



St Budeaux Foundation CofE (Aided) Junior School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 113483
Local Authority Plymouth
Inspection number 295621
Inspection dates 21–22 November 2006
Reporting inspector Brenda Cusdin HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary	School address	Priestley Avenue
School category	Voluntary aided		Higher Saint Budeaux
Age range of pupils	7–11		Plymouth PL5 2DW
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01752 365217
Number on roll (school)	204	Fax number	01752 351011
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	V S Armitage
		Headteacher	Robin Jones
Date of previous school inspection	23 May 2005		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The backgrounds of the pupils who attend St Budeaux Foundation C of E (Aided) Junior School are similar to many other schools. There are a few differences. Although the surrounding area is a diverse mix, there are more pockets of deprivation than is typical. More pupils have learning difficulties and disabilities than nationally. However, the average attainment of the pupils entering in Year 3 is above the national average. Many pupils transfer from the nearby community infants' school.

St Budeaux was placed in special measures in May 2005 because there were widespread weaknesses. There were difficulties in recruiting staff and staff absences. This led to a high proportion of temporary staffing. The nearby infants' school loaned their headteacher and literacy coordinator to St Budeaux last school year. A successful recruitment campaign secured a new, permanent headteacher for the beginning of this term and permanent teaching appointments for all classes.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

St Budeaux has made considerable improvements since its last inspection, despite huge staffing difficulties last year. The school has successfully tackled the weaknesses identified in the last inspection report. In accordance with Section 13(4) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures. The school's overall effectiveness is satisfactory and, in some respects, good.

The acting headteacher worked impressively to promote better quality in the classrooms and to raise achievement. The Year 6 results in 2006 were the best ever. Standards matched national averages, whereas two years ago standards in Year 6 were below average and achievement was poor. The 2006 Year 6 group achieved well in relation to their targets in English and science and reasonably well in mathematics, but the boys did not do as well as the girls.

Staff have been sensibly deployed to improve rates of progress and to combat the legacy of underachievement. Good assessment strategies pinpointed weaker groups and led to well thought out extra tuition. Improvement strategies adopted last year successfully ensured that pupils made satisfactory or good progress in most, but not all, year groups in English and mathematics.

The new headteacher has identified key priorities at this point in the school's improvement drive and in light of the staffing changes. He is making good headway with these. Staff are settling in well with their new classes and the pupils say, 'We've settled in with our new headteacher and he's got to know us all well.'

The quality of teaching and the curriculum are satisfactory overall and there are some good features. Rightly, teachers are challenged to use assessment to plan lessons tightly matched to their pupils' varying starting points. In some lessons, this productive approach works effectively. In other lessons, the pace of learning is satisfactory rather than good mainly because some groups' needs are not met quickly enough. The school has dramatically improved the use of information and communication technology (ICT) to enliven the curriculum and promote learning.

The personal development of the pupils is good. Pupils work well together in lessons and behaviour is good. They make a valuable contribution to school life. For example, they helped to decide which candidate should be their new headteacher. Proudly they say, 'We got it right.' St Budeaux is a caring school where staff see pupils' well-being as very important. Staff's hard work has delivered the big improvements in achievement in challenging circumstances, together with skilled leadership and management. There is good capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that pupils, especially boys, achieve well and consistently as they move through the school and make good progress in each lesson.

- Ensure that staff consolidate the considerable improvements in provision and extend the scope of their sound evaluation and planning strategies to current development priorities.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

The school is raising standards and improving the pupils' achievement. Currently, standards are close to national averages. Pupils are achieving satisfactorily and some are achieving well. More able pupils relish challenge in lessons. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are supported thoughtfully and achieve as well as others in their classes.

The Year 6 results in 2006 were the best ever. The school's targets for pupils gaining the expected Level 4 or above in English and science were achieved but the mathematics result was below target. Far more pupils achieved the higher Level 5 in English, mathematics and science than ever before. Higher attaining girls achieved really well in these tests but, overall, boys did not do as well as the girls.

Over the last year gaps in pupils' learning experiences from previous years became more evident. The school's efforts to plug these gaps were particularly effective for the Year 6 group sitting the tests. The school's assessments showed that by the end of last year most, but not all, year groups had made satisfactory or good progress during the year. The shortfall over the year was where staffing difficulties were most acute. Nevertheless, many pupils were making good progress in lessons at the time of the last monitoring visit in June 2006 and all were making satisfactory progress. During this inspection, pupils' progress in lessons was at least satisfactory in all classes.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral and social development, is good. This is reflected in pupils' enjoyment, positive attitudes and good behaviour both in lessons and around school. The pupils have a good understanding of the importance of a healthy lifestyle and how to stay safe.

Pupils enjoy taking responsibility and take this very seriously. For example, they describe prefects and peer mediators as 'contributing to our school by helping to make behaviour better.' They are very proud to have had an impact on the school community by their recent involvement in the appointment of their new headteacher saying, 'We got it right.' They appreciate the supportive ethos, underpinned by Christian values and beliefs.

