

Swimbridge Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113455
Local Authority	Devon
Inspection number	311275
Inspection date	29 January 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 aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	80
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Anne Hayes
Headteacher	Garry Reed
Date of previous school inspection	3 November 2003
School address	Barnstaple Hill Barnstaple EX32 0PJ
Telephone number	01271 830437
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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 White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is similar to the national average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is slightly above average and the proportion with a statement of special educational need is broadly average. In recognition of its work in physical education, the school has received an Activemark silver award.

The school provides both a breakfast club and an after-school club for its pupils.

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. It also has some outstanding features. Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Pupils enjoy school greatly and their behaviour and attitudes are exemplary. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Whilst the school's care, guidance and support for pupils are good overall, pastoral care is of very high quality, with the safety of its pupils being a priority. Parents are very positive about the school, and one wrote, typically, 'What a fantastic school!'

Standards are above average and pupils achieve well. When children start in Reception their knowledge and skills are broadly as expected. During their time in Reception children progress well, reaching and sometimes exceeding the levels expected for their age. Pupils continue to do well in Years 1 to 6, with the result that standards are above average at the end of Year 6. Good teaching is a key factor in pupils' good progress. Relationships are outstanding, teaching assistants make a good contribution to pupils' learning and teachers make good use of a variety of resources and strategies to make lessons interesting. Lessons are planned thoroughly, with careful allowance made for the needs of different pupils, for instance, those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. This helps to ensure that all pupils do equally well. Teachers mark pupils' work conscientiously and give them targets to aim for, but pupils are not always clear about how they can improve their work.

The good curriculum contributes well to both pupils' great enjoyment of school and their learning. The curriculum is interesting and varied and in particular helps to make the pupils very aware of the need to follow a healthy and safe lifestyle. The school reviews its curriculum routinely, with a current emphasis being placed on extending the use of literacy and numeracy in other subjects so pupils can practise their English and mathematics skills across the curriculum.

The headteacher, members of staff and governors are a dedicated team and they provide good leadership and management. School self-evaluation is effective in highlighting where development is needed and this has contributed well to the improvements seen in standards in the last two years, especially in Years 1 and 2.

Good use is made of outside bodies, such as sports coaches and special needs advisers, in supporting the work of the school. The many improvements that have been made recently and the way that issues from the last inspection have been tackled demonstrate that the school has a good capacity to improve even further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision in the Foundation Stage is good and much improved since the time of the previous inspection. Children make good progress in the Reception Year because they are taught well. By the end of the year they reach and sometimes exceed the levels expected for their age. Children settle happily at the start of each day and the adults provide them with an appropriate balance between teacher-led activities and those which the children choose for themselves. Although pupils talk about their work and so develop their speaking skills, opportunities are sometimes missed to encourage this further. Children behave very well and they share readily with others. A good range of resources is provided for them to work with and the outdoor area is used well to extend learning. The staff work hard to create a friendly and caring learning environment. This means that the children enjoy school and develop good social skills.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide more opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy and numeracy skills through increased links between subjects.
- Ensure that marking and target setting provide pupils with a clear understanding about how to improve their work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards are above average and pupils' achievement is good. Children make a good start in Reception and in Years 1 and 2 pupils also make good progress. After a number of years when standards were broadly average at the end of Year 2, in 2007 they were above average. These standards are being maintained in the current Year 2. Present standards in Year 6 are also above average and these pupils have made good progress from their starting point in Year 3. In the national tests in 2007, pupils performed less well in mathematics than in other subjects. The school successfully identified this weakness in the pupils' performance and current evidence suggests that the school has addressed this issue well. Pupils are now performing equally well in all subjects. The school now believes that providing pupils with more opportunities to use and apply their numeracy and literacy skills across the curriculum would increase the pace of learning even further.

The school makes good provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and this is helping them make good progress towards their targets.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development is outstanding and is firmly based on the school's very good provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils' excellent attitudes and behaviour and their great enthusiasm for learning, are important reasons why they achieve so well. They are courteous and polite to each other and to adults. Pupils play happily together and they say that bullying is not a problem. Consequently, they feel both safe and well cared for in school. Pupils love coming to school, as shown by their good attendance. Pupils make an excellent contribution to the community by taking part in many village activities such as maypole dancing. Pupils also raise money for a number of charities. They use their initiative very well when carrying out responsible jobs, such as playground and lunchtime helpers.

