of them on starting Year 1. Progress improves steadily through Years 1 and 2. Consequently, standards are above average in mathematics, reading and more recently in writing. Standards are average in science, where weakness in pupils' enquiry skills limits their learning.

Pupils continue mostly satisfactory progress in Years 3 to 6. They progress well in mathematics, where they show particular enthusiasm to the challenges presented to them. However, a few more able pupils do not always progress as well towards the targets set for them in writing, particularly in punctuation and spelling. Investigative skills in science are also relatively weak. Standards are above average in mathematics and average in English and science. More recently pupils' writing is showing signs of improvement.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good, including for children in Reception. Behaviour and relationships are excellent. Several parents wrote that 'Children love school and are polite and sociable.' Pupils enjoy coming to school and this is seen in their good attendance. They say 'We mix together well and get lots of attention from friendly teachers.' Parents are particularly pleased by their children's enthusiasm for school.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The pupils show good awareness of the needs of others. They learn well from each other and from the caring role models of all the adults who work in the school. Pupils have a good understanding of healthy, safe lifestyles and have benefited from activities leading to 'Healthy School' status. Pupils contribute well to the community, for example, through performances,

produce sales and support of children's charities. The pupils participate well during discussions in class and are very knowledgeable about recycling. However, despite good work in the past, the school council is not operating currently. This is a weakness that is limiting the pupils' opportunity to express their views. Even so, their broadly average skills equip them satisfactorily for their future well-being.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teaching and learning are satisfactory, including in Reception. Renewed stability in staffing is helping to improve the quality and consistency of teaching and learning. Teachers promote warm relationships and manage pupils' behaviour well. These develop pupils' positive attitudes to learning. These also support the challenging teaching and good achievement evident in mathematics. Teachers increasingly use ICT, develop role play opportunities and make useful links between subjects to enrich learning. Teachers and their capable assistants very closely support pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities.

Other aspects are not developed as consistently through the school. Whilst all pupils are included socially, occasionally, more able pupils are not challenged fully. In science, for example, they have limited opportunity to follow their own lines of enquiry. Younger children, too, do not always have sufficient opportunity to initiate their own learning.

Expectations of pupils' writing, especially in Years 3 to 6, are not always consistent. Displays of pupils' writing show improved presentation and descriptive writing skills. In contrast, the quality of pupils' spelling and punctuation in writing books remains relatively weak. Across the school, teachers give useful oral feedback to pupils about their work. However, teachers are not using marking precisely enough to show pupils how to make best progress.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum is satisfactory. There is good enrichment of the pupils' personal qualities from a range of activities and clubs. Outdoor and indoor facilities, including for children in Reception, and provision for ICT have been improved since the last inspection. These help to meet the pupils' differing needs and enable them to become healthy and safe learners. There are very good links with outside agencies, especially in supporting pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. There is a good emphasis on the expressive arts and an improving use of literacy and ICT skills across the curriculum. There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to use and develop their enquiry and investigative skills to best effect. This is limiting their progress, particularly in science.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Care, guidance and support are good. Pupils benefit from being part of a secure and caring community. The school is meticulous and very effective in safeguarding the pupils' well-being. Parents are confident that their children are safe at school. All pupils receive good pastoral support and guidance for their personal development. Staff work well with parents to sustain this, as seen in the school's positive response to their request for more clubs. Pupils with complex learning difficulties and disabilities benefit from very close adult support. Pupils receive good academic guidance in mathematics, but it is not as consistent in other subjects.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher plays a key role in promoting a welcoming, caring ethos. Staff and governors give effective support to the nurturing of the pupils' good personal development. Parents strongly appreciate this aspect of school life. The headteacher, ably supported by the chair of governors, encourages a team approach to management. The headteacher's absence during the past year constrained the team's ability to monitor the school and improve pupils' achievement. Renewed stability in staffing, combined with committed teamwork, has re-established a satisfactory quality of self-evaluation. This is evident in the more effective focus on developing pupils' writing and the continuing good achievement in mathematics. The roles of subject coordinators and governors are still not fully developed in terms of monitoring and evaluating school effectiveness. Strengths continue in promoting pupils' good personal development. The good improvement in pupils' ICT skills and the increased range of extra-curricular activities since the last inspection also show that the school has the capacity to improve.

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## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</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>	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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

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

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

<sup>1</sup> 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

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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**

Thank you for welcoming me when I visited your school. I enjoyed the day I spent in your school. You all made me feel very welcome.

These are the main things I found out about your school:

- It is a satisfactory school. The headteacher, staff and governors are working together to help you make better progress.
- You treat each other in a very kindly way and your behaviour is outstanding.
- The staff take good care of you, especially those of you who need extra help.
- Generally, you make steady progress and meet the standards expected by the time you leave the school, but you are good at mathematics.
- You enjoy school and attend well. You know how to keep healthy and safe.
- The quality of teaching is satisfactory, and many of you are trying to improve your learning.

To help your school to improve further, I have asked the headteacher and staff to help some of you to improve your punctuation and spelling when you write. I have also asked them to give you more opportunities to investigate and learn better in science. In addition, I have asked the leaders and managers of your school to improve the way they check how well you are doing.

It is important that you continue to try hard and look after each other.

Thank you once again and good luck in the future.