

# Parkham Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	113164
<b>Local Authority</b>	Devon
<b>Inspection number</b>	311132
<b>Inspection date</b>	26 June 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Stephen Lake

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4-11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	65
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Philip Priest
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ruth Jones
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	10 January 2005
<b>School address</b>	Parkham Bideford EX39 5PL
<b>Telephone number</b>	01237 451334
<b>Fax number</b>	01237 451334

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

The impact of the school's focus upon writing on standards in English.

The effectiveness of assessment procedures in guiding and supporting pupils to achieve higher standards.

The impact of the improved accommodation on teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage.

Evidence was gathered from:

Discussions with the headteacher, chair of governors, pupils and staff.

Visits to classes.

Scrutiny of pupils' work.

Observation of other aspects of the school day such as breaktime.

Analysis of parents' questionnaires and school documentation, in particular data on pupils' progress.

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

Parkham Primary is a smaller than average school that serves a largely rural area, although a few pupils come from as far away as Bideford. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties, mainly moderate learning difficulties, is well above average. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is well below average. Many more pupils than average enter or leave the school partway through their school career. This is mainly due to the number of rented properties in the village that families move into for comparatively short periods of time.

## 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. It has a consistent emphasis on developing good attitudes to learning. The good quality systems for checking on the work of the school have enabled improvements to take place, especially in the quality of writing. Pupils say that they love being at school and enjoy it immensely. This is reflected in their well above average attendance. Parents appreciate the work of the school. 'Parkham School offers the children a fantastic start' is a typical comment received from the many parents who wrote in support of the school.

Achievement is good. Children start school with skills in line with those expected for their age and leave with standards that are above average. Nevertheless, progress is not consistent. Children make satisfactory progress in Reception and start Year 1 suitably prepared for learning. The very small numbers of pupils in Year 2 over recent years make accurate judgements on standards unreliable in any one year and the many changes as pupils enter and leave the school affect progress. Over the last few years, progress in Years 1 and 2 has been satisfactory. Pupils have attained broadly average standards by the age of seven. Throughout Years 3 to 6, pupils make good progress because the good quality systems to check their progress are used effectively to plan work that is matched to their needs. The good support for pupils with learning difficulties enables them to achieve as well as other pupils. This is particularly important as many of the pupils who join the school partway through have additional learning needs. Standards in art are particularly good and this has recently been recognised by the ArtsMark award.

The good quality curriculum is improving further as the school reviews the factors that help pupils learn effectively. The regular checks on pupils' progress showed that standards in English were not as good as in other subjects, due to the quality of pupils' writing. A whole-school focus on this has resulted in great improvements in the quality of writing. This is closely linked to the development of a more creative curriculum that recognises that learning can take place in a wide variety of situations and provides opportunities to motivate pupils to learn more effectively. Visits to museums and places of interest are used well to support learning. Good partnerships with the local secondary school enable gifted and talented pupils to be supported through the curriculum. Other partnerships such as the recent work with a local artist also help enrich the curriculum.

Teaching is good overall, although the quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 is only satisfactory. Marking generally gives pupils good guidance on how to improve their work and pupils say that teachers give them a great deal of help. The particularly detailed marking in English in Years 5 and 6 that gives very good guidance to pupils on how they can improve their work is a key factor in the improving standards in writing. In Years 5 and 6, very good use of pupils working with partners helps them identify how they can improve their own writing. Teachers make good use of information and communication technology (ICT) to support learning. The impact of this was seen in a creative writing session, where pupils produced excellent sentences and phrases to describe scenes in a film clip in a more imaginative way. A typical example was the pupil who wrote: 'I opened the door. I was worried because it creaked like an old man trying to sing.' Teaching assistants provide valuable support in classrooms. They are particularly good at supporting pupils with learning difficulties and enabling them to be fully included in all lessons.