Pupils have an exceptional understanding of the need for healthy and safe lifestyles. They eat fruit and healthy meals and they benefit greatly from the opportunities provided for physical activity. The school very successfully develops in its pupils a range of personal skills, such as confidence and independence, and the good progress that pupils make in basic skills prepares them well for their next stage of education, as well as for later life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Good planning and close cooperation between teachers and teaching assistants mean teaching is good, and pupils learn well. Classes are managed well and relationships are a strength. Lessons are lively, with a good mixture of whole- class and group activities. Teachers use a good range

of resources, such as interactive whiteboards, to make their lessons interesting. Pupils respond well to these activities and they concentrate well, working with great enthusiasm. Most of all they enjoy themselves. Consequently the pupils successfully develop and reinforce both their knowledge and skills. Planning is good, with suitable allowance being made for all pupils. The work provided for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities enables them all to take a full part in lessons, and the tasks given to more able pupils provide appropriate challenge. Occasionally, the introductions to lessons are over-long and when this happens the pace of learning slows.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum enables pupils to study a broad and interesting range of subjects and this contributes well to their good progress. Good use is made of the local environment, for example, in science. Some cross-curricular links are already in place. The school is working to develop these links further, especially with regard to literacy and numeracy so that pupils can have more opportunities to practise and develop their skills. In the Foundation Stage, there is a good balance between independent learning and more directed tasks. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are identified quickly and are provided with a good variety of relevant work. There is strong emphasis through the school on developing pupils' personal and social skills.

The curriculum makes an outstanding contribution to pupils' safe and healthy lifestyles and the school's exceptional provision for swimming contributes particularly well to both. There is also a good range of educational outings and extra-curricular activities, which the pupils support with great enthusiasm. Music is a strong feature in school and all pupils in Years 3 to 6 learn to play a musical instrument.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Adults ensure that there is outstanding pastoral care. Staff are highly committed to the safety of their pupils. For example, pupils are very confident that they have an adult to turn to if they are worried. Child protection procedures are good and staff are alert to signs that any pupil might be distressed or anxious. Safeguarding procedures are robust. Outside agencies are used well to support pupils when a need is identified. Staff promote a safe, secure and clean environment. Safety checks and risk assessments are carried out routinely. Pupils are taught about the importance of healthy living and they are reminded of the need to take care, for instance, when going swimming.

Guidance and support in lessons are good and pupils are given the skills to become successful learners. However, teachers do not always provide enough guidance when adding comments in pupils' books. Similarly, whilst pupils have targets in both English and mathematics, discussions suggest that they are not always clear about what they need to do to improve their work further.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher leads the school with dedication and skill and he is supported well by other staff members. There is a strong sense of teamwork and the sharing of roles and responsibilities amongst the very small number of staff is done well. There is a clear sense of purpose to make

the best possible provision for pupils, to help them achieve as well as they can and to develop the school further. In particular, all staff have been outstandingly successful in creating a positive and caring environment, based securely on Christian principles and the well-being of the pupils is paramount.

The school has good systems for finding out how well it is doing and the self-review has identified strengths and areas for development accurately. For example, actions to improve the performance in mathematics show clear signs of having been successful and the current focus on improving the quality of marking and target setting is appropriate.

Subject coordinators demonstrate a clear understanding of the strengths in the subjects for which they are responsible and they have actively initiated and supported strategies for making improvements. They currently have limited opportunities to observe lessons in other classes, in order to carry out their own checks on the quality of teaching, although plans are in hand for this to happen. Governance is good, with governors being fully involved fully in producing the school improvement plan. They are currently developing their role in monitoring various aspects of provision, by, for example, visiting lessons in order to improve further their overall involvement in holding the school to account.

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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?	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	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	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 January 2008

Dear Pupils

Swimbridge CE Primary School, Swimbridge, Devon EX32 0PJ

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 older pupils and we both really enjoyed joining you in assembly. 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. The 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 excellent.
- 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 literacy and numeracy skills through the work you are given in other subjects.
- Make sure you understand how to improve your work through comments in teachers' marking and the targets you are given.

You can help too, by making sure you know how to make your work even better.

We wish you all good luck for the future.

Best wishes,

Martin James Lead Inspector

Annex B



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Martin James
Lead Inspector