

St George's Church of England Infant and Nursery School

Inspection report - amended

Unique Reference Number	113456
Local Authority	Devon
Inspection number	289637
Inspection dates	28 February –1 March 2007
Reporting inspector	Graeme Bassett

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	203
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sheila Bloomfield
Headteacher	Bridget Johnson
Date of previous school inspection	5 March 2001
School address	Jackets Lane Northam Bideford EX39 1HT
Telephone number	01237 477262
Fax number	01237 477262

Age group	3–7
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Amended Report Addendum

Report amended due to administration error

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average school with six infant classes and a Nursery class for 52 children. The school serves the immediate locality around the school and also accept some children from further afield. Most pupils are White British and very few are learning English as an additional language. Although the economic circumstances of families in the local area are broadly average, some families face more challenging circumstances. The proportion of pupils that has learning difficulties and disabilities is higher than usual. The school has a 'Healthy schools' award.

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 where pupils achieve well. The headteacher has created a strong and very dedicated team that works conscientiously to give good support, care and guidance to each pupil. Leadership and management are good. The headteacher, supported well by the assistant headteacher, gives a clear direction to the work of the school. As a result of good evaluation of how well the school is doing, significant improvements have been made since the last inspection and the capacity for future improvements is strong.

Parents express very positive views about the school and many say that they 'feel fully involved with their child's learning'. Relationships between children and adults are very good and this creates a happy environment where each pupil is fully involved in all that the school does and is truly valued. As a result, pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good. They do very well in understanding how to remain healthy and safe, and preparation for their next school and for their future well-being is good. Their behaviour is good and attendance is better than average.

Pupils achieve well and by the time they leave in Year 2 standards are broadly average. Children enter the Nursery class with standards that are generally below expected levels, especially in their speech and language development and in their social and personal skills. With effective teaching and good quality provision throughout the Foundation Stage, children do well during their early years in school. As a result, although standards are below average, about half of them are currently on course to reach the expected goals by the end of the Reception Year. Because of the skilful teaching throughout Years 1 and 2, pupils enjoy their work and continue to achieve well. Pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding continue to improve so that by the end of Year 2 standards are broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics. More able pupils succeed well to reach the higher levels in reading and mathematics but do not do well enough in writing. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress because of the fervent dedication shown to them by all staff, especially the teaching assistants.

As a consequence of the effective leadership and management of numeracy and literacy, teachers are successfully raising standards in these subjects. The curriculum is well planned and subjects are linked effectively under themes to make learning more meaningful to all pupils. Tasks planned for those with learning difficulties and disabilities, including the significant number of pupils with a statement of special needs, are structured well. These factors also contribute to pupils' good achievement. However, there are some inconsistencies in the way teachers keep pupils informed about what they are expected to learn in each lesson and so they do not have a clear understanding of how well they are doing. Likewise, the comments in the marking of work do not always give pupils enough guidance about what they need to do next to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that all pupils, but especially the more able ones, are set more challenging tasks in creative and factual writing in order to raise standards.
- Make sure that teachers remind all pupils what they are to learn at the beginning of each lesson so that pupils can tell whether they have learnt what is expected.
- Make certain that the comments that teachers make when marking work help pupils to understand what they have to do next to improve their work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' achievement is good and standards are broadly average by the time they leave in Year 2. Children enter the Foundation Stage (Nursery class) with standards that are below expected levels overall. A significant number of children are a long way behind in their personal, social and emotional skills and this contributes to the weaknesses in the early development of their communication and language skills. By the time children join the Reception classes, most have made good progress in all areas of learning, especially in their social skills. However, there are still many who have weaknesses in their writing, speaking and listening skills. Good progress continues throughout the Reception classes and by the end of the year about half of the year group have caught up, but standards overall are still below average.

Pupils continue to achieve well in Years 1 and 2, so that by the end of Year 2 standards in reading, writing and mathematics are broadly average. Even so, standards in writing are still slightly lower than those in reading, because more able pupils do not do well enough. Pupils' work in art, information and communication technology (ICT) and music is above average. The pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities achieve well because of the good support they are given. There is no significant difference between the performance of the boys and girls.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy school and have positive attitudes to work and play. The few pupils who find it less easy to conform are managed well and nearly all pupils are friendly and well mannered. Pupils have a growing awareness of different faiths, customs and cultures. For example, children in the Foundation Stage enjoyed the recent celebration of the Chinese New Year.

