

Kentisbeare Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113357
Local Authority	Devon
Inspection number	289597
Inspection date	28 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Jonathan Palk

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	162
School	
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Gill Persey
Headteacher	Tracey Hailey
Date of previous school inspection	15 April 2002
School address	Kentisbeare Cullompton EX15 2AD
Telephone number	01884 266330
Fax number	01884 266330

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This small primary school, located in the centre of the village, has grown rapidly in recent years. High numbers of pupils join the school other than at the normal time of admission. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds and speak English as their first language.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

As one parent neatly summed up, 'Everyone enjoys the experience' at Kentisbeare. This view was echoed by parents in their letters and by the pupils who talked with inspectors. There is certainly an impressive buzz and enthusiasm for learning in this village school.

The school provides a sound education and has some strong features. A good curriculum fosters and encourages pupils to grow in confidence and broaden their skills. The personal development and well-being of all pupils are outstanding. There is a wide variety of enrichment activities that encourage pupils to stay fit and healthy. Children in the Reception Year are given plenty of opportunities to pursue their own ideas and develop creative skills, and this continues throughout the school. This ensures a good platform for moving on to secondary school. Attendance and behaviour are good. Pupils make an excellent contribution to the school and local community.

Standards are average across the school in English and mathematics. Achievement over time is satisfactory but progress is not consistent year on year. There is too much variation in the progress pupils make in mathematics from the Reception Year through to Year 4. Pupils' writing still lags some way behind that of reading, and more able pupils in particular could achieve more in this area. By Year 6 pupils have reached their expected targets but this represents satisfactory, rather than good, gains in relation to their starting points.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Pupils achieve well in science, information and communication technology (ICT) and in art because these subjects are taught well. Teachers plan work that excites and motivates pupils but their expectations of what they could achieve in some subjects are not always high enough. Not enough use is made of information from assessment to extend pupils' learning.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The parents value the emphasis placed on educating the 'whole child', and the leadership's commitment to high quality pastoral care. The school has managed the substantial growth in pupil numbers well. The school knows where its weaknesses lie but there is not enough focus on whether new initiatives are improving pupils' progress. Generally the school requires more robust management. Progress since the last inspection and recent improvements to the curriculum show that the school has satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the rate of progress in mathematics from Reception through to Year 4.
- Improve the rate of progress of more able pupils in writing.
- Raise achievement by making better use of assessment to check how well pupils are doing and to plan suitably challenging work in lessons.
- Ensure that school evaluation is more focused on the impact on pupils' progress.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Attainment on entry is broadly average. Progress in the Reception Year is satisfactory. However, there are shortcomings in the way in which work is matched to needs, particularly in early writing and mathematical development, that restrict what children achieve. Throughout the school pupils make good progress in reading, reaching above average standards. Achievement

in science is also good and standards are above average because of the emphasis on extending pupils' thinking through investigative work.

Progress in writing and mathematics is more variable. Standards are below average by the end of Year 2 because not enough pupils reach the higher levels. Present standards in Year 6 are above average and better than in the previous three years. The reason for this is that half of these pupils joined the school in Year 5 with above average standards. The group of pupils who have been at school from the end of Year 2 reach average standards and have made satisfactory, if uneven, progress. Several initiatives have been started, to raise standards in writing through the school, that are beginning to have an effect, particularly for less able pupils. These are yet to produce substantial improvement for the more able. Progress in mathematics is variable, and often unsatisfactory between the Reception Year and Year 4 because work is not always well matched to pupils' needs. Emphasis on mental arithmetic, clear targets for improvement and good quality investigative work have helped pupils to catch up in Years 5 and 6; their progress has been good.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Children's personal and social skills develop well in the Reception Year. Children learn to share and work together and are confident in choosing their own activities. Pupils' skills in working independently and in groups, for example, on the computers and during environmental lessons, are excellent by Year 6. This has a very positive impact on their enjoyment of school and the success with which recent arrivals settle in. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good in lessons and around the school. Older pupils use their initiative in looking after younger ones during playtimes.

Pupils' preparation for life after school is good and enhanced by ICT skills, problem solving skills and teamwork. They have an exceptionally well developed sense of responsibility to the community and, through the school council, have organised fund raising to increase the amount of playtime resources. Pupils have an excellent understanding of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle. They are very aware of the importance of keeping themselves safe. The pupils have very positive attitudes to sport and all are keen to represent their school. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, with many participating actively in village life and in activities with other schools. In this relatively monocultural community, pupils' understanding of cultural diversity is impressive.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

There is some excellent teaching for the older pupils that has the right pace, combined with high expectations of the pupils, and challenges their thinking. The school recognises not all teaching is as effective. Daily planning is adequate, but not detailed enough to meet the full range of needs. This leads to slow progress by too many pupils in mathematics. Teachers are not always confident about judging pupils' standards and challenging them to reach high targets. Hence, questions are not demanding enough and there is not a clear enough focus on what is expected of pupils of different abilities.

