

Sidbury Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113363
Local Authority	Devon
Inspection number	311228
Inspection date	3 December 2008
Reporting inspector	Jonathan Palk HMI

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	99
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Carole Turner
Headteacher	Diane Gordon
Date of previous school inspection	21 February 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Church Street Sidbury Sidmouth EX10 0SB
Telephone number	01395 597279
Fax number	01395 597781

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an Additional Inspector. The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

pupils' achievements in reading, writing and mathematics

the quality of teaching and learning and the use made of assessment information to plan lessons

the effectiveness of school leaders in planning and taking action to improve the school's performance.

Evidence was gathered from the examination of school documentation, discussions with pupils, school staff and a governor, and observations of some lessons and other school activities. The inspector took account of parents' views expressed in questionnaires. 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 were not accurate, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Sidbury is a small school with an Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) that admits children, initially part time, from the age of four years. Pupils are taught in four mixed-age, mixed-ability classes. The proportions of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities fluctuate each year but are often above average. Most pupils are of White British heritage and few pupils are learning English as an additional language. Many more pupils join and leave the school at times other than the normal entry times. Since the last inspection, half of the teaching staff have changed and there is a new building that houses the EYFS and Key Stage 1 classes.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory education. There are some notable strengths, particularly the breadth of opportunities provided to pupils. The headteacher and the committed staff team ensure that the care and welfare of every child are at the heart of the school's work. Parents and pupils are proud of their school. They value the 'the family feel' and nearly all parents agree with the parent who said, 'a well-run school, focusing on children's development and education together in a very caring environment'.

Pupils' achievements are satisfactory in relation to their different starting points. Although there is a wide range of abilities, children join the school in the EYFS from a starting point that is lower than usually found for children of this age. This is because their language for communication and thinking, and their writing, together with their knowledge of how to link sounds and letters and their calculating skills, are below the levels expected for their age. The school has recently improved the teaching of sounds and letters and the tracking of children's progress. Consequently, children are now making satisfactory progress in the EYFS. In the rest of the school, current assessments show that pupils are making satisfactory progress and are on track to meet their targets by the time they leave in Year 6. The unvalidated national test results in 2008 show that standards were in line with the national averages in English and science but below average in mathematics. Pupils' progress is now tracked more rigorously and support is provided to ensure that pupils make at least the expected rate of progress. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities often make good progress in lessons because of the effective support they receive, including from learning support assistants. More able pupils do not always reach their full academic potential because the school is not using assessment information systematically enough to set work that is sufficiently challenging. In 2008, the proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels in Year 2 tests and assessments was below average. There was an improvement in the proportion of pupils in Year 6 reaching the higher levels in English and science and this was similar to the national validated 2007 results, but results in mathematics were below the 2007 national averages and there is scope to raise this further.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils are friendly, polite and confident and, as another parent commented, '...have learnt how to forge relationships and be a part of a team'. Pupils feel safe and thrive in the school's encouraging environment. Pupils say that they really enjoy school. Their attendance has improved recently, and is now above average. Pupils are very enthusiastic about their involvement in the community, such as through musical, sporting and artistic events. Their links with a community in Tanzania help them towards a greater understanding of the global community. They have a good understanding of how to keep healthy and the school council is currently involved in finding out how pupils can ensure more packed lunches contain only healthy foods. Most take part in numerous sporting activities, including some that are competitive. They are adequately prepared for their future economic well-being.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Lessons are stimulating and consequently engage the pupils. Adults enjoy very good relationships with pupils and so classrooms are harmonious places for learning. Pupils respond well whenever they have the opportunity to develop and discuss their own ideas. However, there is sometimes a lack of pace during parts of the lessons while teachers wait for the class to catch up, which leads to some inattention. Marking is effective and pupils say that they find it helpful because teachers show them how to improve.

