



Bickleigh Down Church of England Primary School

Inspection Report - Amended

Unique Reference Number 113493
Local Authority Devon
Inspection number 289652
Inspection dates 2–3 October 2006
Reporting inspector John Carnaghan

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	School Drive
School category	Voluntary aided		Woolwell
Age range of pupils	4–11		Plymouth PL6 7JW
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01752 301837
Number on roll (school)	353	Fax number	01752 301838
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Roger Carlton
		Headteacher	Christine Deykin
Date of previous school inspection	16 September 2002		

Age group 4–11	Inspection dates 2–3 October 2006	Inspection number 289652
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Amended Report Addendum

Report updated to resolve formatting inconsistency

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by a team of three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Bickleigh Down School lies on the northern edge of Plymouth. It is larger than most primary schools. The area it serves is relatively prosperous, but there are some small pockets of deprivation. The school has fewer than usual pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities and very few whose first language is not English.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Bickleigh Down is a good school with much to commend it. Pupils work hard, they behave well, their standards are above average and they achieve well. There is a happy atmosphere and pupils rightly believe they are well cared for. Most parents express great satisfaction with the school.

The school is well led and managed. The headteacher is a cheerful presence and this helps set the positive ethos. When weaknesses in the school's performance are noted, leaders and managers usually take direct effective action. The school uses assessment information well to set clear achievable targets for pupils. These are regularly shared with both pupils and parents. An outcome of this practice was the improved Year 6 test results in 2006. Management and teaching in the Foundation Stage are very good, enabling the children to make a flying start to their school careers.

Teaching and learning are generally good. Much of the teaching is well planned and both motivates and interests the pupils, so that they enjoy school and are keen to learn. The teaching in the Foundation Stage is consistently good. In some lessons, either there is not enough challenge to stretch the more able pupils, or the school's effective behaviour policy is not used well enough to maintain good order. These relative shortcomings occur because the monitoring of teaching is not always completely effective. There are many strengths in the curriculum, including the curriculum in the Foundation Stage, the use of specialist teachers and well-attended extra-curricular provision. In contrast, provision for information and communication technology (ICT) lacks substance, resulting in achievement that is no better than satisfactory.

The pupils develop well spiritually and have a good sense of right and wrong. They are considerate for the safety and well-being of others. They like school, feel safe in it, and are positive and friendly both in and out of lessons. Pupils understand about the importance of leading healthy lifestyles. They have plenty of exercise and they eat healthily from the school canteen. They willingly take part in a broad range of school and community activities. The effective teaching and the pupils' readiness to learn enables them to develop well the skills and attributes needed in later life.

What the school should do to improve further

- ensure that the ICT curriculum provides better opportunities for pupils to improve their skills, knowledge and understanding
- strengthen aspects of teaching, to provide sufficient challenge for higher-attaining pupils and to consistently implement the school's behaviour policy
- ensure that monitoring of lessons is consistently effective in securing further improvements in the teaching.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils start school with average standards. With the good teaching and the strong support the school gives, they leave with above average standards. This means that their achievement is good. The school's emphasis on providing equal opportunities ensures that all pupils, including those with learning difficulties or disabilities, achieve equally well.

The youngest children are well nurtured in Foundation Stage. They quickly develop good work habits and achieve well, either reaching or exceeding their goals. Test results for Years 2 and 6 pupils indicate high standards but there was some slippage in the period 2002–2005, especially in mathematics. Robust action by the school has reversed this trend and the 2006 results, particularly in mathematics, were a significant step forward and confirmed the pupils' good achievement. The school set challenging targets for 2006 Year 6 test results and exceeded nearly all of them.

In most subjects, pupils perform well. The exception to this positive picture is ICT. There have been insufficient opportunities created to enable pupils to sufficiently develop their skills and their achievement in this area, which are no better than satisfactory.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development is good. Pupils enjoy lessons and behave well both in class and around the school. Pupils feel safe and know there is an adult to talk to if needed. Attendance is average. Pupils in the Foundation Stage are active learners, keen to experience new ideas. From the time they start school, pupils develop the skills needed to work independently and in teams.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The ethos of this church school is evident in daily worship, in which pupils engage enthusiastically, demonstrating good spiritual awareness. The pupils' understanding of other cultures is good, as a result of links with schools in different countries. Pupils have regular opportunities to become familiar with the multicultural nature of Britain. Pupils understand the benefits of leading a healthy lifestyle. They appreciate the many sporting activities provided and like the healthy eating initiative.

