

# North Tawton Community Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	113259
<b>Local Authority</b>	Devon
<b>Inspection number</b>	289564
<b>Inspection date</b>	3 May 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Eileen Chadwick

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	147
School	
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Ian Perrior
<b>Headteacher</b>	Nicholas D'Agorne
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	12 February 2001
<b>School address</b>	Exeter Street North Tawton EX20 2HB
<b>Telephone number</b>	01837 82284
<b>Fax number</b>	01837 89140

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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

This primary school serves the town of North Tawton and surrounding area. It draws its pupils from socially and economically diverse backgrounds. Pupils' attainment on entry is below that expected because a substantial proportion has limited communication skills when they join the school. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is average, although the number with statements of educational need (the highest form of need) is well above average. The school has gained the Healthy Schools Award. The current headteacher was appointed in 2003.

## 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 and improving school. It provides pupils with a well rounded education and enables them to successfully develop their academic, creative, practical and sporting skills. The headteacher is a strong leader. The school has come a long way in the last few years under his leadership and standards are improving. Pupils' behaviour is good and this provides a springboard for their learning. School leaders and staff work closely together, intent on raising standards further and making the school even better. The school has a secure knowledge of its strengths and clear plans to tackle weaker areas.

Pupils achieve well but progress varies between year groups. In Reception, satisfactory teaching leads to children's satisfactory progress. Standards remain below expectations by the start of Year 1. Good teaching and progress in Years 1 and 2 raise standards to average in reading and mathematics by Year 2, although standards are below average in writing. In writing, most pupils progress well but the progress of lower attaining pupils sometimes slows when writing tasks are too hard. Standards in Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics have improved in recent years and pupils are now better prepared for their junior education than in the past. Pupils make good progress in Years 3 to 6. By Year 6, standards are broadly average in English and mathematics, although spelling is often a weaker area, despite the good progress now being made.

The overall quality of teaching is good. Teachers manage pupils well and usually make sure all abilities achieve well. However, in Reception, work set is sometimes too hard for lower attaining children in literacy and numeracy. Occasionally, in Years 1 and 2, writing tasks are not fully matched to the needs of lower attaining pupils.

The personal development and well-being of pupils are good. They enjoy their lessons and this is reflected in their good attendance. This stems from a good curriculum that is particularly strong in the arts and sport. It is enriched by a wide range of activities outside normal school hours and by interesting visits. The quality of care, support and guidance of pupils is good. Pupils are well cared for, feel safe and develop an excellent understanding of how to keep healthy. Academic assessment is generally good: rigorous assessment in Years 1 to 6 and close monitoring of pupils' progress has led to a sharper focus on making sure teaching matches pupils' learning needs. However, assessment systems in Reception are less rigorous, despite much effort to bring provision in Reception up to the same standard as the rest of the school. This prevents school leaders thoroughly evaluating children's progress in order to quickly improve it.

Leadership and management are good and very good in the case of the headteacher. He has been the driving force in the improvements seen since the previous inspection. Self-evaluation is accurate and has identified the right priorities for improving pupils' achievement. Effective monitoring and evaluation procedures have given school leaders a clear understanding of what needs to be done to raise achievement.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Raise achievement in Reception by strengthening the teaching of basic skills and by improving checks on how well children are learning.
- Raise standards in writing and spelling throughout the school and make sure teaching always meets the needs of lower attaining pupils.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Pupils' overall achievement is good. Their attainment on entry is below average and, by Year 6, they reach broadly average standards in English and mathematics. For several years, Year 2 standards were exceptionally low, which left a legacy of weak basic skills in Years 5 and 6. The school is successfully addressing the poor start that these pupils had in Key Stage 1.

Children make satisfactory progress in Reception, although standards are below those expected in literacy and numeracy on entry to Year 1. Recent enhancement to provision for Reception has improved children's achievement but the progress of lower attaining children still occasionally slows when the activities that they are given are not well matched to what they already know.

Pupils make good overall progress in Years 1 and 2. By Year 2, pupils reach average standards in reading and mathematics, although standards are below average in writing. The proportions working at average and higher levels have increased substantially this year, especially in reading and mathematics. This is due to improved reading systems, rigorous assessment and more challenging learning opportunities. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are given good support to help them catch up in reading and mathematics. However, lower attaining pupils' progress sometimes slows in writing when the steps in learning are too hard for them.

