

Collaton St Mary Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113476
Local Authority	Torbay
Inspection number	311288
Inspection date	26 September 2007
Reporting inspector	David Townsend HMI

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	211
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Treby
Headteacher	Philip Mantell
Date of previous school inspection	15 September 2003
School address	Blagdon Road Paignton TQ3 3YA
Telephone number	01803 556433
Fax number	01803 556433

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following: standards and achievement, with a particular focus on the use of targets to drive improvement; the curriculum, including provision for different groups of learners; and academic guidance and support, especially for those at risk. The evidence gathered included a scrutiny of documentation, including the school's own evaluation of performance, lesson observations and interviews with staff, governors and the headteacher. In addition, a group of children discussed their views of the school with the inspector and he examined all parent questionnaires that were returned. 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 form (SEF), were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Collaton St. Mary is an average-sized primary school. It serves the coastal town of Paignton in Devon. The percentages of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, those from minority ethnic groups and those with English as an additional language are below national averages. The percentage of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is above the national average. The attainment of pupils on entry to the school is broadly average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Collaton St. Mary is a good school with many strengths. It enjoys the overwhelming support of parents, who rightly applaud the caring Christian ethos and the high expectations staff set for children and themselves. After a period of change, during which the pace of school improvement and pupils' progress slowed, the staff team has been reorganised under the headteacher's purposeful leadership. There is a shared commitment to improvement, a skilled and dedicated staff team and good communication with parents and other partners, including local schools. These factors, coupled with recent improvements to the school's systems for monitoring and improving its performance, give Collaton St Mary good capacity to improve still further.

The progress that pupils make throughout the school is good and learners with disabilities and/or difficulties do particularly well. Standards are above average, and they are well above average in reading in Year 2 and mathematics in Year 6. Boys and girls do better than those nationally. However, in the 2006 statutory tests, Year 6 made good progress in mathematics but progress in English was only satisfactory, owing to disappointing scores for writing, especially at the higher level. In addition, staff changes had an adverse effect on rates of achievement for pupils in other year groups, and especially those who required extra help to reach expected levels. However, improvements to the monitoring of learners' progress have enabled the school to identify potentially underachieving pupils earlier and introduce an effective programme of interventions. This has helped teachers set useful learning targets for pupils, including higher attainers, and to make their teaching more focused on pupils' needs. Consequently, Year 6 writing scores improved in 2007 and, across all year groups, pupils of all abilities are making faster progress now.

Pupils' personal development is good. Pupils also know how to keep themselves safe and adopt safe practices. They readily take on responsibility within the school community, and express views and contribute to decision-making during class debates and as school council members. The school is preparing pupils well for their future economic well-being. Learners are equipped with the basic skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT and also general learning attributes, such as the ability to work in teams, lead groups, present ideas and perform.

There are effective systems to monitor and encourage attendance and punctuality, which are both good. Pupils' positive attitudes and good behaviour, both in class and around school, are key factors in their good achievement. They are aware of the importance of healthy lifestyles and take regular exercise, although the school's current emphasis on the importance of good diets is yet to have a full impact on all pupils' eating habits.

Pupils' social, moral, and cultural development is good. Their spiritual development is a strength of the school. They have a clear sense of right and wrong and show positive attitudes to worship, reflecting carefully and acting upon their own values. For example, they show concern for others in school as 'buddies' for younger children and as 'peer mediators', helping each other resolve disputes. The school sees its mission as to 'build bridges' and it is successfully encouraging pupils' understanding of global cultures and traditions. Its active links with a primary school in Peru are raising pupils' awareness of how lives are lived on other continents.

Teachers have high expectations of all learners and the pupils readily respond to the challenges set for them. Teachers plan carefully and give pupils clear direction as to the learning attributes and thinking skills they will be using in each lesson. Teaching assistants effectively support

groups and individuals. Behaviour management is good, and positive relationships, conducive to good learning, exist between learners and with adults. Teachers use the interactive whiteboards well to help pupils learn visually when trying to grasp new concepts and organise their thoughts. However, some lessons seen were still too teacher-led and insufficient opportunities existed for pupils to be 'active learners' and discuss ideas in small groups rather than listen at length. This slowed the pace of learning.

