

Silverton Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113365
Local Authority	Devon
Inspection number	311230
Inspection date	20 September 2007
Reporting inspector	Martin Kerly

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	126
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	K Devaraj
Headteacher	H Nickels
Date of previous school inspection	6 November 2002
School address	Coach Road Silverton Exeter EX5 4JY
Telephone number	01392 860677
Fax number	01392 860677

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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 aspects: the pupils' achievement; the ways leaders check the performance of the school and use the information gained to improve the school further; and the impact of all the things in place designed to promote pupils' personal development and well-being. Evidence was gathered from observations around the school, discussions with pupils, staff and governors and analyses of the school's working documents. Other aspects of the school were not inspected 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

The pupils are from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds within the large village and its surrounding rural area. Almost all are White British and speak English as their first language. The attainment of children on entry to the Foundation Stage is exceptionally varied. Collectively it is broadly average and has declined a little over time with children demonstrating weaker speech and language skills than at the time of the last inspection. Whilst the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is smaller than found nationally there are considerably more pupils with statements of special educational need than usual in a school of this size. Four of the five classes have more than one year group and some year groups are split between two classes.

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 in all the main aspects of its work and it serves its community very well. One parent wrote, 'We are very lucky to have such a friendly and well run school on our doorstep.' The school benefits from an experienced headteacher and staff team who maintain an enthusiasm for new initiatives and strive successfully towards constant improvements in the quality of activities and experiences provided for their pupils. Pupils really love school. They are very proud of their achievements and the school's special characteristics, including some very imaginative developments around the extensive school grounds and site. They use words such as 'brilliant' to describe the school and struggle to think of ways to suggest how to improve it. Every pupil is really well known by the staff who use their knowledge well to create a supportive atmosphere. Parents appreciate this, 100% of whom in a recent survey said their children feel safe in school. Another parent referred to 'the close-knit family' within school. This is evident throughout the day in the pupils' good personal development and well-being and the way they thoughtfully respond to one another. This is particularly noticeable in the exceptionally calm and relaxed atmosphere when pupils are eating their lunch, with older and younger pupils quietly chatting together and with the support staff.

Pupils of all abilities achieve well and make good progress. By the end of Year 6 standards are consistently significantly above the national average. This is because pupils are taught well and there are effective systems for assessing pupils' individual progress and sharing it with them. This 'sharing' helps reinforce their learning. A good example of this is the regular conferencing sessions held between teacher and pupil when the pupil's progress is reviewed and some of the learning targets for the term ahead are worked out. Pupils appreciate these sessions and find them helpful. Teachers mark their pupils' work carefully and provide helpful guidance about how they can improve. Pupils make good rather than outstanding progress because although the school has detailed records of individual pupils, it does not use these fully to track the progress of whole groups of pupils. The school recognises that at present it has only limited information about any variations in progress by groups as they move from one class to the next, and of any impact from splitting year groups between classes. The targets set for the end of Year 6 are challenging and contribute to the overall good progress of the older pupils, but the school does not use this approach to help raise standards for other year groups.

Pupils' behaviour is good and at times exemplary. Pupils are clear about how to get help when they have a problem and know how to keep themselves safe. Many of them become quite animated when talking about diet and the daily 'leap into life' and are proud that the school recently received the Healthy Schools Award. The school rigorously implements all the statutory procedures designed to safeguard pupils.

Those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities respond well to the very systematically and sensitively organised programme of additional and targeted help. Teachers and their skilled assistants are deployed well to work either alongside or at a discreet distance to give these pupils every opportunity to integrate and take on increasing responsibility for their own conduct and learning. Other pupils are very sensitive about the specific needs of individual pupils and how they can help them. The school leaders work effectively to involve other professionals and agencies to support these and other pupils and their families.