In Years 3 to 6, pupils' progress in relation to their starting points is good. These pupils catch up well from their earlier underachievement in Key Stage 1. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress. Pupils make impressive progress in writing in Years 5 and 6 but weaknesses in spelling for average and lower attaining pupils still limit writing standards to some extent. Standards in English, mathematics and science national tests for Year 6 pupils have been broadly average for the past three years. However, a dip occurred last year when over a third of all pupils in Year 6 had learning difficulties. Throughout the school, pupils make good progress in art and design, design and technology, and sport.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 2

Pupils are well behaved, courteous and polite. Relationships are good among pupils of different ages, abilities and from different backgrounds. This is a major reason why pupils enjoy school. Pupils feel secure and safe and are sure that bullying is rare and promptly dealt with. They usually work hard and have good attitudes to learning. However, on the few occasions when learning does not meet their needs, their concentration begins to wander and they can become distracted. They take responsibility well, for example, when representing their class on the school council. They develop an excellent understanding of the importance of living healthy lifestyles and take part in regular physical activity with enthusiasm. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They know right from wrong and learn about different cultures. Pupils make a good contribution to their community, for example, by caring for and improving their local environment and recycling waste. They are well prepared for their economic well-being. Pupils make good progress in literacy and numeracy, develop good decision making and teamwork skills, and gain understanding of the world of work.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good overall but with some variation in different year groups. In Reception, there are sound opportunities for children to learn through practical activity. However, there is not always a close enough match to children's previous skills, especially for lower attainers. This slows children's progress in aspects of literacy and numeracy. Throughout the school, good relationships between staff and pupils, and between the pupils themselves, create a positive learning atmosphere. Teachers manage pupils well and use a wide variety of approaches which engage pupils' interest. They deploy information and communication technology (ICT) resources well to facilitate learning. Pupils are enabled to learn successfully through listening and watching as well as through problem solving. However, occasionally, in Years 1 and 2, writing tasks are too hard for lower attaining pupils when tasks do not build sufficiently on their reading skills. Teaching assistants provide good support for pupils' learning, especially for those with severe learning difficulties.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 2

The curriculum is broad, relevant and interesting. There is good provision for literacy and numeracy in Years 1 to 6 but there are some weaknesses in Reception. The school has stepped up its provision for the teaching of reading and this is having a positive impact on raising standards in Years 1 to 6. There are some high quality learning opportunities in subjects such as art and design, design and technology, and sport. Meaningful links are made between subjects to build pupils' enjoyment and learning, for example, between writing and design and technology. The curriculum is further enhanced by a wide range of visits, visitors and out-of-class activities. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties is good. Learning opportunities for more capable pupils are good in Years 1 to 6. Close links with local primary schools and the secondary school enrich pupils' learning and personal development.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 2

Pupils feel well looked after and are confident to approach adults if they have a problem. The friendly atmosphere and strong sense of community help them feel secure. Procedures for child protection, together with those for health and safety, are good. The school has good procedures for making sure children settle easily into Reception. Strong links with outside agencies help staff to provide good support for pupils with severe learning difficulties and disabilities. Systems for tracking pupils' progress, particularly in English and mathematics, have been substantially improved in recent years. However, the school is fully aware that more rigorous checks on children's progress are needed in Reception, where assessment systems are in place but weaker than in the rest of the school. Individual targets give pupils a clear understanding of what they must do to improve.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

The headteacher has brought vision and coordination to the work of the school. He has secured a strong school ethos with an emphasis on improving standards and achievement. School leaders have a clear shared vision and have built an effective team which works well together. Key staff make a strong contribution to pupils' achievement. Much improved systems for checking teaching and monitoring pupils' progress have led to higher standards for Year 2 pupils. Rigorous evaluation of the school's performance has resulted in the identification of what is working well and what is in need of improvement. This process of self-evaluation profitably involves other staff. However, in its efforts to be as self-critical as possible in order to boost standards, the school has evaluated its current overall effectiveness as satisfactory. This undervalues its achievements and the inspection finds it to be good.

School leaders have managed the intensive support provided by the local authority well. This was provided because of the decline in standards in Year 2 several years ago. In Reception, checks on progress have led to better provision for children than when previously inspected, though staffing inconsistencies have limited its full impact. The school is fully aware of the need to step up these checks in order to raise children's achievement in literacy and numeracy. The leadership provided by the governing body is satisfactory. The chair of governors is knowledgeable and provides a strong lead to other governors. They are supportive but, as many are new, they are still receiving training for their roles. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory, mainly due to accelerated progress since the current headteacher's arrival. The school has good capacity to improve further.

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## Annex A

## 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>
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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>	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	3
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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
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	3

### 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	2
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	1
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

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

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

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

4 May 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of North Tawton Community Primary School, EX20 2HB

Thank you for taking part in the inspection of your school. I enjoyed talking to you and seeing you at work and play. I am writing to thank you for the help you gave me and to let you know what I found out about your school. Firstly, you need to know you go to a good school. These are some of the good things about your school.

- Your headteacher leads the school well and has ensured all the staff work as a team for you.
- You make good progress in your learning in Years 1 to 6.
- You enjoy school and get on very well with each other.
- You have really good opportunities for art and sport and to learn through visits, visitors and clubs.
- Teachers make sure you are cared for well and you are kept safe. . Here are the things we are asking the school to change:
- For those of you in Reception, make sure that your progress is as good as in the rest of the school by teachers never giving you work that is too hard or easy.
- Make better checks on how well you are learning in Reception.
- Making sure all of you improve your writing and spelling.

You can help your teachers by making sure you continue to work hard at improving your reading, writing and mathematics.

Thank you again for being so helpful.

Yours sincerely

Eileen Chadwick Lead inspector