

Shaugh Prior Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113262
Local Authority	Devon
Inspection number	311182
Inspection date	16 July 2008
Reporting inspector	Alex Baxter

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	27
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Roger Smerdon
Headteacher	Caroline Pitt
Date of previous school inspection	9 February 2004
School address	Shaugh Prior Plymouth PL7 5HA
Telephone number	01752 839373
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a very small school, which mostly serves the needs of pupils in the local rural area. There is an above average proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well above average and is very high in some year groups. The number of pupils leaving or joining the school other than at the normal time of entry is also high in some year groups. Attainment on entry varies significantly from year to year. Generally, it is below the level expected for children's ages, particularly in communication, language and literacy. The school has a number of awards reflecting its commitment to team leadership, healthy living and art.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Shaugh Prior is a good school. Parents are right to value the education their children are getting. One commented, 'I would recommend this school unreservedly as an environment in which children thrive', and this reflects the views expressed by all sections of the school community. The headteacher inspires colleagues and pupils alike and promotes good teamwork in a very supportive manner. Governors, too, are fully involved and make good contributions. In several ways, this is a very special little school with a distinctive and inclusive ethos. In response to excellent care, guidance and support, and good teaching and learning, all pupils, including the high proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, show outstanding personal development and well-being. The numbers of pupils in each year group are very small, so the results of individual pupils have a big impact on the school's results from year to year. Although standards are below average at the end of Year 6, most pupils achieve well.

The pupils' excellent attendance reflects their great enjoyment of school. They readily express this enthusiasm. As one pupil said, 'At our school we all bond together.' In all aspects of school activity, pupils' behaviour and their relationships with each other and with adults are exemplary.

Very close links with parents and with outside agencies ensure that from the moment they enter the school, children are helped to settle and are treated fairly as individuals. As a result, children in the Foundation Stage (Reception) make a good start and learn well. Teachers and their assistants plan learning activities with care and are skilled at meeting pupils' widely differing needs, and this underpins good progress through the school. Standards are rising and pupils' progress has been accelerated this year in response to strengthened teaching and learning in mathematics and an increasing focus on developing pupils' speaking skills. By the end of Year 6, whilst skills are broadly average in reading, speaking, mathematics and science, they are not high enough in writing because of weaknesses in pupils' handwriting and in the way they construct sentences.

Pupils experience a good curriculum. Because of several improvements since the last inspection, the curriculum now includes good outdoor sporting and environmental activities and frequent opportunities to learn by using computers. A good range of clubs and visits, often to other schools, promotes the pupils' good adoption of healthy living, their enthusiastic contributions to the community and promising skills in sports and the expressive arts. However, the curriculum does not always give pupils enough opportunity to take responsibility for their own learning. This limits, for example, the pupils' ability to apply their counting skills to solving mathematical problems.

The school's good leadership and management are underpinned by a strong, inclusive and team-orientated ethos. All staff and governors share a unity of purpose and give good support. Together they are effective in ensuring that teaching meets pupils' needs and that targets are realistic and enable pupils to make good progress. Improvements since the last inspection and the rising standards through the school in response to current initiatives, for example to extend pupils' speaking skills, show the school's good capacity to improve into the future.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The number of children and their abilities vary considerably from year to year. The current Reception children are making good progress and are on track to reach above average standards

