

# Littleham Church of England Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	113370
<b>Local Authority</b>	Devon
<b>Inspection number</b>	311234
<b>Inspection date</b>	17 January 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Rowena Onions

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>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3-11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	111
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Tim Wood
<b>Headteacher</b>	Penny Hickman
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 March 2003
<b>School address</b>	Littledown Close Littleham Exmouth EX8 2QY
<b>Telephone number</b>	01395 266535
<b>Fax number</b>	01395 225494

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is a smaller than average size primary school. Almost all pupils are of White British origin and speak English as their first language. The school serves an area of significant economic and social deprivation and an above average percentage of pupils have free school meals. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is also above average. Attainment on entry to the Nursery and Reception classes is low.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Littleham is providing a satisfactory but quickly improving quality of education. Some aspects of the school are already good and others are close to being so. Overall, pupils are making satisfactory progress, and there is increased progress evident in most parts of the school and in most subjects. The standards pupils reach in English, mathematics and science are, however, still well below average throughout the school. Staff are working hard to help pupils to make better progress and attain higher standards. Because they are well supported both in class and through additional small group teaching, pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Parents, pupils and staff all comment on the improved pupil behaviour and attitudes to school. These are now good and are forming a basis for better academic progress. Pupils report liking school. They concentrate well in class and try to please. The school takes good care of the pupils and provides them with strong personal guidance. Good personal, social and health education enables pupils to know the importance of diet and exercise in keeping themselves well. They feel safe in school and report that they know they have someone to turn to where there is a need. Positive examples teach pupils to consider each other and to learn. The schemes where older pupils lead the play of younger pupils, help them gain an understanding of citizenship and community.

The development of relationships and positive attitudes is a good aspect of teaching and learning, which are satisfactory overall. Teachers work closely with teaching assistants and together they give pupils a good level of support and personal assistance. This is valued by the pupils and assists them to gain a growing confidence in their ability to do well. Teachers generally design lessons that will interest pupils and link first hand experiences. For example spending a week in a classroom organised in a Victorian manner, to extend pupils' knowledge. There are occasions, however, when teachers do not make sufficient use of the time available to them. Teachers have implemented a considerable number of new teaching strategies although some of these have yet to be consistently or precisely applied to have a measurable impact. Teachers, for example, are not sufficiently clear in telling pupils how to improve their work in lessons or through marking.

The headteacher provides good leadership of a team who have a clear focus on the improvement of standards. The school has accurate self-evaluation and a clear view of its strengths and weaknesses. With the support of the local authority, it is taking effective action to improve and has set itself challenging targets. Subject leaders are taking a stronger management role in the school. There is a need to develop this leadership further and extend it to a wider group of staff both to allow staff to develop their expertise and to avoid a further increase to the headteacher's workload. The curriculum is clearly growing stronger as initiatives such as the recent focus on the development of phonics are included and as the school develops a more coherent approach to the linking of subjects. The newness of such initiatives does, however, mean that the impact of the curriculum on standards and progress remains satisfactory.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 3

From low starting points, children make satisfactory progress although few attain at the nationally expected level by the end of Reception year. Provision in the Foundation Stage is

in a period of transition. Sound leadership and management have resulted in improvements to the nursery provision and the curriculum is satisfactory. There is now a good balance of child-initiated and adult-led work that enables the children to learn how to communicate, make choices and work and play with each other. This is helping children to make good progress and acquire better skills than they did in the past. The school has responded to the need to help former nursery children make up some lost ground by taking a rather more formal approach to teaching and learning in Reception. Whilst this is meeting the needs of the current group appropriately, the school is correct in identifying the need to work towards a more consistent approach between the Nursery and Reception classes

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

- Raise standards further by:
- ensuring that pupils know how to take action to improve their work
- developing the leadership roles of a wider group of staff
- ensuring that good use is made of time in all lessons.

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.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Pupils in Years 1 and 2 make satisfactory progress. The introduction of consistent approaches to the teaching of basic number and phonic skills is beginning to show in increased progress in Year 1. The school rightly identified that Year 2 pupils were not making sufficient progress in the mixed Year 2/3 class and just one week before the inspection, had taken action to divide the class into separate year groups. Year 2 pupils are already making better progress in class, but it is too early to see impact on overall progress. Through the daily focus on the understanding and application of number, pupils in Years 3 to 6 make good progress in mathematics. The practical approach to science teaching taken by teachers interests pupils and assists them to make good progress. Progress in English is satisfactory but slower in writing than in reading as pupils struggle to find ways of expressing themselves on paper. The school is rightly pleased with the work pupils produce in art. The work on display in the school is of a good standard.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils are happy and relaxed in school. They enjoy and join in with the activities provided for them. Attendance is rising and is now close to the national average. Older pupils say behaviour has improved over the last few years and that they are now able to concentrate in class. Pupils work and play amicably and there are very few occurrences of poor behaviour or bullying. Pupils report that any incidents of the latter are dealt with rapidly. Pupils' personal, including their spiritual, moral and social development is good and is underpinned by the Christian ethos of the school and supported by effective links with the local church. The school council is proactive in helping the school to improve. The links with the community, for example the art display mounted in the local launderette, are raising both pupils' self-esteem and the profile of the school in the neighbourhood. Activities such as group work help prepare pupils for a world of work, but their below average basic skills currently undermine their preparation for future economic well-being.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

