

Bearnes Voluntary Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113400
Local Authority	Devon
Inspection number	311252
Inspection date	14 January 2008
Reporting inspector	Denise Morris

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	77
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Roberta Tierney
Headteacher	Art Hewitt
Date of previous school inspection	9 June 2003
School address	Queen Street Newton Abbot TQ12 2AU
Telephone number	01626 353980
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This small school draws its pupils from all areas of Newton Abbot. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average, with a higher proportion having statements of special educational needs than in most primary schools. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is also above average. There is significant movement of pupils in and out of the school other than at the usual times of joining and leaving. Although there is a wide spread of individual attainment on entry, taking the intake as a whole, children's starting points are below the level expected.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school. Significant strengths are the good personal development and well-being of the pupils which result from the good care, guidance and support that the school provides for them. Pupils behave well, have positive attitudes and enjoy school life a lot. They are polite and helpful to others, often offering to do simple tasks about the school. Pupils are beginning to understand the importance of keeping fit and leading active lives as the school has recently applied for 'Healthy School' status.

Pupils are very well cared for. The whole school community keeps them safe and secure. As one parent commented: 'Because of the extra help received I have found a remarkable improvement in my child's work and confidence.' Academic guidance is satisfactory and improving. It results in pupils having a clear awareness of their achievements. Monitoring of the progress of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is thorough.

Standards are below average but achievement is satisfactory. The movement of pupils in and out of the school, other than at normal times of joining and leaving, limits the achievement of some of them. Pupils make satisfactory progress during their time at the school, preparing them adequately for their futures. Standards in reading and writing have improved recently, particularly in Years 1 and 2, because of a good new approach to learning sounds. Across the school, standards in mathematics and science are lower than those in English and the more capable pupils, whilst making satisfactory progress, do not always achieve their potential.

Teaching is satisfactory and occasionally good, leading to satisfactory learning overall. Pupils enjoy lessons because relationships are good and they are motivated to succeed. Pupils do not, however, have sufficient opportunity to improve their independence skills because too much is done for them. This particularly impacts negatively on the learning of more capable pupils. Teaching does not always challenge these pupils well enough, for example through the use of probing questions. The satisfactory curriculum is enriched well by visits to many places of interest and through strong links with local schools.

Leaders have identified the right areas for development. The headteacher and senior managers know what needs to be done and provide satisfactory leadership and management of the school. They have already begun to improve standards in English and are now rightly tackling standards in mathematics and science. Effective new monitoring and tracking systems have resulted in the school gaining a clearer view of its strengths and areas for development. Staff have clear roles and responsibilities and are committed to raising standards. Governors are helpful and carry out their strategic roles diligently. They are not yet as challenging to the school as they could be because several are new to the role. Because of improvements recently, and the satisfactory progress in the issues identified at the last inspection, the school demonstrates that it has a satisfactory capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage Grade: 3

Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Pupils enter the Reception class with below expected levels of attainment, and often well below in communication, language and literacy. They make satisfactory progress during their time in the Foundation Stage although, when they enter Year 1, few have reached the goals for children of their age. The Reception children share a class with those in Years 1 and 2. Activities in the class are usually appropriate to their age and ability, although occasionally there are too few opportunities for them to explore, investigate and make decisions for themselves. The accommodation is adequate and

the school is rightly working closely with the local authority to improve the provision. Children are well cared for and their achievements are accurately recorded. They benefit from working with older children and quickly develop confidence, enjoying their learning. They work well together and behave well. Relationships are good and links with parents are strong, ensuring that children's learning is continued at home.

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What the school should do to improve further

- raise standards, particularly in mathematics and science, and ensure that the more capable pupils reach their full potential
- ensure that teaching challenges the more capable pupils fully
- increase opportunities for pupils to develop their independence skills, particularly in lessons
- develop governors' roles in challenging the school.

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

Although standards are below average across the school, there has been some recent improvement particularly in English. Standards in English are rising as a result of a good new phonics programme and a consistent approach to encourage writing across the curriculum.

The school has recognised that pupils have not always done well enough in the past, particularly in mathematics and science. In the national tests in 2007, standards at the end of Year 6 were lower in mathematics and science than in English. In the 2007 assessments of pupils at the end of Year 2, pupils' performance was better in reading and writing than in mathematics. The school is now taking action to drive up standards in mathematics and science and, as a result, pupils are currently making adequate progress in these subjects as well as in English.

Nevertheless, the school recognises that the more capable pupils in particular still need to move on more quickly. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve satisfactorily in relation to their starting points and capabilities because they are given effective support.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' good personal development and well-being ensure that the school is a happy place to be. Parents value the way that pupils enjoy coming to school. 'They love school' commented one parent, whilst another said 'my child is so happy at school and feels really accepted'. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The good opportunities for spiritual development in assemblies enable pupils to reflect on their own lives and on the lives of others. Pupils take opportunities for responsibility sensibly and seriously, with many of the Year 6 pupils acting as prefects and helping younger ones, particularly at lunchtimes. Pupils know how to keep safe and they make sure younger ones do also. Many pupils, however, have too few opportunities to develop their independence, particularly during lessons.