The curriculum is good with outstanding features. It is broad, balanced and rich. Teachers plan carefully to ensure that learning experiences are practical and relevant. They give much emphasis to planning time for pupils to think carefully, reflect on their own progress and identify the links between different subjects. An outstanding strength of the curriculum is the wide variety of after-school clubs. Pupils enjoy regular specialist sports coaching and other tuition made possible through the close links with local partner schools and organisations. However, the school recognises that its work in planning for progression in skills and understanding to help pupils build on their own prior learning is at an early stage of development for some subjects.

The pupils feel safe, supported and well cared for in school. Collaton St. Mary is a happy and safe environment where it is clear that every child matters. There are robust and comprehensive procedures in place for safeguarding pupils. Support for vulnerable pupils is good. The school liaises effectively with parents to keep them well informed about the extra support their child is receiving, and with external agencies to ensure the timely provision of specialist advice and tuition. Support for pupils' personal development is effective. In addition, the arrangements for assessing how well the pupils are doing academically have recently been enhanced and are now good. Targets for improvement are set for English and mathematics and shared with the pupils, who find them helpful. There are now termly target reviews to monitor the progress of all pupils and ensure that there is earlier identification of, and support for, any learners at risk of underachieving.

The headteacher provides reflective and purposeful leadership, ably supported by his capable leadership team. Good systems are now in place for checking how well the school is doing and these involve governors and leaders at all levels, who all share a clear view of the school's performance. Teachers take responsibility for specific subjects and lead these well. There is careful tracking of the pupils' progress and close analysis of this data enables the school to set, and ensure that pupils meet, challenging but realistic targets for improvement. However, the school improvement plan has too many priorities and its criteria for judging successes are not focused sharply enough on securing better outcomes for pupils.

The partnerships forged with other schools and organisations are particularly good and enable staff to share expertise with colleagues elsewhere. This collaboration has had a positive impact on the quality of provision, for example in terms of the improved procedures for transferring children into the Foundation Stage. Governors play an active role in both challenging and encouraging the school. They manage the budget wisely and to good effect.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The youngest children get off to a good start in school, quickly settling into routines. They work confidently on independent tasks, concentrate well together during class discussions and enjoy talking about their work. By the end of their first year, all are working within the standards expected for their age in all areas of learning, including personal development, and some are exceeding them. They make particularly good progress with their communication and language

skills and mathematical development. Staff have a clear understanding of how young children learn and they plan and deliver a curriculum that is broad and balanced. The team work well together to provide a good balance of activities led by an adult and those initiated by children, and they keep a close check on how they are doing. The adults model good learning well, for example by encouraging children to share and to take responsibility. Children are well cared for by the teachers and other adults. The team have built up a good knowledge of the children by assessing their learning through regular observations and record-keeping. Leadership and management are good. Leaders have ensured high levels of parental involvement in this stage of the children's learning and have acted to improve arrangements for children's transfer from pre-school.

What the school should do to improve further

- give pupils even more opportunities to lead their own learning and be more actively involved in all parts of lessons
- sharpen school improvement planning by agreeing clearer priorities and setting specific targets for measuring improvement.

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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	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
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	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	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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

27 September 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Collaton St. Mary Primary School, Paignton, TQ3 3YA

I very much enjoyed meeting you and coming to see your lessons when I visited your school recently. Thank you for making me feel welcome, telling me about your school and letting me see your work.

I believe Collaton St. Mary is a good school with many strengths. This is what I liked most:

- you are interested in your lessons and always try your best
- your behaviour is good and you enjoy school because you find it a friendly place to be
- your teachers and other adults look after you well; they take care to make sure you are safe and encourage you to be healthy
- teaching in your school is good and teachers work hard to provide a range of interesting projects for you to study
- you enjoy the excellent range of after-school clubs
- your headteacher is leading the school effectively and other leaders in school provide good support
- the youngest children make a good start in school and by the time you leave at age 11, standards are good
- whilst you all enjoy sports and being active, you are not yet eating as healthily in school as you could, especially at playtimes.

These are the areas I think could be improved:

- you could have even more opportunities to discuss ideas and present your findings during lessons
- the school's plans need to be clearer about what improvements are the most important, and need to set targets for how much improvement is required.

I am sure that you will play a full part in helping your teachers and the other adults in school help make Collaton St. Mary an even better school. I wish you every success in the future.

David Townsend HMI



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