Pupils gain a suitable economic understanding for their age. There is a keen emphasis on developing basic skills and a current priority is to provide more opportunities to use English and mathematical skills for real life purposes. The school is aware of the need to plan ways to raise pupils' aspirations for their future choices. Cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils' understanding of other cultures and cultural

diversity within Britain is developing. Pupils contribute to the local community through charities, such as a children's hospice, and there are developing links with the wider community.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and there are good features. Lesson plans are informative and ensure that everyone's attention is focused on key learning points. In the satisfactory lessons, key learning points are similar for all groups whereas in the most effective lessons they are pitched to be challenging but achievable for each of the different groups noted in the lesson plan. Teaching assistants and volunteers are well aware of the part they can play and they guide groups well.

Teachers carefully research and use stimulating resources. They vary activities through lessons to maintain the pupils' interest. Teachers use interactive whiteboards to introduce ideas, model what to do, and encourage pupils to share their ideas with everyone else. They purposefully encourage pupils to ask questions and say when they are unsure. As a result, pupils try hard and share their ideas easily. They work well together and show real pleasure when they, or others, are successful.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory curriculum overall. The programme of personal, social and health education gives pupils a clear understanding of how to keep healthy and safe, and effectively promotes their good personal development. Throughout the school, the curriculum is increasingly enriched by the use of visitors, visits, and a growing range of activities outside the school day, some of which are run by pupils themselves. These not only support pupils' learning but also help to foster pupils' positive attitudes.

Due emphasis is given to developing pupils' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills. Pupils are grouped by ability for English and mathematics lessons. However, the curriculum is not always adapted well enough to ensure that all pupils make good progress from their starting points in lessons. The school has made considerable improvements in the provision for ICT since the last inspection with the creation of computer suites within the main school. This has enabled teachers to ensure that opportunities to consolidate ICT skills are planned in other subjects. As a result, pupils use computers regularly to access information and for fun learning experiences.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory overall. A particularly good feature in that this is a caring school where pupils' well-being is of principal importance. Pupils recognise this and it is a key factor in their positive attitudes to school. Health and safety procedures are well understood and any pupils who are at risk are quickly identified and supported well. Pupils say that they feel safe and know who to turn to, if necessary. Support for pupils with learning difficulties is good and helps pupils to develop positive attitudes towards work. This, alongside appropriate involvement of outside agencies and parents, ensures these pupils achieve as well as others.

The academic guidance and support provided by the school are satisfactory overall but there are some inconsistencies. Teachers set targets for pupils that are shared with them regularly and pupils know their targets. Targets in English have been closely matched to pupils' varying abilities and there are plans for this to happen shortly in mathematics. The school has worked hard to improve teachers' use of assessment information to plan challenging lessons. However, expectations of what can be achieved within lessons are not always as high as they could be. The quality of marking is good in some classes where teachers helpfully note what pupils have achieved and also suggest ways they could improve. This gives pupils opportunities to try again. Marking is satisfactory overall. Books are marked regularly and pupils' successes celebrated.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

From the start of last school year, the acting headteacher determinedly raised expectations of what the pupils should be achieving. She incisively pinpointed specific weaknesses in the different year groups. Curricular plans were sharpened to address these issues and tailor-made additional programmes were introduced. Sensibly, these were tightly focused, taught for a short period, and then reviewed to see how well they had worked. Usefully, all staff regularly gathered updates on standards throughout the school year.

These good management practices continue. The new headteacher is making a significant contribution to the school's developments. The senior leadership team has sound strategies for evaluating whether their guidance is being implemented, how well the school is doing, and planning improvements. The school is acutely aware that the local authority's recent analysis of the 2006 Year 6 results showed that boys did not achieve as well as the girls. Improving boys' achievement and raising pupils' aspirations are now additional priorities for improvement this year.

Teachers work to clear, well reasoned guidance which is raising standards and promoting pupils' personal development. Teaching assistants play a key role in supporting pupils, and their skills are developed and deployed thoughtfully. Non teaching staff make a significant impact to the smooth running of the school.

The acting headteacher and the new headteacher have actively networked to bring in extra support from other schools or the local authority. Governors too have supported the school energetically. Many visit to see developments first hand and many work in the school, giving their time and expertise to support priorities. Governors have made useful records of the insights they gained during these visits. Spending is clearly targeted to the school's improvement priorities. Financial difficulties have been resolved with support from the trustees.

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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?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	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?	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?	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	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

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?	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.

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	3
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

Many thanks for your warm welcome. We really enjoyed our visit to your school. We learnt a lot from talking with you and the staff, and joining your lessons and activities.

We were impressed by the many ways that you contribute to the school and were very pleased to hear you say that you had made the right choice with your new headteacher. There have been a lot of changes in staff, so it was good to see that you have all settled in well this new school year. You behaved well around the school and in lessons. You worked together sensibly and tried hard.

Your school's Year 6 results last year were the best ever! But, the boys did not do as well as the girls. Your teachers are already thinking about ways to help all of you, including the boys, make really good progress all the time.

The staff have been working very hard. In many ways, your school is much, much better now. We think that it is definitely giving you a sound education and that there are some things which are good.

We hope that your staff will carry on successfully improving your school. We saw that they care about you very much and want the best for you. You told us that means a lot to you.