One reason for the pupils enjoying school so much is the wide range of interesting and imaginative activities planned by the teachers, routinely in the classroom and at special times

such as 'World week' and the performing arts festival. The pupils are inspired by the strong focus on sustainable green issues. One said proudly, 'Our school is really, really green. We recycle, we compost and we are a getting a PVC thing on the roof to generate electricity.' The school council is relatively new with a strong adult presence. However, pupils are heavily involved in a range of projects contributing to the wider community, and the 'spuddies' and charity market initiatives within school involve many of them taking on additional responsibilities. Such projects along with the focused programme on computer keyboard skills contribute well to their good skills needed for adult life and the workplace. These projects, other new curriculum developments and the changed structure of classes are not fully reflected in the current curriculum plans. The school recognises this needs reviewing as a priority.

The good leadership and management of the school are characterised by the clear direction set by the headteacher, the constant efforts to introduce new and innovative approaches and the collegiate way the experienced staff team operates. The school has a generally accurate view of its performance, supported by the detailed knowledge of each individual pupil. Currently checks on areas like teaching are mainly informal, lack a systematic approach, and are not always written up afterwards in a way that can be used to improve practice in the future. In spite of this, the school has made significant progress since the last inspection, particularly in remodelling the building and some imaginative curriculum initiatives. This has had a positive impact on pupils' achievement. The governors are exceptionally well led by an experienced chair who makes an outstanding contribution to the strategic direction of the school offering a careful balance between support and challenge. Governors are particularly well involved in key developments with working parties successfully driving new initiatives such as the provision and use of computers. The staff and governors have identified an ambitious number of priorities for improvement over the next year. This is indicative of their overall energy and commitment but the list is too long to enable them to keep a clear focus on the main priorities. Even so, the school's recent successes indicate that it has a good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision in the Foundation Stage has been strengthened by the recent substantial improvements in accommodation and access to an outside area. Children respond well to the good induction programme and good teaching. They settle quickly and achieve well during their first year in school. There are plans to strengthen the use of the new outdoor area giving children even more opportunities in all six areas of learning as they move independently in and out of doors.

What the school should do to improve further

- Establish more systematic and formalised ways of checking and reporting on the performance of all aspects of the school's work.
- Review the system for curriculum planning to ensure it embraces the many new and ongoing changes in the curriculum and reflects the evolving mixed-year group class structure.
- Set up a system for tracking the progress of whole classes and year groups, by combining all the information on the progress of individual pupils, in order to set targets for the end of each year and evaluate and respond to any variations in the progress of different groups or classes.

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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	2
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?	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
How well 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	2
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	3
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	1
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

24 September 2007

Dear Children,

Inspection of Silverton CE Primary School, Silverton, Devon EX5 4JY

- Thank you for welcoming me to your school recently. I enjoyed talking to groups of you and seeing some of your work. I was particularly impressed by the very polite and friendly way you all greeted me as I moved around the school throughout the day and I know your parents like the family feel within the school. You were right to tell me that Silverton School is a good school. It has lots of good things about it and here are some of the highlights:
- You enjoy school life very much and the many interesting activities planned and provided by your teachers. This helps you to make good progress and do well when it comes to national tests at the end of Year 6.
- Your teachers and other adults know you all really well. They are good at helping you to understand about what you need to do to improve, and very skilled at helping you when you have a problem. They are also very good at thinking of lots of exciting things for you to do like the performing arts festival.
- You are good at helping to take care of yourselves and those around you, and lots of you do important jobs around the school. Many of you are involved in helping make your school 'green'. Your headteacher has lots more ideas about this.
- Everyone who works at the school takes good care of you and makes sure you feel safe.
- The headteacher and other leaders, including the governors, have lots more ideas about how to improve the school. They work well together as a good team.
- I have asked the headteacher, staff and governors to consider ways of improving just three things to make the school even better:
- Set up more regular checks on how well everything is going in the school and what might need changing a bit.
- Have a look at the plans about what you are learning in each class each term to make sure they include all the new subjects that have been introduced.
- Find ways of collecting all the information about the progress you make as a whole class or year group so that the leaders can decide if any changes need to be made and what targets they can set for the end of each year group.

I feel sure you will continue to do all you can to maintain all the good things about the school.

Yours sincerely,

Martin Kerly (Lead inspector)

24 September 2007



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