Pupils' outstanding personal development and well-being are due to the very good provision for this in the rich and stimulating curriculum. The work on social and emotional aspects of learning has contributed well to pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Behaviour is excellent and pupils are eager to learn. Their understanding of how to stay healthy and keep fit is excellent. Pupils say that they like the many opportunities to take part in the wide variety of sports and activities provided. They say that they feel very safe in school and demonstrate a very strong understanding of how to stay safe because of the good care, guidance and support that they receive. Particularly impressive, in this school near the coast, is pupils' understanding of how to stay safe on a beach. They are very aware of the dangers posed by beach litter. Pupils take part eagerly in the many opportunities for sport and have a very good understanding of how to eat healthily. Pupils make an outstanding contribution to the school community through the school council and the many opportunities provided for them to take responsibility. Pupils' views are valued and acted upon. For example, the school council has undertaken a survey on the condition of the toilets and their suggested improvements are being put into place. The skills gained through their many responsibilities, together with the standards attained, mean that pupils are prepared well for their future economic well-being.

Leadership and management are good. The good systems for checking on the work of the school by the headteacher and subject leaders provide an accurate picture of what is working and what needs improving. Governors have good systems for checking on the work of the school through regular visits and links with subject leaders. All staff and governors are involved in school improvement but at present, the very detailed school development plan and separate set of governors' aims are too cumbersome to be manageable. This makes it difficult to identify the most important priorities for improving the school. Good budget management has provided improved resources for ICT and improved accommodation for the Foundation Stage.

Although governors support the school well, the good quality information on pupils' progress is not presented in a way that enables them to see easily how well the school is doing or to judge the performance of different groups of pupils. Taking into account the recent improvement, the school is well placed to improve further.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 3**

Although the outdoor provision and accommodation has improved greatly, achievement is only satisfactory as it is too early to see the full impact of the improvements made. Children start the Foundation Stage with broadly average skills and make satisfactory progress to start Year 1. All areas of learning are covered adequately and there is a suitable balance between direct teaching and opportunities for children to learn through purposeful play. The school has identified that the staffing levels do not always allow the outdoor provision to be used to its maximum advantage. Children settle in quickly, have positive attitudes and learn to relate well with others. The care provided by adults is good and helps children to feel secure and confident. Teaching and learning, and leadership and management, are satisfactory in the Foundation Stage. The school is already developing stronger links with the pre-school playgroup to improve further the transfer into the school.

## **What the school should do to improve further**

- Improve achievement in the Foundation Stage to Year 2 to match that in Years 3 to 6.
- Produce a more concise school development plan in which the priorities and aims of the governing body and the school are more closely aligned and more manageable.

- Refine the way in which data is presented to governors to enable them to see school performance more clearly.

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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
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?	2
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 <sup>1</sup> 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	2
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	1
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

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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

27 June 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Parkham Primary School, Bideford EX39 5PL

Thank you for making me so welcome when I visited your school. I particularly enjoyed talking with you at playtime and meeting with the school council.

Yours is a good school. I can see why you enjoy being there so much and have such good attendance. Some of the other things that I liked about your school are:

- You achieve well and leave school at age 11 with standards that are better than those at many other schools.
- Your personal development is outstanding because of the way you are taught and looked after. I was particularly impressed with the contribution made by the school council.
- Your behaviour is excellent.
- You told me that you feel very safe in school and you showed me that you have a very good understanding of how to stay safe. This is because the school is good at looking after you and giving you guidance on what to do.
- Your school is led and managed well. Your headteacher and all the other staff have good ways of finding out what helps you learn and then making sure that happens.

To help you do even better I have asked the school to:

- Improve the achievement of those of you in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2.
- Find ways of making the plans to improve the school simpler so that they can be put in the most important order.
- Find easier ways of sharing the good information that teachers have about you with the governors.

Thank you again for helping me find out about all these things. You can help too by helping those who join from other schools to settle in quickly so that they start learning as well as those of you already there.

Yours sincerely

Stephen Lake Lead Inspector