

Bridgerule Church of England Primary School

Inspection report - amended

Unique Reference Number	113373
Local Authority	Devon
Inspection number	311236
Inspection date	28 February 2008
Reporting inspector	Jill Arnold

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	20
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Cindy Neep
Headteacher	Lucina Swain
Date of previous school inspection	3 November 2003
School address	Bridgerule Holsworthy EX22 7EN
Telephone number	01288 381366
Fax number	01288 381366

Age group	4-11
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Amended Report Addendum

Report amended due to factual inaccuracy

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The number of pupils at this very small rural village school has dropped by more than half since the previous inspection. All pupils are White British. There is a relatively high proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities but none has a statement of special educational need. There is a high turnover of pupils. The governing body has a shortfall of four governors.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

Although pupils enjoy coming to school and have good attitudes to learning, they do not achieve as well as they should because the leadership and teaching are inadequate. The school provides for pupils' personal development and well-being successfully through its pastoral support, but does not have sufficiently high expectations of them academically. The school's self-evaluation is over generous in viewing teaching and achievement as good. It has taken action to improve standards in writing and mathematics, but these have not been sufficiently effective. The headteacher is failing to drive up standards by addressing the weaknesses in teaching and setting challenging targets for improvement. Governors provide support to the school but are not playing their full part in helping the school to improve.

Standards in the Year 6 national tests have been consistently below, and sometimes well below, national averages in English, mathematics and science for the last five years. The Year 2 results in reading, writing and mathematics have also been below average. A few pupils are on course to reach the levels expected for their age, but current standards are below average overall. Although pupils often start school with low levels of attainment, they do not make sufficient progress through the school to make up the deficit in their learning by the time they leave. They make satisfactory progress in the Foundation Stage from their starting points, but thereafter their rate of progress through the school is slow. The school monitors pupils' progress and sets targets but these are often unambitious as expectations are too low. Pupils' individual targets relating to English and mathematics are too broad to be meaningful to pupils when they tackle their work. Pupils that are more able reach the levels expected for their age but rarely achieve the higher levels.

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good, as is their social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. They attend school regularly and mostly punctually. They are friendly and cheerful; they work and play safely and harmoniously. Pupils of different ages get on well together and are supportive of each other. The curriculum and additional activities make a strong contribution to pupils' personal development and greatly enhance their enjoyment of school. The range of clubs and additional activities offered by such a small school is good. The curriculum is carefully planned to meet National Curriculum requirements and its content provides a good framework for learning. However, inadequate teaching does not capitalise on what the curriculum offers. Teachers' expectations are too low and lessons are insufficiently challenging. Lessons are conducted at a slow pace and pupils are not given clear guidance on how to improve their work. The very small classes enable pupils to receive considerable individual attention from adults, but this advantage is not reflected in the progress pupils make.

The school has productive partnerships with neighbouring small schools and the church, which extend the learning opportunities for pupils. However, parents' views of the school are mixed. Responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire represented half of the pupils at the school, of which a third appreciated all that the school offers. The remainder had concerns about

communication and consistency of the school's leadership which they felt needed to be addressed.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children's skills on starting school are wide ranging but often below those expected for their age. The school's assessments indicate that most children make satisfactory progress by the end of their Reception Year to achieve age-related expectations, due to the constant attention and good care they receive. They benefit socially through having older children in the class to imitate and play with at break times. A teaching assistant closely supervises the children throughout the day, providing encouragement and helping to build their confidence to speak. Children's achievements are noted and used to inform subsequent planning of activities. Progress over the year is recorded in home-school books that help to keep parents involved in their children's learning. Lack of outdoor access and shelter, also noted at the last inspection, continues to hamper aspects of children's development. Although much discussion has taken place, this issue remains unresolved.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise teachers' expectations of what pupils will achieve by setting appropriately challenging targets for all pupils in English and mathematics.
- Improve the quality of teaching by ensuring lessons provide the right level of challenge for all pupils and are conducted at a pace that enables them to make good progress.
- Provide pupils with clear guidance and specific targets to help them improve their standard of work and measure their progress.
- Improve leadership and governance by developing expertise in monitoring the work of the school rigorously and dealing more effectively with weaknesses.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

In 2007, children in Reception made satisfactory progress, achieving age-related expectations in all areas of their learning except emotional development and linking sounds and letters, which were lower. Their strongest area was mathematical development. In the national tests, Year 2 pupils achieved below national averages in reading and mathematics, and their writing was well below. Year 6 pupils also performed below national averages in English and mathematics. Pupils currently in the school have a range of capabilities but their writing and mathematics standards are below average overall. Although the school's assessments indicate that a few are on course to reach the national expectations by the end of Year 6, many will need to make rapid progress to ensure they start secondary school with the necessary literacy and numeracy skills.

