

Ilsham Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113401
Local Authority	Torbay
Inspection number	311253
Inspection date	27 March 2008
Reporting inspector	Christine Huard

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	164
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sally Timmins
Headteacher	Lynn Atkinson
Date of previous school inspection	8 December 2003
School address	Ilsham Road Torquay TQ1 2JQ
Telephone number	01803 292313
Fax number	01803 211193

Age group	4–11
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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 effectiveness of measures taken to support progress in Years 3 and 4, the key elements that contribute to pupils' strong personal development, and how effective the new management team and governors are in securing the continued success of the school. 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 its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

The school serves the local parish and the surrounding community. The attainment of children when they enter the Reception class is broadly in line with the levels expected in their personal development but the development of early writing and mathematical skills are usually below those expected.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school. It provides an excellent education in an exciting and stimulating learning environment, which fully reflects its Christian ethos. Parents are very supportive of the school and are very pleased with their children's progress. One parent echoed the views of many: 'Ilsham is an excellent school, our children are very happy, there is a strong sense of community and teaching is well tailored to ability.' The key to the school's success is the dynamic leadership of the headteacher. She is passionate about developing not just the academic and personal qualities of the pupils in her care, but also a curiosity and natural love of learning. Leaders at all levels share this passion and commitment so there is a unity of purpose and great cohesion within the whole school team. In addition, there are excellent plans for development, rigorous self-evaluation and robust monitoring. Challenging targets are set and met. Actions taken to bring about improvement, for example in accelerating the progress made by pupils in Years 3 and 4, are proving to be successful. All these factors mean that the school is moving forward exceptionally well and has an outstanding capacity for further improvement.

Children in the Reception class receive a good start to their education. Activities match their individual needs in a lively learning area. In Years 1 to 6, pupils sparkle. They attain exceptionally high standards in a range of subjects such as art, music and information and communication technology (ICT), as well as English, mathematics and science. Achievement in these areas is outstanding. The school makes excellent provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and holds regular discussions with parents and outside agencies to ensure that their needs are met. Similarly, pupils who are especially gifted or talented are identified, and care is taken to make certain they are sufficiently challenged, through challenging tasks and 'tricky targets'.

Pupils are inspired by the exciting and lively curriculum. A walk around the school clearly explains why. The vibrant displays of pupils' work, such as that resulting from a 'Rain Forests' project, illustrate the breadth of the curriculum and are evidence of the way in which pupils' work is valued. Excellent links are made across a range of subjects and the use of ICT is fully integrated into all topics. Themed days and weeks result in a range of outstanding work. There is wide range of visits and visitors that act as 'launch pads' for projects or effectively consolidate pupils' learning. Of particular note is the provision for physical education, which is outstanding. Limitations imposed by the size of the school's site and lack of facilities are overcome by the comprehensive and varied programme offered and creative methods of ensuring it is delivered. An inclusive programme for pupils' personal, social and health education makes a major contribution to pupils' outstanding personal development. Pupils are nurtured, and the care and support provided for them are excellent. 'It's like being part of a big family' explained one pupil. The guidance pupils receive for their personal and academic development is second to none. They know that if they have a problem it will be sorted out, and they feel safe and secure.

Pupils want to come to school and this is reflected in their good attendance. The excellent behaviour, eager responses and excitement generated in each classroom illustrate how successfully teachers motivate their pupils so that they greatly enjoy their education. They bubble with enthusiasm. Exhilarated Year 5 pupils explained, 'We read for the joy of it'. They discussed the writing of Michael Morpurgo knowledgeably and maturely, clearly demonstrating their empathy with the characters in 'Kensuke's Kingdom'. Teachers ensure that pupils know what they are going to learn. They use resources, such as interactive whiteboards, skilfully in order to make explanations clearer and lessons more interesting. In these mixed age group

classes, teachers are particularly successful at planning a wide range of tasks. These are carefully devised to meet the learning needs of all pupils so that all are appropriately challenged or supported. This excellent planning is a key factor in why the pupils manage to achieve so well. Pupils are encouraged to explore and share ideas with their peers and in small groups. They know exactly how well they are doing in their work. They find marking very helpful and see their targets as 'goals' – 'they really set us a challenge'. They appreciate the fact that targets are regularly reviewed so that they are constantly moving forward in their learning.