Consequently, most pupils know their targets for reading, writing and mathematics. Those who find learning more difficult or have specific needs are given good support and are fully included. The match of work to pupils' stage of learning is not always sharp enough, particularly to ensure that the more able pupils are sufficiently challenged to improve.

The good curriculum has been improved recently by the introduction of more opportunities for meaningful writing in other subjects, particularly to stimulate boys' interest. There is a greater focus on teaching sounds and consequently, pupils are more confident writers and are therefore able to write more extensively. Focused support programmes are provided for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The quality of mathematical tasks has been improved, with a stronger focus on learning through using and applying pupils' mathematical skills, although this has yet to show in improved standards. The information and communication technology (ICT) curriculum has a strong focus on using skills across a range of subjects and developing research skills. Consequently, pupils enjoy their topic work and improve their knowledge of people and places. The very strong links with local schools contribute to the impressive breadth of experiences the school can offer pupils. Pupils make an excellent contribution to their own community through, for example, the work of the school council, and actively support a range of charities.

The school is well led and managed. The headteacher has led the school successfully for a number of years and is highly respected by pupils, parents, staff and governors. The leadership team has a good understanding of the school's strengths and has put in place effective strategies for improvement where weaknesses are identified. For example, boys' progress in reading and writing in Key Stage 1 has improved and pupils' progress in writing by the end of Year 6 is now more in line with national averages. However, there is not enough evaluation of where teaching is most effective in ensuring pupils reach more challenging targets. Governors are committed and knowledgeable and offer good support and challenge to school leaders. The school has good capacity to improve.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

From their lower than expected starting points, children in the EYFS make satisfactory progress, although standards remain below expectations by the time they leave the Reception class. Children make good progress in their personal and social development because of the interesting activities, which have a strong focus on learning together. There is an appropriate mix of activities initiated by the children and those led by the teacher that encourages children's good attitudes to learning. Children have good opportunities to develop independence through activities such as 'plan, do and review'. They also benefit from focused sessions where the teacher challenges their understanding through good questioning. The stimulating play areas encourage children's thinking and inquisitiveness. The teacher has developed the planning for outdoor learning, which is used well to enrich both children's knowledge and understanding of the world and their creative development. The EYFS is ably led and managed and the children are well cared for. Children's progress is tracked well and the information is shared through informative reports and regular contact with parents. The teacher has a good understanding of the different stages of young children's development but lesson planning does not always reflect this. As a consequence, activities are not always sharply enough focused.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in mathematics to at least the level of those in English and science.

- Monitor teaching and learning more closely so that best practice can be shared.
- Use assessment information systematically to improve the match and challenge of activities, particularly for the more able pupils.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

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?	3
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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

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/or disabilities make progress	3

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	2
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	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	3
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

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	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

3 December 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Sidbury Church of England Primary School, Sidbury, Sidmouth EX10 0SB

Thank you for helping make our visit so enjoyable. It was very helpful to talk with you and have the chance to look at some of your workbooks. Yours is a satisfactory school with some good features that I have listed below.

- You have very positive attitudes towards learning.
- You are kind and helpful to each other and your teachers.
- The adults at school take good care of you and your parents tell us they are very happy with all the school provides.
- The teachers plan the lessons well and are good at organising the help for those that need it most.
- You have a good curriculum with many exciting opportunities to learn new skills, particularly in art, design and technology, information and communication technology and physical education.
- The school grounds are delightful and provide many opportunities for you to be healthy and learn outdoors.

The standards most of you reach and the progress you make at school are satisfactory. Your headteacher, teachers and governors have a good idea about what they need to do to improve the school. We have asked the staff to do three things:

- Make every effort to improve standards in mathematics to at least the level of those in English and science.
- Ensure that the lessons they teach really challenge those of you who are capable of doing harder work; you can help by telling them when work is too easy.
- Check regularly on the quality of learning in lessons and share with other teachers what they find out.

Best wishes

Yours faithfully

Jonathan Palk

Her Majesty's Inspector