Although the school keeps track of the progress pupils make, and feels that those who are with them for several years make good progress, this is not the case. An analysis by the school of pupils who joined Reception showed that only half were achieving the levels expected of them by Year 6.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils show positive attitudes to learning and readily apply themselves to their work. They are sensible around the school and in their handling of equipment and musical instruments. They have a good appreciation of safe and healthy lifestyles, shown in their energetic playtimes, the uptake of sports on offer and their understanding of healthy eating. Their contribution to the community through their various jobs, the school council, fund raising activities and assemblies is good. New pupils to the school feel welcome and integrate quickly. Links with other neighbouring small schools enable pupils to engage in a wider range of social and cultural activities, which support their personal development. Although pupils have good collaborative skills and attitudes to learning, their preparation for their future economic well-being is undermined by their undeveloped literacy and numeracy skills.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 4

Teaching is insufficiently focused on ensuring all pupils make good progress in their learning in every lesson. Although teachers plan for the range of pupils' abilities in their classes, lessons are not sufficiently productive because work is not always pitched at the correct level of challenge for individual pupils. During the inspection, pupils in one class spent too long on the carpet before engaging in practical activity and restlessness began to creep in as a result. Pupils were unclear specifically what they were learning because questions and explanations were not skilfully phrased. Pupils in the other class worked at a slow pace on a simple task whilst the teacher focused on a small group without checking on the rest. In both cases, the teaching failed to extend pupils' learning effectively. In contrast, another lesson engaged pupils through practical activity, the explanations and questions were sharply focused, and there was a clear sense of purpose enabling pupils to make satisfactory progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is broad, balanced and enlivened by links between subjects and by interesting educational trips and visitors to the school. It promotes pupils' personal development strongly. Pupils particularly enjoy art, information and communication technology (ICT) and physical education. Music is a strong feature with all pupils learning to play a musical instrument. Although the content of the curriculum is good and it provides a good vehicle for learning, not all aspects are taught sufficiently well to enable pupils to acquire the literacy and numeracy skills necessary for the next phase of their education.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

There are good health and safety, risk assessment and child protection procedures in place to safeguard pupils' well-being. Relationships between adults and pupils are positive. The school has worked successfully with external support to improve pupils' behaviour and, although a few parents have concerns, older pupils feel that staff manage the difficulties of a very small minority appropriately. Supervision levels are high and pupils feel safe in school with plenty of

adults to provide support should they need it. Whilst pastoral care is good, academic guidance is not robust enough. Teachers' marking provides encouragement but fails to give a clear indication of what pupils need to do next to improve their standard of work, other than by making their handwriting or presentation neater. The targets pupils have in their English and mathematics books are too wide to guide pupils when they tackle their work or to help them measure their success. Although arrangements are in place to assist pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, their impact is not monitored to ensure the actions are effective.

Leadership and management

Grade: 4

The leaders of the school have an unrealistic view of how well the school is doing. It has not tackled weaknesses in the teaching to ensure that all pupils make the progress they should. Processes for deciding on targets are insufficiently robust as the analysis of data on pupils' performance is insecure. As a result, teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils will achieve in each lesson, or the progress they will make over time. A significant proportion of parents have concerns over the willingness of the leadership to take account of their views. The school struggles to recruit governors as pupil numbers have dropped but those appointed try their best to support the school. Although they make visits to the school and receive regular information from the headteacher and staff, they are not involved in rigorously monitoring and evaluating the school's work and do not provide the challenge required to help move the school forward.

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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?	4
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	4

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	4

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?	4
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?	3

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?	4
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	4
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	4
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	4
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	4
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	4
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	4
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	Yes
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

3 March 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Bridgerule C of E Primary School, Bridgerule, EX22 7EN

Thank you for welcoming me to your school when I came to inspect it recently. I enjoyed visiting your lessons and hearing your views. I am writing to tell you what I found out during the day.

Nearly all of you enjoy coming to school and behave well. It was good to see how sensible you are in carrying out your jobs and leading assembly and how well children of different ages work and play together. The school provides interesting activities, trips and visitors to help make your learning enjoyable. All the sports you do and your daily fruit show you are keen to lead a healthy lifestyle. Music, art and PE are some of your favourite subjects.

You try hard with your work, but too many of you are not doing as well as you should because not enough is expected of you. The standards of English and mathematics work are too low, and you do not make enough progress in every lesson. Sometimes, the work is too easy and at other times, too hard. You are not given enough advice on how to improve your work. You do have targets, but these are not helping you to do your very best because they are too general and do not help you to measure your own progress.

Your parents have mixed views about your school. Some are happy with your school but others feel there is room for improvement. The school leaders need to be more ambitious. Although yours is a happy, caring school, it is not providing an acceptable standard of education because you are not all achieving as well as you should. I have asked the school to do the following things:

- Have high expectations of what you will achieve in English and mathematics.
- Improve teaching so that you all work hard enough and make good progress in every lesson.
- Give you helpful advice on how to improve your work.
- Keep a close check on how well things are going at the school and make sure improvements are made.

Best wishes

Jill Arnold Lead Inspector