by the time they enter Year 1, but standards have not been as high in previous years. Excellent links with parents help children to settle confidently into school life and provide a boost to successful learning. In addition, staff provide excellent care, guidance and support and consistently good teaching. They are particularly successful in developing the children's understanding of words and their speaking and self-confidence. The well-planned curriculum includes a good balance of adult-led activities and those chosen by the children themselves. The very well resourced outdoor learning area represents another significant improvement since the last inspection. However, although children mix beneficially with older pupils in their mixed-age class, the very small year groups limit the amount of collaborative stimulation with others of their own age.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve pupils' writing, especially their handwriting skills and the way they construct sentences.
- Provide more opportunities for the pupils to take responsibility for their own learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils make good progress, building well on the good start they make in the Foundation Stage. Standards are typically below average by the time pupils leave the school. This reflects the high number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Even so, this represents good achievement in relation to pupils' capabilities. By the end of Year 6, most pupils show broadly average skills in mathematics and science and in reading and speaking and listening. These standards reflect the strengthened teaching and learning strategies established with good consistency over the past school year. However, writing, especially handwriting and sentence formation, is less well developed. Throughout the school, many pupils show talent in a range of subjects, especially in sports and the expressive arts.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils really enjoy their time at school. One pupil reflected the views of most by saying, 'We get on well together, everyone is so kind and generous.' In the school's supportive setting, pupils develop extremely well spiritually, morally, socially and culturally. Pupils have plenty of opportunities to express their views, for example, as members of the School Council, where their perceptive ideas in charitable fundraising are adopted willingly by supportive staff. Because all adults working in the school encourage and appreciate the pupils' ideas, pupils feel valued and respond with even more enthusiasm and confidence. This was clearly evident at lunchtime when play leaders willingly helped others, especially younger pupils, to enjoy healthy, happy activities. Such positive empowerment of the pupils is another reason why all pupils, including several with complex emotional and behavioural needs, behave extremely well, adopt very healthy and safe lifestyles and contribute fully to their school and to the community. Even though some pupils still have weak writing skills, their self-confidence and willingness to work supportively with others prepare them well for the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The good teaching and learning evident across the school are typified by precise planning which identifies relevant challenging learning objectives for the pupils and deploys assistants and other helpers very supportively. Teaching in mathematics has been strengthened by the adoption of a new scheme that plots the development of pupils' counting skills in a beneficial and progressive way. An approach that promotes the pupils' 'speaking into writing' skills is also being implemented. Already this is lifting skills and shows promising signs of much further potential. At times, however, teachers give too much direction and pupils do not have enough opportunity to set up and follow their own lines of enquiry. This limits the pupils' ability to quicken their learning by exploring their interests, for example. Teachers work closely with their colleagues and use a good range of resources, including much improved information and communication technology (ICT) equipment to make sure that pupils enjoy their learning. For example, pupils develop and act out their ideas through role play. When questioned, one pupil readily exclaimed, 'We do lots of practical work.' This was evident in Reception, where children made good use of their improved outdoor area by using a digital camera to record their observations.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is well matched to individual needs and is enhanced by a good range of clubs. There are many opportunities for pupils to learn through practical activities, especially in the expressive arts, where several pupils excel. Whilst the pupils greatly enjoy these activities, they do not have enough opportunity to take responsibility for their own learning. In mathematics, for example, this limits their ability to solve real-life problems for themselves. The limitations of very small numbers of pupils in each year group, and in indoor facilities for physical education, are generally managed well, being supplemented by planned trips and inter-school events. Occasionally, however, the small numbers of pupils in separate year groups limit opportunities for social interaction, including for children in Reception. Outdoor facilities, including for the youngest children, are used well to enrich sporting activities on the new field, and the development of flower and vegetable beds is promoting the pupils' healthy lifestyles. Provision for ICT has also been improved significantly since the last inspection. Teachers now use interactive whiteboards effectively to stimulate pupils' learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Pastoral care is outstanding, and the pupils' well-being is safeguarded very securely. As a result, pupils develop their personal qualities extremely well. Play and lunchtimes are a joy because supervision is calmly effective and because the pupils know there is always an adult or an older pupil to help. One parent said, 'This school is so lovely, my daughter just loves it.' The provision and support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is a strength, which is enhanced by excellent links with parents and outside agencies. The way teachers and their assistants include pupils with complex emotional and behavioural needs is a particularly exemplary feature. Academic guidance is good. Regular consultations involving pupils, teachers

and parents help pupils to understand what they are aiming for. Marking is clear and detailed and shows pupils what they have to do to improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher inspires the inclusive ethos of the school and provides an excellent lead in promoting the well-being of the pupils. Staff at all levels say they feel empowered. They work well together, hold high but realistic expectations and help pupils not only to succeed, but also to find enjoyment in learning through an enriched curriculum. Governors give good support. The school develops excellent links with parents and outside agencies, which contribute supportively to the pupils' outstanding personal development and well-being, especially for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Self-evaluation is effective because it is based on very detailed assessments of the pupils' developing skills, which show the positive progress made by individual pupils. Sometimes key information for staff and governors is clouded by too much description and the school's evaluation of its strengths is overly modest. Nevertheless, improvements since the previous inspection, including to the Foundation Stage, in the use of ICT and the range of outdoor learning opportunities, show the school's good capacity to improve in the future.

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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?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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?	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	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?	1

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	1
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 Shaugh Prior Primary School, Plymouth PL7 5HA

I agree with you and your parents, who feel that yours is a good school. Thank you for welcoming me when I visited, and a particular thanks to those of you on the School Council who helped by sharing your views with me. I especially liked the way you all get on so well together and behave so exceptionally well. I can see why you love school so much.

These are some of the other the main things I found.

- You make good progress in your work because you are taught well by teachers and their assistants, who show you what you have to do to improve.
- You receive excellent care from all the adults who work in the school. As a result, you really enjoy your learning in a good range of activities and your attitudes to learning, healthy living, and contributions to the school and community are first class.
- Your headteacher leads the school really well. She receives good support from staff and governors. Together, they work very closely with your parents to help you to achieve your best.

To help the school to become even better, I have asked the headteacher, governors and staff to do two things.

- Help you to improve your writing, especially your handwriting and the way you form your sentences.
- Make sure that teachers give you more opportunities to take responsibility for your own learning.

You can help with these by taking more care with your handwriting and by trying to do more things for yourselves.

Yours sincerely

Alex Baxter Lead Inspector



16 July 2008

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Alex Baxter
Lead Inspector