

Lynton Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113451
Local Authority	Devon
Inspection number	289633
Inspection date	1 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Peter Clifton

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	96
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Wilde
Headteacher	Jayne Peacock
Date of previous school inspection	14 January 2002
School address	Market Street Lynton EX35 6AF
Telephone number	01598 753309
Fax number	01598 753309

Age group	4–11
Inspection date	1 May 2007
Inspection number	289633

© Crown copyright 2007

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average school serving a wide coastal area of North Devon. There are four mixed-age classes. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is average. However, there is an high proportion of pupils with statements of special educational need. Attainment on entry to the school is broadly in line with age related expectations, although it varies from year to year due to the small numbers. Nearly all pupils are of White British heritage. The school very recently formed a federation with two other local schools, under a single governing body and headteacher. This cemented the informal links between the schools that had been developing for some time.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to the standards reached and progress made by pupils, and the quality of the teaching. Weaknesses in these areas means that the school's overall effectiveness is inadequate.

The progress pupils make through the school is inconsistent. Consequently pupils' achievement is inadequate and standards below average. Provision in Reception is satisfactory. Children settle in quickly and grow in confidence. They make satisfactory progress and reach standards that are at or slightly above the expected levels by the end of the Reception Year. This progress is not maintained and standards are below average by the end of Year 2 with a particular weakness in writing and mathematics. By Year 6, overall standards are below average and well below average in mathematics. This underachievement by pupils is a consequence of significant staffing difficulties which have resulted in inadequate teaching. The headteacher has taken firm measures to resolve this and current action is beginning to improve pupils' progress and achievement to a satisfactory level. Progress has not been fast enough to overcome the legacy of underachievement. A key weakness in teaching is in the inconsistent use of assessment information to plan the next steps of learning for different groups of pupils and low expectations of what pupils can achieve. This has resulted in pupils not doing well enough, particularly those who are capable of working at the higher levels. Pupils' achievement in mathematics has been especially weak because opportunities for pupils to apply their skills and understanding are inconsistent. Too much time is spent on practising basic skills. The school has recognised this and introduced changes. Pupils' recent work shows improvement being made.

There are some strengths in the school. Pupils behave very well and nearly all have positive attitudes to learning. They feel very safe in school and many comment positively about several aspects of school, for example, that the school has made them 'better listeners'. The school has a strong family atmosphere and older pupils take pride in playing with and looking out for younger ones. Overall, pupils' personal development and well-being are good and their attendance is average. Parents support the work of the school well. The school cares for the pupils well and provides satisfactory academic support and guidance. Key changes, such as improvements in the way the school tracks the progress of individual pupils, have been established and these are now providing secure information. Pupils are given individual learning targets to reach. However, target setting is not yet firmly established and, as a result, some pupils are not clear about how to improve aspects of their work. Care, guidance and support are satisfactory overall. The curriculum is also satisfactory and many pupils enjoy the after-school clubs and the good range of trips and visits.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher has established a clear agenda for improvement and is beginning to turn things around by drawing on the wider expertise available in the federation.

What the school should do to improve further

- Use information about pupils' current achievement to plan challenging work which will meet the needs of different groups in order to accelerate progress and raise standards, particularly in writing and mathematics.

- Provide more opportunities for pupils to apply their skills and solve problems, particularly in mathematics.
- Ensure higher attaining pupils have more consistent challenge.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Pupils' achievement is inadequate and standards are below average by the time pupils leave in Year 6. This is because the quality of teaching has not been good enough for several years.

Children make satisfactory progress in their Reception Year. They reach standards that are at the expected level across the areas of learning but slightly better in communication, language and literacy and in their personal and social development.

The results of the Year 2 national tests for the past five years show that standards have fallen markedly with a particularly sharp decline in 2005. In 2006, standards rose a little but were below average in reading and writing and mathematics, with mathematics and writing the weaker areas. Pupils make inadequate progress from their starting point in Year 1. There are too few pupils working at the higher Level 3.

In Year 6, standards in national tests improved between 2002 and 2004 and then fell markedly between 2004 and 2006 to a below average position because pupils did not do well in mathematics and science. Higher attaining pupils underachieved in mathematics particularly. Standards in English have been maintained at a broadly average position for the past three years. The progress made by Year 6 pupils in 2006 was well below that expected in English, mathematics and science. The current picture shows some improvement in learning during lessons and improving standards in Year 6. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make satisfactory progress overall.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils in the school are friendly and confident. They get on well together in classes and play together sensibly at break and lunchtimes. Good co-operation is very evident in the way they help each other to complete work in lessons. These positive attitudes are helping them to learn. Pupils enjoy playtimes because there are plenty of activities for them to enjoy. They say that behaviour is getting better and comment that they now only get 'a few yellow cards'. They are very aware of keeping themselves safe out of school.

