

Exbourne Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113410
Local Authority	Devon
Inspection number	311257
Inspection date	7 May 2008
Reporting inspector	Martin James

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	52
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Michael Winter
Headteacher	Celia West
Date of previous school inspection	11 February 2004
School address	Exbourne Okehampton EX20 3SQ
Telephone number	01837 851205
Fax number	01837 851205

Age group	4-11
Inspection date	7 May 2008
Inspection number	311257

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is much smaller than most primary schools. Nearly all pupils are from a White British background. Few pupils are eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties, including moderate problems in literacy and numeracy, is below the national average. In recognition of its work, the school has received the Activemark award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school where pupils achieve well. Pupils' personal development and well-being are good, as are their attitudes and behaviour, and they show great enjoyment in coming to school. Care, guidance and support are good, with the care and safety of its pupils being a high priority of the school. Pupils also benefit greatly from the excellent links made with the village community, especially the neighbouring church. Parents hold overwhelmingly positive views about the school. One said, typically, 'The family-like atmosphere at Exbourne Primary School has promoted happiness and self-confidence in my children, and educationally and socially they are thriving.'

When children start school, their knowledge and skills are broadly as expected, although a small number have weaknesses in their language skills. They achieve well in Reception, and by the end of the year they achieve average levels and sometimes higher. Pupils then make good progress through Years 1 to 6, and by the end of Year 6 they reach above-average standards. Overall, however, pupils perform relatively less well in writing than in other subjects.

Teachers relate well to pupils and they make good use of a variety of resources and teaching strategies to make lessons interesting. Teaching assistants are well deployed in supporting pupils with literacy and numeracy difficulties in particular. Lessons are generally well planned, but the work provided for more-able pupils is not always challenging enough to suit their particular needs. Helpful advice is given to pupils in class and also through the comments put in their books. Pupils enjoy the good range of visits and visitors that enriches the curriculum, and they show a clear understanding of the importance of following a healthy lifestyle. The school routinely reviews its curriculum, and it recognises that limited use has been made of literacy and numeracy in other subjects. The current emphasis on increasing the use of literacy in particular is an appropriate priority for the school in view of the pupils' comparative weakness in writing.

The headteacher, the governors and other members of staff are keen to do the best they can for the pupils. Self-evaluation is good and, as a result, the differences noted in the performance of boys and girls have been successfully remedied. Governors are fully involved in budget setting and development planning, and they routinely hold the school to account for its performance. Good use is made of outside bodies, such as sports teachers and music specialists, in supporting the work of the school. Current planning shows a clear awareness of the ways to take the school forward, and the school's track record of improvement demonstrates a good capacity for it to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children settle happily into school, and they enjoy the company of the older pupils in the mixed-age class. Adults work hard to provide them with suitable variety of tasks and experiences. They give them, for example, an appropriate and much-improved balance between teacher-led activities and those which the children choose for themselves. However, opportunities are sometimes missed to encourage them to talk more about their work. The children behave well, and they readily share with others. A good range of resources is provided, with the outdoor area being used well. The staff work hard to create a friendly and caring learning environment,

and the children develop good social skills. As a result of good teaching, the children make good progress, attaining average standards and sometimes higher by the end of the year.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide pupils with more opportunities to develop their writing skills in other subjects of the curriculum.
- Ensure that teachers consistently provide challenging activities for pupils, especially the more able.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards overall are above average, and pupils' achievement is good. Children get off to a good start in Reception. By the end of the year they reach average levels, and, on occasions, exceed them. By the end of Year 2, pupils achieve well and reach above-average standards. However, pupils do slightly less well in writing than in other subjects.

Although the pupils' performance in writing remains a little lower than in other subjects, overall standards are also above average at the end of Year 6. This represents good achievement from these pupils' particular starting points. In 2007, boys in both Years 2 and 6 did not perform quite as well as the girls. The school recognised this, and the strategies introduced to reduce the differences have been successful, with boys and girls now performing equally well. The school makes good provision for pupils who find learning difficult and this is helping them to make good progress. However, the progress made by more-able pupils, although good overall, is not as consistent and at times it could be better.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils say that they like school very much, and this is reflected in their above-average attendance, their good behaviour and their outstanding enjoyment of school. Pupils are polite and courteous, and the majority move around the school in a quiet and calm manner. Pupils say that bullying is not a problem and they express complete confidence in the school's ability to sort out any issues that do arise. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and, for instance, they have a clear understanding of other cultures. Pupils have a good awareness of how to live healthy lives and they readily make healthy choices in what they eat. Pupils benefit from the opportunities provided by the school for exercise, such as 'Take Ten', and they tackle these with great enthusiasm.