Pupils recognise the needs of those less fortunate than themselves and make a good contribution to the community. They regularly raise money for a range of charities, for example supporting developments in Africa and India, and are regularly involved in activities such as performances for the local community. They clearly know the difference between right and wrong and behave well. Pupils take regular exercise and many benefit from sporting activities and clubs to keep fit. However, not all pupils are aware of the importance of healthy eating. The good school council has a positive role and there is a democratic approach to its organisation. Pupils look after their school environment well. Their adequate progress in literacy and numeracy means that they are satisfactorily prepared for their futures.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Pupils value the support that teachers provide for them. Because of satisfactory and sometimes good teaching, pupils make at least satisfactory progress in their lessons. Teachers plan many exciting activities to which pupils respond well. Pupils in Years 1 and 2, for example, enjoyed searching all over the school to discover as many different materials as they could as part of their science lesson. Resources are used well to add interest and support learning and lessons are harmonious. Behaviour is well managed and relationships are strong. Teaching assistants play an important and successful role in the support of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Questions are a regular feature of many lessons but they do not always extend the highest ability pupils as well as they could. Although the school has made progress in developing pupil's independent skills, there are too few opportunities in some lessons to develop independence in learning by making choices or decisions. This results in the needs of some groups of pupils, especially the more capable ones, not being fully met. The provision of homework is variable, resulting in missed opportunities to accelerate pupils' progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Satisfactory activities are planned for all pupils. There are some examples of work that is well matched to the needs and abilities of pupils but this has not been extended to all classes, resulting in a lack of challenge for some more capable pupils. Opportunities for pupils to develop their independence in learning are rare. At times, too much is done for them, removing their

chance to think for themselves, make decisions and plan their own approach to learning. Good links have been established with other schools, particularly the secondary school which is strengthening the curriculum in many subjects, especially in physical education and information and communication technology. The good new phonics programme is having a positive impact on standards in reading and writing in Years 1 and 2 in particular. Good use is made of regular trips and visits to enrich the curriculum and the few clubs provided after school help to extend sporting achievements.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Very good pastoral care including effective procedures to support the high number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities helps pupils to feel safe, secure and happy. Induction procedures are good, helping pupils to settle well and feel valued whether they enter the school in Reception or at a later stage. Parents feel that the school is approachable and that any problems are quickly dealt with. The partnership with parents makes a strong impact on pupils' personal development and well-being. Child protection procedures are robust and the school is working hard and successfully to improve attendance.

The supportive role of the special needs coordinator in the assessment of pupils is a significant strength, helping pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to feel confident and make progress. Monitoring and tracking procedures as part of academic guidance have improved recently and the school now has a clear view of each pupil's progress as they move through the school. This is helping targets to be more realistic, and is contributing to improving progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leaders have identified the need for increased rigour in raising standards and improving achievement across the school. The headteacher, with the support of others with leadership and management roles, has already begun to put procedures in place to improve reading and writing. These procedures are showing success in improving pupils' progress. Action has also been taken to start to improve pupils' progress in mathematics and science. Resources are deployed well and have a particularly effective impact on outcomes for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Good partnerships with other schools have resulted in curriculum enrichment and in good opportunities for transition to high school. Good links have also been established with Early Years providers and the Newton Abbott Learning Community, which enables 15 local schools to work effectively together. All of these links are used well by leaders to improve provision in the school.

Governors are supportive but their role in challenging the school's leaders is underdeveloped. The school's evaluation of its performance is satisfactory and the use of challenging targets has recently improved to a satisfactory level. Monitoring has also improved and is contributing to the setting of realistic targets. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory and, based on recent developments, the school has a satisfactory capacity to improve further.

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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	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 disabilities make progress	3

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	3
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

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?	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	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
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	3
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

15 January 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Bearnas Voluntary Controlled Primary School, Newton Abbot TQ12 2AU

Thank you for your recent help in our inspection of your school. We very much enjoyed talking with you about the things you do. You told us that you enjoy school and like your teachers. This letter is to tell you about some of the things we found during our visit.

Your school is giving you a satisfactory education. You behave well and are polite and helpful. You are making satisfactory progress with your work although you do better in English than in mathematics and science.

Your teachers help you to learn at a satisfactory rate and provide you with a satisfactory curriculum. However, there are not always enough opportunities for you to be independent in your learning so that you can make choices and decisions for yourselves. You attend sporting clubs well, although we think there could be more choice of clubs available to you.

Your headteacher and other adults who work in the school keep you safe and secure. They are always ready to help you. They carefully record how well you are doing. There are four things that we are asking the school to improve so that your education is better. You can help by working hard in your lessons and by making sure that you attend school regularly. We have asked the school to:

- help you to do better in mathematics and science and make sure that those of you who are capable of reaching the higher levels do so
- make sure that those of you who find learning easy are always challenged fully by the teachers
- give you more opportunities to be independent, particularly in lessons
- develop the governors' roles in helping the school to improve.

Thank you again.

Best wishes

Denise Morris Lead Inspector.

Annex B

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Lead Inspector.