Pupils enjoy taking responsibility around the school and are given good training to enable them to carry out their duties effectively. The school council has suggested a number of improvements to the school environment and these have been implemented. Pupils make a satisfactory contribution to the local and wider community. Their good basic skills, independence and social development prepare them well for future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The school teaches pupils well and promotes good learning. Teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage are consistently good and are extremely well focused on the learning needs of individual children.

Teaching exhibits some praiseworthy characteristics. Classrooms are orderly and well organised and teachers invariably manage pupils with quiet assurance. They respect pupils and this is reciprocated, leading to a good atmosphere for learning in most lessons. Most pupils are keen to learn. They work happily in pairs and small groups and develop good independent learning skills from an early age.

Teachers use interactive whiteboards well. They use these to improve the pace of learning and to make explanations lively and accessible. Pupils are often invited to come up to the front of the classroom and they enjoy demonstrating their understanding by using the board. In contrast, the use of ICT to promote wider aspects of learning for the pupils sometimes lacks imagination.

Occasional lessons have weaknesses. Sometimes, there is a lack of challenge for more able pupils. Some teachers are inconsistent in their application of the school's behaviour policy, which can lead to disruptions to the pupils' learning.

Assessment is very good. Regular assessments lead to the accumulation of useful information on each pupil. This, in turn, results in the setting of clear regular targets for improvement and has a strong impact on promoting higher achievement.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. The teaching of French to all year groups has been an innovative recent addition to the curriculum. Excellent experiences provided in the Foundation Stage are giving pupils a very positive start to their learning journey. The ICT curriculum is a relative weakness because the development of ICT since the last inspection has been too slow, and standards in Year 6 lag behind those in other subjects. The use of ICT to support learning in other curriculum areas is patchy.

Learning is enlivened through the good use of visitors and visits, linked to year group topics. There is a good range of popular well-attended extra-curricular activities. The use of specialist teachers to deliver music and physical education to all classes has had a positive impact on their popularity. For example, all pupils in Years 3 to 6 now learn a musical instrument.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. The ethos of the school ensures that pupils feel valued and develop confidence from their start in the Foundation Stage and throughout the school. High expectations of behaviour are made explicit and are supported by a clear system of rewards and sanctions. Staff are well trained in child protection and effective procedures are in place to ensure that pupils are kept safe and feel secure. Good links with parents and outside agencies ensure that the needs of all pupils, including those with learning difficulties or disabilities, are fully met. Well-planned programmes for personal and social education and citizenship enable pupils to make good progress in their personal and social development and cultural understanding.

The school has good assessment and tracking systems which are used well to provide academic guidance. Pupils know their targets and what they need to do to improve. They are involved in setting some of them. Pupils with learning difficulties have thorough individual education plans and are given good support to enable them to achieve well.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management of the school are good because there is a constant focus on raising standards and monitoring pupils' achievement. Leadership of the Foundation Stage is very good.

Staff teams were reorganised in 2005 to improve planning and facilitate a more creative and exciting curriculum. There is a collective will to succeed and an enthusiasm amongst the staff to make this organisation work for the benefit of the pupils. The school has improved well since the last inspection and it has a good capacity to improve further.

Whole-school self-evaluation is well established and educational data is used well to set targets and review progress. Pupil tracking in Years 3 to 6 gives a clear idea of strengths and achievement. Although monitoring of teaching is not always regular and consistent enough, some specifically targeted monitoring has been effective. For example, in 2005, mathematics was identified as an underperforming area. The monitoring, support and feedback of teaching and learning resulted in impressive improvements in test results in this subject.

School development planning is based on a thorough and accurate knowledge of what needs to be improved. The school recognises that the current plan has too many priorities and is conducting a major review involving all management and leadership teams.

Governors are very supportive and hold the school to account well. They visit the school regularly, are fully involved in monitoring its work and act as a 'critical friend' for the leadership team.

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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	2
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	3
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	3
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?	3
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.

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	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

Thank you very much for being so friendly and helpful to the inspectors when we visited your school recently. We really enjoyed meeting you and your teachers.

We think that you are lucky to attend such a good school. It has many strengths; the most important are:

- you are well taught, your standards are high and you make good progress
- you behave well and work jolly hard most of the time
- the school is well run by the headteacher and all other staff
- you are well looked after by all adults in the school.

There are some things that could be improved; these are:

- you do not get enough chance to use computers, so standards in ICT are too low
- sometimes, teaching does not stretch you enough or make sure behaviour is always good.
The school needs to check up on teaching better to stop this happening.

Once again, thanks for your welcome when we were in the school.