

Kilmington Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113100
Local Authority	Devon
Inspection number	311107
Inspection date	6 December 2007
Reporting inspector	Eileen Chadwick

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	69
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Martell
Headteacher	Malcolm Bettison
Date of previous school inspection	13 October 2003
School address	School Lane Kilmington Axminster EX13 7RG
Telephone number	01297 32762
Fax number	01297 32762

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: the progress the pupils make in the Foundation Stage and Key Stages 1 and 2, and the impact of leadership and management on initiatives for raising standards and achievement. Evidence was gathered from lesson observations; discussions with pupils and staff; reviewing the assessment data the school uses to track the progress the pupils make; and analysis of pupils' work. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Kilmington is a small school that serves the local village as well as communities further afield. Nearly all pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils receiving free school meals is below average. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average, although their distribution across the school is uneven. A good number of pupils in Key Stage 2 have joined the school other than at the normal time of admission. Children start school with a range of abilities but overall they are at the level expected. Numbers have fallen a little in the last three years and as a result, pupils are now taught in three classes. The headteacher teaches a class for three days a week as well as fulfilling his leadership role. The school holds Active Sportsmark and Healthy Schools' Awards.

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' personal development, including their behaviour, is excellent. The school has a very welcoming atmosphere and pupils thrive both academically and personally. Pupils' individual talents are nurtured well. Pupils have good opportunities to develop their creative, practical and sporting skills. Central to this is the very good leadership of the headteacher who is well supported by staff and governors. Parents hold the school in high regard and, as one parent commented, 'We have nothing but praise for the school, our children are extremely happy, settled, making good progress and receiving a broad education'.

Pupils achieve well. They make satisfactory progress in Reception and reach the standards expected by the time they begin Year 1. Standards in Year 2 are rising and are now above average in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils' progress in Key Stage 1 has accelerated because there have been improvements to provision and better checks on their progress. This good progress continues in Key Stage 2 and by the end of Year 6, standards are above average in English, mathematics and science. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported throughout the school and make good progress. More capable pupils, including those who are gifted and talented, achieve well because they are identified early and given challenging learning opportunities on a broad front.

For the past few years, standards have often been high for Year 6 pupils but they dipped a little in 2007. This happened during a difficult period when a small drop in pupil numbers necessitated staff redundancies. This had a significant impact as staff at all levels in this small school take on a wide range of responsibilities. The school has recovered well and new staffing structures and teaching arrangements are having a good impact on lifting standards again. Pupils' good progress is due to much good teaching and a stimulating curriculum which motivates pupils to want to learn. Work is usually well matched to the wide range of abilities and the different ages in each class. However, in Reception, although there are lively learning activities with a sound emphasis on developing children's literacy and numeracy skills, there are a few occasions when work in the basics is not so well matched to children's needs; it tends to be rather too hard or too easy. There is strong provision throughout the school in information and communication technology (ICT), art, design and technology and sport.

Provision for care, support and guidance is good. Outstanding pastoral leadership promotes high standards of care and a sense of family in which all pupils feel valued. Pupils enjoy school a great deal and this is reflected in good attendance and their high participation rate in the wide range of after-school clubs and activities. They are very happy and have positive relationships with each other and adults in the school. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Excellent partnerships with parents, other schools, the local church and community greatly enhance pupils' personal development and sense of belonging. Pupils make a major contribution to the community and develop their leadership skills very well, for example when leading school assemblies, running the school tuck shop and raising money for charities. Later entrants settle very well because both staff and pupils 'go that extra mile' to help them feel at home.

Assessment systems are good and help the school to know how well it is doing. The school has accurately identified its strengths and weaker areas. Demanding targets have been set for most pupils, with the school regularly making adjustments to make sure they remain a challenge. The school has correctly identified that better continuity in assessment tracking and target

setting is needed across Reception and Year 1 so that pupils' progress can be more readily evaluated.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher gives a very clear direction and provides energetic and purposeful leadership. He successfully combines his heavy teaching role with that of school leader. The school's arrangements for self-evaluation are good. Rigorous checking of teaching focuses on how well the needs of individuals and groups are met. The headteacher has successfully given subject leaders the opportunity to monitor and manage their areas of responsibility and this is a major reason why the school provides a good quality, all-round education. Governors play key parts in challenging and supporting the school and make good use of their subject strengths to inform their monitoring. Governors manage a tight budget very prudently, but the school has been able to create very little for contingency. The compact accommodation is well maintained, and skilful management makes excellent use of the restricted space. Issues from the last inspection have been effectively tackled and the school's record shows it has a good capacity to improve.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

At the time of the inspection, only three children had entered Reception and a further nine are due to start in January. Secure and moderated assessments from previous Reception classes, as well as observations of teaching and work, show that children make satisfactory progress in literacy and numeracy and across most other areas of learning. Children enter with very varied skills but, overall, they are broadly as expected. By the time they begin Year 1, children reach the standards expected and they exceed them in personal, social and emotional development. Children are nurtured caringly and their personal development, safety and well-being are given high priority. The curriculum is interesting and carefully planned to make sure both the Foundation Stage and National Curriculum can be taught satisfactorily in the mixed Reception and Year 1 class. There is a good balance between focused teaching and learning through play. Teaching ensures that basic skills are soundly taught but work is not always matched to children's needs closely enough and this impedes faster progress. Assessments are thorough but tracking arrangements from Reception to Year 1 are cumbersome. The school has identified this as an area for development to enable staff and leaders to evaluate children's progress more efficiently and ensure smooth transition and target setting.

What the school should do to improve further

- In Reception, make sure work in the basics is consistently well matched to children's needs.
- Make sure assessment tracking across Reception and Year 1 promotes smoother transition and target setting.

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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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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?	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Kilmington Primary School, Axminster EX13 7RG

Thank you for being so welcoming and helping me when I came to inspect your school to find out how well you are getting on. I particularly enjoyed visiting your lessons and talking with some you after lunch.

You told me you go to a good school and I agree. Your school also has some outstanding areas.

Here are some good things about your school:

- you make good progress and reach above average standards in English, mathematics and science
- you make good progress because teaching is usually good and you work hard
- you behave excellently, really enjoy school and get on with each other very well indeed
- you have good opportunities for ICT, art, sport, design and technology and you enjoy these very much
- your headteacher leads you all very well, and your teachers and the school governors are always working hard to make the school even better
- teachers take superb care of you, make sure you are kept safe and keep careful checks on your progress.

This is what I am asking the school to change:

- make sure those of you in Reception are always given work which is just right and not too hard or too easy
- make sure teachers can check your progress from Reception to Year 1 more easily.

I hope you will continue to enjoy school and work hard, using your targets so your work gets better and better.

Best wishes

Eileen Chadwick Lead Inspector

6 December 2007

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Lead Inspector