Pupils are animated and receptive in class, and thoughtful and reflective in assembly. They are considerate in their dealings with each other. The playground is a happy and harmonious area where older pupils happily and willingly fulfil the role of 'buddies' to the youngest children. Pupils have an excellent understanding of the importance of a healthy lifestyle, even to the extent of monitoring the contents of each other's lunch boxes! They have a comprehensive understanding of how to stay safe. They realise their responsibility to the global, as well as local, community. They talk eagerly of their links with the Escuela Primeria Yanamanchi in Peru, and of the fact that they raised enough money for the school to be able to buy a copier. The school council is very active and aware of its role in bringing pupils' views to the notice of the school management as well as participating in the appointment of staff and organising a range of fund raising events. They are very aware of contemporary environmental concerns and their excellent numeracy and literacy skills provide an outstanding preparation for their future economic well-being.

Staff and governors know how well the school is doing. Targets set for future development are demanding – but the school thrives on challenge. Although their self-evaluation is a little cautious, this is because they are always looking for ways to move forward. There is a clear understanding of what the school needs to do to improve further, as illustrated by its speedy identification of the need to improve progress in Years 3 and 4 and the successful actions taken to address this. The school uses data exceptionally well to check its performance and the robust monitoring system ensures that the quality of teaching and learning is rigorously evaluated. Teachers share good practice and discuss strategies for helping pupils to become independent in their learning. The school improvement plan and subject plans are meticulous, and are vital constituents in the concerted efforts to drive this school forward.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children in the Reception class make good progress and they join Year 1 having reached broadly average standards. Children are keen to learn because a good range of activities is provided across all areas of the Early Years curriculum. There is a good balance between those activities led by the teacher and those that children choose for themselves. However, more could be done to develop and utilise the outside area to make it as stimulating as the interior, and give children even more chances to choose their own activities. The classroom is bright and exciting and provides an inviting environment for children to work in. The teaching is animated and pace is generally good. Occasionally, the children are so keen to participate in lively activities, however, that time has to be taken to calm them back down again. The care and attention given to children's welfare are very good. Monitoring of children's progress is rigorous and action is taken to provide good additional support where it is needed. The leadership and management of the Foundation Stage and the support provided for the teaching are very good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop more opportunities in the outside area in the Foundation Stage in order to widen the curriculum to improve children's opportunities to make choices.

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?	1
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?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
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?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
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?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
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	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

28 March 2008

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Ilsham Church of England Primary School, Torquay TQ1 2JQ

Thank you for the very warm welcome you gave me when I visited your school. You certainly seem to be very happy and it was good to hear how you really enjoy your work and all the extra activities in which you are involved. I think your school gives you an excellent education and is working hard to make it even better.

These are the things I liked best:

- Your behaviour is excellent and you are really keen and enthusiastic about your learning.
- You are all doing very well in English, mathematics and science and in many other subjects as well.
- You take very seriously the importance of eating healthily at school and taking physical exercise.
- Teachers make learning interesting and fun for you, and you know how to improve your work from marking and target setting.
- You have an outstanding and varied curriculum and the special activities arranged to enhance it are excellent. Physical education is particularly exciting.
- The teachers and staff take excellent care of you while you are in school.
- Your headteacher and governors lead the school extremely well and are very keen to make it even better.

There is only one small area that could be a little better:

- I would like to see the children in the Foundation Stage have more activities to choose from in the outside area.

I am glad you enjoy your school and hope you will continue to work hard to ensure that the school stays as successful as it is now.

Very best wishes

Mrs Christine Huard Lead inspector

28 March 2008

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Lead inspector