Children settle quickly into the Foundation Stage classes. They join school confidently because of the home visits made by teachers, which establish good communication with parents. Pupils, throughout the school, develop good skills such as taking turns and expressing their feelings, which prepares them well for their future well-being. They understand the importance of eating fruit and drinking water as well as taking plenty of exercise. School council members take their role seriously and say they 'would like even more jobs and responsibilities'. All pupils develop good attitudes to the needs of others, and charity fund raising forms part of their good understanding about living in the community. Attendance is improving and so far this school year is above average.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well because of good teaching. Teachers plan tasks that build effectively upon pupils' previous learning. Good questioning techniques extend pupils' knowledge well and colourful class displays value their work. Nevertheless, tasks in some lessons do not always extend the writing skills of more able pupils enough and teachers' expectations are sometimes too low for these pupils. In some lessons pupils are not able to judge how well they are doing in their work because they are not told what they are expected to learn. Teachers' written remarks effectively praise pupils' efforts but comments to show pupils what they need to do to improve are often missing.

Good uses of the interactive whiteboards, including video clips, stimulate pupils' enjoyment in their learning. The use of ICT to support other subjects, especially art and writing, helps pupils to maintain concentration very well.

Teaching assistants support pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities very well. They enhance the quality of teaching effectively and play a vital role in the improvement of pupils' reading and writing skills.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is broad and balanced with a strong emphasis on developing pupils' literacy, numeracy and computer skills. Themes link subjects together well to create meaningful topics to capture pupils' interest. However, the development of writing skills is not always planned sufficiently in other subjects.

Provision in the Foundation Stage is good, very well planned, has a strong focus on promoting personal development and meets the needs of pupils well. Personal, social and health education is very well established through the curriculum, enabling pupils to learn how to stay safe, care for their environment and keep healthy. Pupils enjoy a good range of sporting activities and after school clubs. Visits into the community and further afield, and visitors, such as the storyteller, who come to share their interests and experiences with pupils, help to make a lively and enjoyable curriculum.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school is very effective in supporting all pupils especially those with social and emotional difficulties. There are very good links with many outside agencies and the home-school link worker plays an important role in supporting many families, through visits and workshops. Pupils are given every chance to catch up with their reading and writing and they succeed and make good improvements because support and guidance is organised consistently well through small group tuition. All pupils are encouraged to express their feelings and views and this develops their confidence and self-esteem and ensures that they feel well cared for. Teachers maintain accurate records for each pupil to show their progress in literacy and mathematics. The school is now developing its analysis of data to review and set challenging targets in all areas. However, pupils' involvement in self-assessment and in setting their own targets is underdeveloped. Arrangements for child protection, including the safe recruitment of staff, are robust.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher provides a clear direction for school improvement. Leadership and management foster an atmosphere that supports very good levels of care and well-being. This has a good impact upon pupils' personal development and well-being. The leaders for literacy and numeracy provide clear direction for the improvement of these subjects. Pupils' work is monitored well and tracking of their progress is skilful especially in their literacy development.

Good and conscientious monitoring and accurate appraisal are regular features of whole school evaluation. The school's improvement plan identifies very clear strengths and weaknesses and correctly emphasises the development of pupils' writing and the need to raise standards as priorities.

Governors have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the school and they have taken an active role in improving the inside learning environment since the last inspection. The development of resources, especially equipment and the deployment of teaching assistants, is good. However, their overall contribution is satisfactory as they do not always pay sufficient attention to the outdoor facilities and condition of the building.

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Annex A

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	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	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	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	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.

Annex A

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	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

Annex B

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 particularly liked the way you all get on so well together. We found your school to be a good school and a happy place. It is providing you with a good education. These are the things that are particularly good.
- Your school is led and managed well and your headteacher has clear ideas about future developments.
- You make good progress and by the time you leave, your standards in reading, writing and mathematics are about the same as most other children in the country.
- You are all developing good attitudes towards your work and towards each other.
- The teaching is good and your teachers plan lessons that you enjoy.
- Your attendance is now good and you behave well in and around the school.
- The adults in your school care well for all of you.

Even though your school is a good one, there are still some ways in which it could be even better. We have asked your headteacher and governors to:

- Ensure that all of you, but especially those that find work easier, are given more challenging tasks in your creative and factual writing so that you can do even better.
- Make sure that your teachers remind you at the beginning of each lesson what you are to learn so that you are able to judge whether you have been successful.
- Make certain that the comments that your teachers make when marking your work help you to understand what you have to do next to improve your work.

Once again thank you for your help.