Pupils take the many responsibilities that they have in school very seriously. The school councillors are proud of their role and, for instance, they readily organise events and activities for other pupils. Pupils are very successfully involved in the wider community through such things as fund raising, and take part in many activities in the local village, such as singing in the parish church. The school successfully develops in its pupils a range of personal skills such as confidence and independence. The standards currently being achieved in literacy and numeracy are preparing them well for later life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers relate well to pupils and consequently pupils behave well and are keen to learn. They make pupils aware of what they are learning and why, and this contributes well towards their understanding of their work. Teachers' explanations are clear and they successfully engage pupils' interest. Teaching provides a variety of strategies and approaches, such as practical activities in mathematics, which pupils enjoy and which benefit their learning. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' presentation of their work, and this is much improved since the previous inspection. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning, because they are usefully deployed, providing them with good support and advice. Most of the tasks that are planned and provided for the different groups of pupils set a good level of challenge. However, the work provided for the more able pupils does not always extend them adequately. This in turn slows their rate of learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum enables pupils to study a broad and interesting range of subjects, and this contributes to their good progress. Planning is successful in providing for the different age groups of pupils in each class. Some links have been made between subjects to make learning even more relevant, but there have been too few opportunities for pupils to use their writing and number skills in other subjects. A particular emphasis is now being placed on the greater use of literacy, as the school has correctly identified that some pupils have weaknesses in their writing skills. The introduction of resources and activities of particular interest to boys has led to the improvement in their performance that is now evident in their class work. Pupils who find learning difficult are carefully identified and are given a good range of tasks and activities. In the Reception class, good provision is made for both adult-directed activities and opportunities for children to choose themselves.

There is a good emphasis throughout the school on developing pupils' personal and social skills. The curriculum makes a good contribution to pupils' safe and healthy lifestyles. There is a good range of outings, visitors and after-school clubs to broaden pupils' experiences, which they support with enthusiasm.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Adults ensure that there is good pastoral care for the pupils. Child protection procedures are good and staff are alert to signs that any pupil might be distressed or anxious. Pupils in turn are confident that they have an adult to turn to if they are worried. Staff ensure that pupils work in a safe and secure environment. Safety checks and risk assessments are routinely carried out and safe-guarding procedures are robust. Pupils are taught about the importance of healthy living and they are regularly reminded of the need to take care, for instance, when carrying out physical education activities.

Teachers mark pupils' work carefully, and they usually add helpful comments about improving work further. Pupils also have targets for improving their work in literacy and numeracy.

However, some of these are too broad, and discussions with pupils show that they are not always clear enough about what they need to do to make their work better.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher leads the school with dedication and skill, and is supported well by other staff members. They have been particularly successful in providing a good education for their pupils, in spite of the limited accommodation and resources available. Staff work well together and have been most successful in creating a safe and caring environment, based securely on Christian principles. The school has good systems for finding out how well it is doing, and the self-review has accurately identified strengths and areas for development. For example, actions to improve the performance of boys show clear signs of having been successful.

Subject leaders demonstrate a secure understanding of the strengths in their various subjects, but they have limited opportunities to observe lessons in other classes to help shape further improvement. Governors support the school well, being fully involved in influencing priorities in the school development plan. They are currently extending their role in monitoring various aspects of the school's work through more regular visits to classes. Senior leaders regularly obtain the views of both pupils and parents, and these are taken into account during policy reviews.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	----------------

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	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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	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	1
The attendance of learners	1
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?	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?	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	2
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	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

Dear Pupils,

Exbourne CE Primary School, Exbourne, Devon EX20 3SQ

Thank you for making us so welcome when we came to visit your school. We enjoyed our visit and it was a pleasure talking to you. My colleague especially liked talking to the school council, and we both really enjoyed joining you in assembly and in lessons. I am writing to tell you what we found out about the school, what we think is good, and what we think could be made better. Overall, you are in a good school where you are doing well with your work. Your headteacher and other staff know what they need to do to make the school even better.

These things are some of the strengths of the school:

- Teaching is good, and teachers provide you with interesting lessons.
- Your behaviour and your attitudes to your work are good.
- You really enjoy the good range of activities that the school provides, such as visits and different clubs.
- You know about how important it is to eat healthy food and take exercise.
- The staff know you well and take very great care of you.
- Your parents are very pleased with the school.

These are things the school has been asked to improve:

- Provide you with more opportunities to develop your writing skills, through the work you are given in other subjects.
- Make sure that you all get work that suits you, especially for those of you who can do harder work.

You can help, too, by telling your teacher if you think you could do even more difficult work.

We wish you all good luck for the future.

Best wishes,

Martin James Lead Inspector



8 May 2008

Dear Pupils,

Exbourne CE Primary School, Exbourne, Devon EX20 3SQ

Thank you for making us so welcome when we came to visit your school. We enjoyed our visit and it was a pleasure talking to you. My colleague especially liked talking to the school council, and we both really enjoyed joining you in assembly and in lessons. I am writing to tell you what we found out about the school, what we think is good, and what we think could be made better. Overall, you are in a good school where you are doing well with your work. Your headteacher and other staff know what they need to do to make the school even better.

These things are some of the strengths of the school:

- Teaching is good, and teachers provide you with interesting lessons.
- Your behaviour and your attitudes to your work are good.
- You really enjoy the good range of activities that the school provides, such as visits and different clubs.
- You know about how important it is to eat healthy food and take exercise.
- The staff know you well and take very great care of you.
- Your parents are very pleased with the school.

These are things the school has been asked to improve:

- Provide you with more opportunities to develop your writing skills, through the work you are given in other subjects.
- Make sure that you all get work that suits you, especially for those of you who can do harder work.

You can help, too, by telling your teacher if you think you could do even more difficult work.

We wish you all good luck for the future.

Best wishes,

Martin James
Lead Inspector