There are clear signs that teaching is improving. There is a good buzz about some lessons because the activities are practical and well chosen to interest the children. Pupils with learning difficulties benefit from a range of proven strategies to improve their skills in small group reading and mathematics lessons. Lessons are well managed and teachers make good use of the pupils' excellent personal and social skills to ensure they learn well together.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy the good balance of activities provided in lessons and elsewhere. They have many 'favourite' subjects, particularly art and ICT. There is a busy, but well organised, programme of visits and visitors, special events and 'themed' weeks that make a very good contribution to the pupils' personal development. The school has risen well to the challenge to make the curriculum more interesting and engaging. Curriculum planning now provides a number of well linked themes that develop a creative curriculum. For example, a Year 6 poetry lesson successfully combined environmental studies with photography and art. Greater priority is being given to the development of writing skills through finding relevant purposes for writing and through the use of ICT. This is beginning to have an impact, although there is still more to do to raise standards in this area.

Resources and accommodation for reception children have improved well and this has largely resolved the issue about provision from the previous inspection. Very good provision in ICT enriches the curriculum and helps pupils develop good independent learning skills.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Assessment procedures are improving but the impact is still variable. Not all teachers use assessment information systematically in their planning or establish high enough expectations in their lessons. Pupils are beginning to understand their targets but the impact of these is limited. Pupils' targets are not routinely referred to by teachers when marking work or during lessons and this limits their value in helping raise standards.

Pupils who need extra academic or pastoral support are identified early because the headteacher and teachers take time to get to know all pupils well. Adults check carefully to safeguard children's best interests. Staff are approachable and the parents comment positively on high levels of pastoral care.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The school's evaluation of its performance is satisfactory, but not rigorous enough. Strategies such as talking with pupils, routine checks on teaching and learning, and reviews of test results enable the school to identify priority areas for development. However, planning for improvement is not systematic and assessment data is not analysed to judge whether action is having an impact on pupils' progress. Systems have been recently introduced to provide a record of standards in each year group, but these have not been analysed with sufficient rigour. Consequently the school has not reached a clear view about the progress pupils of differing abilities make through the school and across different subjects. The school development plan

is inadequate; it lacks precise time scales and measurable targets against which success can be checked.

The headteacher, staff and governors share a sense of purpose. Consequently there have been significant improvements in some aspects of provision, particularly the teaching of science and ICT, which have led to good pupil achievement in these subjects. The governors provide the headteacher with good support but do not challenge the school enough in relation to the standards achieved. They take careful account of parents' and pupils' views, resulting in the vast majority of parents responding very positively when asked about the effectiveness of the school.

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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>	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?	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

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	3

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
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	1
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	1
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?	3
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?	3

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

29 June 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Kentisbeare Church of England Primary School, Cullompton EX15 2DA

I am writing to thank you for welcoming us to your school when we visited recently and to explain what we found out. We had an enjoyable day and were very pleased to see your work, to visit your lessons and to talk with your teachers, governors and some of you. Your school is satisfactory with some important things that are good, in particular, the excellent way that you mature and take on responsibility as you go through the school. There are some exciting lessons prepared by your teachers and they provide a lot of extra activities to ensure you really enjoy your learning. Most of you learn as well as you should because the teachers manage and organise the lessons well. You are beginning to know your targets and have worked hard on your writing. We thought that the way you use art and the computers to help with this makes a big difference. Your attitudes and behaviour are good. You obviously thoroughly enjoy your lessons and other activities because you have good attendance and take part in many clubs. The staff care a lot about your well-being and you really understand how important it is to stay fit and healthy. We were impressed with how well you have all helped children who have recently joined your school to settle in. This shows that you care for each other. I know that the school council has already made a good start on helping make the school better for you all. Here are the things we have asked staff to improve on to make your learning better:

- Make sure that you make better progress in mathematics.
- Help those of you who are quick to learn to produce better written work.
- Make sure they all know how well you are doing with your learning and ask you harder questions in lessons.
- Become more thorough when planning what to improve and keep a better track of how well you are doing to help you make better progress.

Thank you once again. We hope you enjoy the rest of the term and have a good summer holiday.

With best wishes

Jonathan Palk Lead inspector