

Otterton Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113435
Local Authority	Devon
Inspection number	311267
Inspection date	30 April 2008
Reporting inspector	Michael Barron

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	90
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Judith Constable
Headteacher	Pat Fowler
Date of previous school inspection	18 May 2004
School address	Church Hill Otterton Budleigh Salterton EX9 7HU
Telephone number	01395 568326
Fax number	01395 568326

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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: • standards and achievement throughout the school, especially in Year 6 • the effectiveness of academic support and guidance for pupils, especially regarding the improvement of achievement in writing and reading in Key Stage 1, and writing, especially boys' writing, in Key Stage 2 • the quality of pupils' personal development and well-being, especially regarding pupils' understanding of the multicultural nature of modern British society. The inspector gathered evidence from: discussions with pupils, staff and a representative from the governing body; observations of teaching and of pupils at work and at play; scrutiny of school documentation and self-evaluation, samples of pupils' work and an analysis of parents' questionnaires. Other aspects of the school's work were not inspected in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average primary school situated in a village near to Budleigh Salterton. The majority of pupils live within the local area and nearly all are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above the national average, as is the percentage of pupils with statements of special educational need. Children enter school at the age of four with skills which usually meet expectations for their age. Children currently in the Reception class entered the school with below average skills. Pupils are taught in mixed-age classes in all year groups with the exception of pupils in Year 6. The school's accommodation has been extended since the last inspection with the recent purchase of an adjoining house.

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. It provides a good education for pupils and prepares them well for the next stage of their education. It is well led and managed by an enthusiastic headteacher who has ensured that both governors and staff have worked effectively together to regularly analyse and evaluate the school's performance thoroughly, and identify and implement improvement strategies where needed. The school has made good progress since the last inspection, for example, raising standards and achievement in reading in Year 2, and demonstrates a good capacity to improve in the future. Parents value the good quality of education the school provides for their children and have very positive views of the school. This was reflected in comments in parents' questionnaires such as, 'I am impressed by the caring and imaginative curriculum that ensures that children learn the most.'

Consistently good teaching, linked to a curriculum which serves the needs of pupils well, enables pupils to make good progress from the day they start school. Achievement is good in all year groups so that, by Year 6, pupils attain standards above the national average overall. However, whilst standards in mathematics and science are above average, standards in English are broadly in line with the national average. This is because standards in writing, especially boys' writing, are lower than in other subjects throughout the school. Boys often enter the school at the age of four with language and communication skills below typical expectations and, even though they make good progress in all year groups, their writing skills are lower than those of girls by the time they enter Year 6. Several initiatives to enhance boys' progress in writing have met with limited success and the school is now in the process of developing a curriculum which links subjects together and encourages pupils to develop and use their writing skills in other subject areas. During discussions with pupils, it was evident they enjoyed this approach to learning and several stated that literacy, especially writing, was now one of their favourite subjects. However, it is too early to judge the impact of this work on standards. Pupils displayed good attitudes and stated that they also enjoyed information and communication technology (ICT) lessons, science and sports activities. Evidence from lessons, pupils' books and work on display confirmed that pupils achieve high standards in these subjects. The school's developing cross-curricular approach to learning is successfully encouraging the use of not only literacy, but numeracy and ICT skills, to enhance progress in other subjects.

Teachers ensure that lessons cater effectively for the needs of all pupils in the school's mixed-aged group classes. Teachers use a variety of approaches to make learning interesting and to make sure pupils work hard. Lessons are well structured and enjoyable, although there are very rare occasions when one or two pupils sometimes lose interest for a short time and occasionally drift off task.

The school provides a good level of care, guidance and support for pupils and this is the basis for their good personal development and well-being. There is a pleasant family atmosphere about the school and parents are overwhelmingly positive in their appreciation of the caring way the school looks after their children. Good induction and transfer arrangements help pupils settle quickly into new routines. Pupils' health and well-being are securely safeguarded and child protection procedures meet current government requirements. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is good. Teachers and teaching assistants work well together to ensure that pupils requiring extra help, especially those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, are well supported and make similar good progress as other pupils. The school has developed and implemented good procedures to track pupils' progress and uses these very

efficiently to set challenging targets for pupils to try to reach. These have helped to maintain high standards in mathematics and science over a number of years and are beginning to have an impact on raising standards in writing. However, whilst pupils are well aware of their individual learning targets, the quality of teachers' marking is variable and does not always give pupils a firm idea of how to improve their work.