Recent initiatives mean that teachers are now very focused on ensuring that classrooms provide pupils with a good environment for their learning. Classrooms are calm and businesslike and children benefit from the positive relationships they have with staff. Wall displays are used productively to encourage learning through, for instance, reminders of what has been taught as well as examples of good work. The key elements necessary to promote good learning, such as the way teachers question pupils and the involvement of pupils in their learning, are in place but are not yet consistently used. Pupils are not, for example, always sufficiently aware of what they are trying to learn in a lesson and cannot yet say how they will recognise when they have been successful. In some lessons, time is not as effectively used as it should be. Pupils are, for example, expected to sit for too long listening to their teacher and at times their attention wanders, reducing their learning.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 3

The curriculum supports pupils' personal development well. Initiatives to teach pupils about healthy living are very successful. The school is making good efforts to revise the curriculum so that pupils can consolidate their learning in one subject through work in another, but this is still work in progress. Efforts to use subjects like art and drama to both enthuse and engage pupils are clearly successful in promoting better attitudes. Curriculum enrichment, for example the use of visits, is beginning to impact on standards, such as improving the content of pupils' writing. Good use is made of data to identify where whole school or group interventions are needed and this has particular impact on the progress of lower attaining pupils. Many of the curriculum initiatives are, however, new and the school is learning the best ways to maximise improvements so that they have a greater impact on raising standards.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 2

Pupils are known and valued as individuals. Adults take great care to ensure their personal well-being and safety. Pupils who have additional learning needs or are particularly troubled are supported very well and links between the school and other agencies are very productive. The school has informative systems for the tracking of pupils' progress and these are used well in setting challenging targets for pupils and in targeting additional teaching and support. Pupils know their targets but, as the systems for involving pupils are relatively new, they are not always sure what action they can take to meet them. There are very thorough systems for ensuring that children settle well into school and very good links with the secondary school that mean that pupils approach transfer very confidently.

## Leadership and management

#### Grade: 3

The headteacher is providing good, effective leadership for the school. She has taken a measured approach to the need to bring about change and has had the full support of staff and governors

in doing so. Although the impact of the many initiatives is not yet fully clear, there are a number of early signs of success, such as pupils' much improved behaviour, the increased progress being made by nursery children and in mathematics in Years 3 to 6. This, together with the energy and drive towards improvement by staff, demonstrates that the school has good capacity for further improvement. Parents and pupils speak highly of the headteacher's influence and are overwhelmingly positive about the school. The school has rightly identified a need to further promote leadership of the school by a wider group of staff to ensure that the leadership of new initiatives, such as the development of strategies to increase pupils' understanding of how to improve, does not increase the headteacher's workload still further. The school strongly supports the inclusion of all pupils and deploys resources well, providing a very good number of adults in each classroom. The governing body fulfils its duties well and is both supportive and questioning of the school, ensuring that management decisions are well thought through.

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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?	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 effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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 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	2
The attendance of learners	3
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	3

### The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
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>	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
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	3
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

## Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

18th January 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Littleham Primary School, Exmouth EX8 2QY

Mr Williams and I really enjoyed our visit to your school. We and would like to thank you for the friendly way in which you talked to us. We think that your school is a satisfactory one that it is getting better all the time. This letter is to tell you what we found.

- You are making satisfactory progress in your work but your progress is beginning to get faster.
- You like your school and find it a safe and secure place to be.
- You learn to respect each other and to behave well.
- You get on well with your teachers who try to make your lessons interesting.
- You are not always sure how best to improve your work.
- Sometimes better use could be made of time in lessons.
- The adults in the school take very good care of you.
- Your headteacher, teachers and governors are working hard to make your school better.

We have asked your headteacher and teachers to do three things to help make your school better.

- Help you know how you can improve your work in lessons and over longer periods of time.
- Make sure that the best use is made of time in all lessons.
- Share some of the jobs that help the school get better amongst more of your teachers.

We are very glad that you like your school and think you are right to do so. We think that you could help your teachers to make your school even better by working through your school council to help teachers find ways of letting you know how to improve your work.

Best wishes

Rowena Onions Lead inspector