

The Beacon CofE (VA) Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113430
Local Authority	Devon
Inspection number	311265
Inspection dates	5–6 March 2008
Reporting inspector	Michael Burghart

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	168
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Adrian Graeffe
Headteacher	Susan Lockwood
Date of previous school inspection	1 November 2003
School address	1 Beacon Place Exmouth EX8 2SR
Telephone number	01395 264300
Fax number	01395 223169

Age group	4–11
Inspection dates	5–6 March 2008
Inspection number	311265

© 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

This is a smaller than average sized primary school. Five classes contain pupils from more than one age group. Reception children are taught in a single class. Pupils are drawn mostly from the local area, parts of which are recognised as being disadvantaged. A variety of pupils are from families based in temporary accommodation. More pupils than average enter or leave the school other than at normal times. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. Whilst the proportion of pupils who have English as an additional language is below average, it is rising. Children enter Reception with skills and experience below those normally expected. The school holds the Healthy School and Travel Plan awards. The acting headteacher, who has managed the school temporarily since Easter 2007, has been appointed as permanent headteacher from April 2008.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The Beacon takes good care of pupils and provides them with a satisfactory standard of education. It is a happy school where pupils feel safe and valued. Links with parents are good. Parents are pleased with the school. Comments such as, 'I am full of praise for the way the school brings out the best in my children' are common. The school is improving, following a period where pupils' achievement was below expectations. Pupils now make satisfactory progress. They build on a sound start in Reception as provision is satisfactory and children are sensitively introduced to school life. Children make good progress in personal development and in learning to get on well with others and their teachers. Standards in English, mathematics and science are broadly average at the end of Year 6, but there are still some pockets of underachievement. For example, because teaching does not always challenge pupils appropriately, too few pupils in middle ability groups reach the levels they are capable of. In the last year, good assessment procedures have been introduced designed to overcome this and raise standards. Teachers are now making learning objectives clear and lesson planning has improved. However, pupils are not sufficiently aware of their targets and this restricts their progress. Teaching is typically satisfactory, but ranges from lessons with inadequate features to some which are outstanding. The best teaching ensures pupils make consistently good progress. This is most obvious in Years 5 and 6 and in the quality of teaching and support for those pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils work and play well together and respond well to the good opportunities to learn about life in Britain and overseas. The school makes very good use of the experience of pupils who come from other countries to encourage everyone to be welcoming and considerate. Pupils know how to stay safe, keep fit and be healthy. Attendance is satisfactory. Notwithstanding the few pupils who could, and sometimes do, misbehave, behaviour is good in and out of class. Pupils enjoy school for most of the time, especially the good range of extra-curricular opportunities (residential trips are very popular!). Staff are working to improve further the already satisfactory curriculum by developing links between subjects to ensure that work is relevant and interesting. The acting headteacher leads and manages the school effectively. She is well supported by the senior teacher and subject leaders. Together, they give the school good educational direction and, as an enthusiastic team, are instrumental in introducing new initiatives. Self-evaluation is accurate and is being used successfully to pick out, and then plan for, areas that need improving. The governors are well informed and fully involved in strategic planning and in evaluating the success of decisions made. Good leadership and management have been at the heart of the school's recent positive track record and now give the school a good capacity for further development.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children are given a satisfactory start in Reception. Staff take good care of them making sure that relationships are good. Children learn to be considerate and work and play together happily. Progress is good in personal, social and emotional development and satisfactory in all other areas of learning. However, with low starting points, few children reach what is normally expected of this age group before they join Year 1. Teaching and support are satisfactory. Planning takes into account what is recommended for this age group. This involves presenting children with a diet of activities inside and outdoors, some that they can choose themselves and others directed by adults. This is effective in providing opportunities for most areas of learning, but

does not do enough to encourage some aspects of communication, especially writing skills. Assessment is being increasingly used to find out what children are capable of and measure progress. Nevertheless, record keeping is insufficiently developed to ensure that children are regularly involved in a wide enough range of activities every day. Parents appreciate the way their children are introduced to school life, especially those who are new to the country.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards, improving the quality of teaching to ensure that pupils are always appropriately challenged.
- Develop provision in the Foundation Stage to give children more opportunities to develop writing skills.
- Embed procedures making more use of assessment information, set targets for individual pupils to aspire to. A small proportion of 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

Pupils make satisfactory progress. They improve from below expectations to broadly average standards in their seven years at the school. However, rates of progress vary at different stages. In Reception, children make satisfactory progress overall with good progress in personal, social and emotional development. Progress is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2. There are good features in pupils' achievement in reading. These are the result of the school's extra emphasis on this aspect and have successfully addressed the weakness in boys' performance. Despite improvements, standards in reading, writing and mathematics are below average overall at the end of Year 2. Satisfactory progress continues in Years 3 and 4 but picks up in Years 5 and 6 because teaching is good and work is appropriately matched to pupils' abilities. School records show that, because of gaps in their previous learning, some pupils in Key Stage 2, particularly those of average ability, are underachieving. Extra support is helping to overcome this. By the time they leave, most pupils reach broadly average standards in English, mathematics and science. Throughout the school pupils with English as an additional language and those who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities are successfully helped to make good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Good standards of personal development have been maintained since the last inspection. Pupils enjoy school and usually show good attitudes. Take up of the many clubs and activities is high. Pupils feel safe in school and act safely. They say that the little bullying there is is dealt with well by staff. They obviously know who to turn to if they have problems. 'All the staff are friendly and listen to you,' was one girl's comment which sums up the majority view. Relationships are good and pupils work well with each other. Pupils and staff are proud of the Healthy School award which recognises a commitment to keep fit and eat healthy. Despite the minority of pupils who could, and sometimes do, present problems, behaviour is normally good in class and in the playground. Occasionally, when work is not appropriately challenging, a small minority of pupils do not behave well enough in class. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils know the difference between right and wrong. The school very successfully welcomes pupils who are new to the country and makes the most of the different