Pupils' enjoyment of school is outstanding and this is reflected in their above average attendance rates. As one older pupil put it, 'It's great here and I don't want to leave.' The quality of pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural development is good overall, and moral, social and spiritual development is particularly strong. This is reflected in pupils' excellent behaviour and their outstanding regard for the welfare of others. They are courteous and very polite. Pupils of all ages play well together and say that they feel very safe and well looked after. They are keen and eager to learn and describe their school as a happy and friendly place where adults make them feel wanted. Pupils are confident there is always someone to turn to if they have a problem. Members of the school council take their responsibilities seriously and say they are proud they are able to have an involvement in school affairs. Pupils have a good understanding of the need to make sensible and healthy choices and realise the importance of keeping fit. They join in the wide range of very popular out of school hours activities the school provides for pupils, and also in the 'Huff and Puff' exercise activities on offer at lunchtimes with great enthusiasm. A wide variety of visitors to the school and visits to places of interest, including residential trips, build up their knowledge of the immediate world around them. However, their appreciation of the multicultural nature of modern British society is quite limited and is not as well developed as other aspects of their cultural education.

The headteacher and teachers share management responsibilities well and teachers are developing their leadership roles as subject coordinators. The school is well supported by the governing body, which offers a good level of support and challenge and fulfils its statutory duties effectively. Staff and governors have built up good relationships with parents, who are very proud of the school and appreciate that their views are regularly sought and acted upon. Links with external agencies are good and support pupils' learning well, particularly those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children achieve well in the Foundation Stage because of consistently good teaching, which is linked effectively to a well planned curriculum. Nearly all are on target to attain expectations in all areas of learning by the time they enter Year 1. The classroom younger children share with Year 1 pupils is a colourful and stimulating learning environment where children feel happy and safe. The teacher and teaching assistant work well together to make sure lessons effectively blend opportunities for independent learning with adult-directed tasks and that children requiring extra help are provided with the support they need to make the progress they are capable of. Children enjoy lessons and happily engage in learning, especially when working under adult supervision, although a minority have yet to develop the ability to work independently. Progress in personal, social and emotional development is good and children understand the need to share and take turns. Children appear keen to join in activities and are developing the ability to listen to others and join in conversations. Mathematical development makes the most of children's improving counting and sorting skills. The topic work approach nurtures children's understanding of the immediate world around them as well as encouraging

creative skills. Physical development is built up effectively, especially in the small, well designed, secure outdoor play area.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in English throughout the school by improving standards in writing, especially boys' writing.
- Ensure that marking consistently provides pupils with effective guidance about how to improve their work.
- Increase pupils' awareness and understanding of the multicultural nature of modern British society.

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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	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	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	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

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

30 April 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Otterton Church of England Primary School, Devon, EX9 7HU

Thank you for welcoming me to your school. Everyone was really friendly and I soon realised why you like your school so much. I enjoyed talking to some of you about your favourite activities and seeing you all working in lessons. I especially remember watching you all enjoying taking part in 'Huff and Puff' exercises in the playground at lunchtime.

Here are some of the things I particularly like about your school:

- This is a good school which prepares you well for the next stage of your education.
- Your enjoyment of school is outstanding and your behaviour is excellent.
- Your personal development is good and you have a good understanding of how to live healthily and safely.
- Your headteacher, teachers and governors lead and manage the school well and make sure that the care, guidance and support you receive is good.

I believe your headteacher and teachers can do something to make your school better and I have asked them to:

- Help you to improve your writing skills, especially boys' writing.
- Make sure that when your teachers mark your work, they always give you clear ideas about how you can improve.
- Help you to find out more about the customs and traditions of people living in this country who are from different cultural backgrounds than your own.

You can help your school to get even better by continuing to work hard.

I wish you the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Michael Barron Lead inspector

30 April 2008

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Yours sincerely

Michael Barron
Lead inspector