Overall, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Their social and moral development are the stronger areas. Pupils show a keen sense of right and wrong and accept that they are all different. They contribute to the school community by taking on responsibility willingly and are well informed about the work of the school council. Pupils have a good understanding about the types of food they should not eat too much of. They think that the dinners provided are healthy. Most pupils expend much energy at break and lunchtimes and eagerly join in extra sporting activities. Although pupils' personal development is good, their inadequate academic achievement results in them not being sufficiently well equipped for their next stage of learning.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 4

Inadequate teaching is the main reason that pupils have not achieved well enough. Teachers manage pupils effectively and successfully foster good relationships. Teaching assistants effectively support individual pupils. Their enthusiasm and skill in teaching groups, such as in Year 6, who need their standards and confidence boosting, is helping pupils to catch up well. The principle weakness in teaching is that teachers' expectations about what can be achieved by the pupils are too variable. Teachers are not consistently setting work that requires pupils to think hard and draw on previous knowledge and understanding. This is because teachers are not using assessment information sufficiently well to plan new and challenging work. In mathematics there are too many basic repetitive sums being completed. As a result, higher level skills are not being developed sufficiently well, particularly by higher attaining pupils. The final parts of lessons are not used well enough to extend learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is adapted well to the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. All subjects are suitably planned and there is a good emphasis on being fit and healthy. Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is good and provides pupils with a clear understanding about living together in a small community. Provision in the Reception class is limited by an over-dependence on adult led activities which reduces children's opportunities to make choices and engage in investigative activities. This accounts for children's satisfactory rather than good progress. Pupils enjoy a wide and interesting range of extra clubs and trips. Many visitors come into the school to talk to the children. Overnight camping trips and night time forest walks are remembered as being fun and exciting. Pupils say the recent visit of the African drummers was really good.

Changes made to improve opportunities for pupils to develop their mathematical problem solving skills are beginning to raise standards and build confidence. However these are not yet sufficiently well established across all classes.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Good pastoral support and care ensure that the pupils grow in maturity and care about each other. Teachers know the children well and respond positively to any issues that they raise. Pupils who have challenging behaviour are supported sensitively yet firmly and they are well settled in lessons. Safeguarding procedures are in place and meet requirements.

The academic support pupils are given is satisfactory. Pupils know what they are learning on a lesson by lesson basis and know where to find their individual targets for improvement, which are clearly displayed in classes. However, these are still very new and their use has not yet been embedded into the normal classroom routines. Consequently their usefulness is currently limited.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher provides clear educational direction for the school. Priorities are identified accurately and there are appropriate strategies in place to promote improvement such as the new target setting arrangements. Teaching is carefully and systematically monitored and draws appropriately on external support. Strengths and weaknesses are clearly identified and followed up. However, the response of some teachers to these improvements has been slow.

Leaders have a good system in place to track the progress of individual pupils and this clearly identifies pupils who are falling behind. However, this information has not been used well enough by teachers in planning work, although the specific booster sessions for Year 6 are well organised and are helping pupils to improve.

Although the school has not made sufficient progress from the previous inspection, improvements now being made are strengthening progress to a satisfactory level and the federation has provided a much wider resource base of expertise which is now being used to help the school. The school's capacity to improve is satisfactory. The governors have only very recently been appointed, however the chair is very knowledgeable about areas that need to be improved.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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
--	-----------------------

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	4
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	No

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4
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?	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	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	4

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	4
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?	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	4
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?	Yes

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

2 May 2007

Dear Pupils,

Lynton CE Primary School, Field Market Street, Lynton, EX35 6AF

Thank you for our very warm welcome to your school. We enjoyed talking to you in lessons and during your playtimes and were very impressed with how friendly you were. We think your personal development is good. You gave us a lot of valuable information and this was a great help to us. We think your school looks after you well but is not giving you a good enough quality of education to enable you to make the progress you are capable of or reach high enough standards by the time you leave. We found that the curriculum and the care, guidance and support you are given are all satisfactory but that teaching needs to be improved. The school is led and managed satisfactorily.

What we most liked about your school:

- You get off to a secure start in Reception.
- You teachers make sure that you are kept safe.
- You have positive attitudes to learning and you behave well.
- You help each other in lessons to understand the work.
- You develop your skills well and learn more in the after school clubs and visits to different places.
- You have a good understanding about how to stay healthy.

We found that improvements are needed and have asked your headteacher and others to:

- help you improve more quickly in writing and mathematics by making sure that the work given to you is not too easy or too difficult
- give you more opportunities to solve problems in mathematics
- make sure that those of you who find learning easy have more difficult work.

We hope your school continues to improve.

Yours faithfully,

Peter Clifton Lead inspector