cultures and experiences they bring with them. Consequently, pupils have a well-established understanding of different lifestyles and are considerate to others, whatever their backgrounds. Pupils make a good contribution to the running of the school as responsible school councillors and class monitors, and to the community in general, for example through charity fund raising. Pupils are satisfactorily prepared for future study and life in general.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching is satisfactory overall. It ranges from inadequate in some lessons to outstanding in others. Similarly, the quality of learning, which is heavily dependent upon the effectiveness of teaching, varies. Strengths in teaching include relationships, good questioning, effective use of interactive whiteboards to support learning, and clear explanations of learning objectives in each lesson. In the most effective lessons, staff plan and present work at different ability and interest levels. However, evidence from the inspection and from the school's own monitoring records shows that there are too many occasions when expectations are too low, pace is slow and work is not well matched to pupils' needs. During such sessions, pupils tend to lose interest, behaviour sometimes slips and pupils do not make enough progress. Teaching assistants make a good contribution to the overall quality of teaching. They support pupils and teachers well in class, and through working with individuals or small groups

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum covers all required subjects, as well as giving good support to pupils' personal, social and health education. There is good provision for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Pupils benefit from booster classes and individual oneto- one opportunities in English. There are good arrangements which allow for Years 5 and 6 to be taught separately for about half the week. Planning is satisfactory, but does not always take full account of the different ability levels within the same class. However, growing use of assessment information to analyse what needs to be taught is reducing the negative effect of this weakness. There is a good range and number of extra-curricular clubs and activities and the curriculum is further enriched with some exciting visits and residential opportunities. Good opportunities provided for those who are identified as gifted and talented are helping such pupils reach above average standards. There are good links with parents and the church.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

This is a caring school. The effects are obvious in pupils' good personal development. Pastoral and physical care are good. Procedures to make sure pupils are safe are carefully monitored and effective. 'A lovely safe school where children are allowed to learn in an unpressurised happy environment,' was one parent's comment. Big improvements to assessment and tracking procedures in the past year have made it possible for teachers to prove not only what standards pupils are at but to gauge their progress. Staff make informed predictions of what pupils are likely to achieve. Targets are set for the school's overall performance in English and mathematics and a start has been made on identifying targets for individual pupils. This process is not yet effectively applied in all classes, with some pupils unaware of what to aspire to. However, the

introduction of learning objectives (WALT– We Are Learning To...) for each lesson is proving successful in helping pupils understand the point of what they are doing.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The acting headteacher leads and manages the school well in a good partnership with the senior teacher. Improvements to curriculum and strategic planning and the use of assessment information, driven by the acting headteacher, are having positive effects on learning. However, the full impact on improving pupils' achievement is yet to be seen. Together subject leaders, senior managers and governors ensure that the school has clear educational direction. They monitor the school's success and evaluate the impact of decisions. The school has a realistic view of its strengths and weaknesses. Governance is good. Governors are well organised and well informed through first-hand information and a good dialogue with staff, parents and pupils. Governors are in a good position to challenge in the role of critical friends and do so effectively. They support the school well.

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?	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	2

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	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	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?	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?	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	3
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

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

7 March 2008 Dear Pupils Inspection of The Beacon CofE (VA) Primary School, Exmouth, EX8 2SR Thank you for your help during the inspection. The school council deserves special thanks for the sensible way councillors represented you all. The Beacon is a caring school that gives you a satisfactory education. This means that it does some things well, but still needs to improve others. Here are some of the positives: The headteacher, staff and governors run the school well. They are constantly trying to find ways to improve it. Staff take good care of you and are helping you to learn as well as grow into considerate young people. Most of you behave well for most of the time. No matter what your background or where you come from, you are welcomed into the school and given good support to settle in. Those of you who find learning difficult are well supported. In order to improve the school should: Make sure that all teaching is as good as in the best lessons and that you are given work which is right for you to push you to do your best Give children in Reception more chances to learn to write Help you to know your targets so that you will understand how you can do better. You can help by trying your best. Good luck for the future. Yours sincerely Mike Burghart Lead inspector

7 March 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Beacon CofE (VA) Primary School, Exmouth, EX8 2SR

Thank you for your help during the inspection. The school council deserves special thanks for the sensible way councillors represented you all. The Beacon is a caring school that gives you a satisfactory education. This means that it does some things well, but still needs to improve others.

Here are some of the positives:

- The headteacher, staff and governors run the school well. They are constantly trying to find ways to improve it.
- Staff take good care of you and are helping you to learn as well as grow into considerate young people.
- Most of you behave well for most of the time.
- No matter what your background or where you come from, you are welcomed into the school and given good support to settle in.
- Those of you who find learning difficult are well supported.

In order to improve the school should:

- Make sure that all teaching is as good as in the best lessons and that you are given work which is right for you to push you to do your best
- Give children in Reception more chances to learn to write
- Help you to know your targets so that you will understand how you can do better.

You can help by trying your best. Good luck for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mike Burghart
Lead inspector