

Ilminster Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113396
Local Authority	Devon
Inspection number	311249
Inspection date	11 June 2008
Reporting inspector	Rowena Onions

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	80
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Arnold
Headteacher	Tracy Hannon
Date of previous school inspection	14 March 2005
School address	Ilminster Newton Abbot TQ13 9RE
Telephone number	01364 661208
Fax number	01364 661382

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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 issues: the pupils' achievement in reading and writing in Key Stage 1 and in mathematics throughout the school; the impact of pupils' involvement in evaluating their own progress and in contributing to school improvement; and the contribution made to the leadership of the school by governors and staff. Evidence was gathered from observations of lessons, scrutiny of pupils' work, parent questionnaires and school documents and discussions with staff, pupils and two representatives of the governing body. 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, as given in its self-evaluation form, were not justified. These have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This small school serves Ilsington village and the surrounding area. Its increasing reputation means that many of its pupils come to the school from a wider area. As a result, the school roll has risen by 25% in the last three years. Attainment on entry to the school is in line with that expected for children's ages and a below average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. There have been a significant number of changes in teaching staff over the last two years but the school now has stable staffing.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Ilington Church of England Primary School is a good school. There have been significant improvements made over recent years. Many aspects of the school are already outstanding and others are close to being so.

Pupils make good progress. Children are given a strong start in the Reception Year and their rapid progress reflects this. Throughout the school, because their lessons are 'not boring because we always have something to do', pupils are motivated to learn and try their best. Teachers ensure lessons contain a variety of practical, meaningful activities. Work is underway to develop pupils' ability to think and reason and they are often asked to solve problems in class. This is effective, both in increasing skills and in ensuring that pupils understand the relevance of what they are learning. There is a consistency of approach to teaching and a breadth to the work provided that underpins the good progress. Pupils' achievement is enhanced by the importance placed on subjects other than English and mathematics. The work seen in design and technology, for example, was of high quality and enabled pupils to practise literacy and numeracy skills to good effect.

Development work in English has been successful and pupils now make good progress in all year groups. As systems and new staff become established, progress is increasing and pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 are currently attaining above average standards. Work in mathematics is newer and, although over their time in the school pupils have made good progress, there is more variability between year groups. Currently, the school puts extra provision into Year 6 to address this and ensure that pupils attain the above average standards it expects. The school has rightly identified that there is a particular need to increase pupils' ability to develop mathematical thinking through discussion and explanation.

The pupils are a delight! They are open, friendly and confident and enjoy everything they do. Because systems for academic guidance are strong they become increasing self-evaluative and self-motivated. They are aware of the quality of their work and how they can improve. They play a significant role in helping the school to develop, for example taking an active part in deciding on improvements to the playground. Exciting new work, in which the school council, together with staff and governors, looks at the Government's 'Every Child Matters' agenda, is beginning to increase their role even further.

The school has an ActiveMark and Healthy School status, illustrating the part it is playing in supporting pupils to develop personally. Pupils are encouraged to be active and there are many opportunities for them to do this. They particularly enjoy the daily ten-minute exercise programme that is taught in French, successfully promoting development in both subjects. Pupils know the importance of healthy eating and are well aware of how to keep safe and secure. Great value is placed on supporting each individual, as summed up by one parent who commented, 'It is lovely to know the teachers care about our children so much.' This is an aspect of the school that particularly pleases parents. There are strong, all round relationships built with parents and most play a very significant role in working with the school to help their children progress. The care taken of the pupils is further extended by a good range of after school clubs and a very well organised early morning club.

The school has done much positive work in assessing pupils' attainment and using this to monitor progress, set targets both for pupils and for school improvement, and to plan interventions for groups and individuals where these prove necessary. The latter have been

particularly successful in helping lower attaining pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, to make very good progress. The mixture of strong personal support and these interventions is particularly successful in helping pupils with additional emotional or behavioural difficulties to overcome these and do well. The school is currently looking at ways in which the assessments teachers make can be used to even greater effect. The most effective practice is seen in Reception where assessments are gathered on a day-to-day basis and put together to form an all round picture of each child, which is used to finely tune teaching and learning to each child's needs. This is a key factor in helping them make such rapid progress. In other classes, teachers are not putting everything they know about each pupil together to provide this all round picture of their attainment in a subject and so the impact of teachers' assessments is not as great.

The headteacher has provided outstanding leadership in promoting school improvement. School self-evaluation is honest and thorough and shared by the whole school community. The changes in staffing mean that the leadership team is very new. They are receiving good training in their roles and are keen to play their part. The start they have made is positive but much of the work they have planned is in its infancy and so has not had time to have full impact. Governors are outstandingly knowledgeable, active and supportive. They appreciate the importance of holding the school to account and thus are playing a full part in helping the school to develop and improve. The very positive start made by the new staff team, together with the impact of recent improvements and the quality of leadership provided by the headteacher and governors, demonstrates the school's outstanding capacity for making further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Because they are very well taught through a strong curriculum that provides them with both direct teaching and the freedom to choose and learn from a wide variety of activities, children in Reception make outstanding progress. They benefit from a safe and secure environment, incorporating indoor and outdoor spaces, including much enjoyed time in the school allotment and in the forest. By the time the children start Year 1, the majority have achieved the expected goals for their ages and many have exceeded them. There is very effective leadership and management and parents comment on the high quality of care their children receive and how this helps them to settle quickly and happily into school.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the consistency of the progress made in mathematics by improving pupils' ability to discuss and explain their work.
- Build on the strong Reception class practice to strengthen assessment throughout the school.

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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	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

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	1

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	2
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	1

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	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
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

12 June 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Ilsington Church of England Primary School, Ilsington, Newton Abbot, TQ13 9RE

I really enjoyed my day at your school and would like to thank you for your help and very friendly conversations. You were a delight! I thought you open friendly and confident. I know you will be pleased to know that I think yours is a good school with many features that are already outstanding and others that are close to being so.

This is what I liked most about your school:

- The good progress you are making.
- The way you enjoy your school and try so hard to learn and improve your work.
- The contribution you make to helping your school to improve.
- That your teachers and helpers make your lessons interesting and fun.
- The range of exciting activities provided for you by your teachers and helpers.
- The very good start children are given in Reception.
- The good care adults take to make sure you are happy, safe and well.
- That everyone in your school is working together to make it even better.

To make things even better, this is what I have asked your school to do now:

- Help you to become better at discussing and explaining your work in maths.
- Build a detailed picture of the strengths and weaknesses in your individual work so that the teachers can help you to make even better progress.

Through your school council, you can help the teachers to do this.

Once again, thank you. I know that you will continue to try hard to do well.

Yours sincerely

Rowena Onions Lead inspector

12 June 2008



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