

Lynton Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113451
Local Authority	Devon
Inspection number	319450
Inspection date	11 June 2008
Reporting inspector	Laurie Lewin

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	92
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Joanne Tucker
Headteacher	Jayne Peacock
Date of previous school inspection	14 January 2002
School address	Market Street Lynton EX35 6AF
Telephone number	01598 753309
Fax number	01598 753309

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average school serving a wide coastal area of north Devon. While the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average, it varies, and in some year groups is above average. Also, there is a high proportion of pupils with statements of special educational needs. Within the spectrum of pupils with special needs, there are relatively high proportions with specific individual learning needs, emotional, social and behavioural needs and some encountering speech, language and communication difficulties. Attainment on entry to the school varies each year but is currently below typically expected levels. Nearly all pupils are White British. The school has a small number of pupils who speak English as an additional language. The school works as part of a federation with two other local schools, under a single governing body and headteacher.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

In accordance with Section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector (HMCI) is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

This is a satisfactory and improving school. Over the last 12 months staff have worked very effectively to improve the standards achieved by pupils. This has been enabled through increased staff training and good quality support from the local authority. In turn, this has led to the implementation of good quality systems to track the progress of all pupils and sharply identify where individuals need extra support. As a result of the good support and training, teaching is now good, with rigorous planning ensuring that tasks match pupils' levels of attainment. The school's very clear assessment information shows that pupils' progress has accelerated a great deal since the inspection last year. Previous underachievement has been eradicated and pupils' achievement is now satisfactory. Due to the strong support they receive, pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities often make very good progress.

Children make good progress in the Foundation Stage because of the good provision so that most are on course to reach the expected levels by the start of Year 1. Pupils reach average standards by Years 2 and 6, although much good work is now evident in mathematics and science. The weakest link in pupils' work is writing where they often struggle because of limited vocabulary. Similarly, when speaking, pupils tend to exhibit a limited range of vocabulary. Although the school has seen a big improvement in the progress most pupils make, the progress of higher attaining pupils is not always as good as it could be. Setting clear targets has been one of the touchstones to help pupils improve their work. However, these targets are not defined precisely enough for higher attaining pupils, to make sure they know exactly what they have to do to make the very best of their abilities. Pupils like their teachers and get on well with all staff. They like school and their attendance is good.

The curriculum is satisfactory and enlivened by a wide range of visits made. However, only a limited range of extra-curricular activities is offered and there remains scope for boosting pupils' learning further in this area. Although teachers do all they can to make lessons interesting and enjoyable, the current planned curriculum does not provide a sufficient range of exciting and motivating activities. Staff have recognised this and are keen to move ahead and introduce new and revitalised planning in the near future. However, the curriculum is good in terms of promoting pupils' personal, social and health education. As a result, pupils learn to eat in a healthy way and, through the wide range of sports activities, keep themselves fit.

Strong provision for care, guidance and support of all individuals ensures that pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Parents comment on the fact that staff know their children very well and cater sensitively for their needs. They are right. As a result, all individuals feel safe. The good quality support and guidance also ensures that pupils' behave well.

Good leadership and management have helped the school improve at a good rate over the last year. The headteacher does a very good job of helping staff work together as an enthusiastic team, fully committed to driving up the quality of provision and standards. Governors carry out their roles well and work closely with staff. The good teamwork, very clear understanding about what is working well and where improvements are needed, plus the good progress made since the last inspection show the school has a good capacity to keep on improving.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children get off to a good start in the Foundation Stage. They enjoy the good range of interesting activities set up for them and rapidly settle into the routines of the day when they arrive in the morning. The teacher is very good at encouraging all individuals and sets an atmosphere in which all children want to try their very best. She is well supported by the teaching assistants. The strong teamwork amongst the staff ensures that activities keep flowing at a good pace. Occasionally, in whole-class sessions for the Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 class, opportunities are missed to draw out the Reception children to work as a group, away from the rest of the class, to ensure that ideas are presented to them in a way that matches precisely with their levels of understanding.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve pupils' speaking and writing skills by giving them more opportunities to discuss and write about areas that motivate and excite them.
- Develop curriculum planning to ensure that activities match more closely with pupils' interests, motivate them and fully enrich their learning.
- Devise targets for higher attaining pupils, which ensure individuals clearly understand what they have to do to work at the levels of which they are capable.

A small proportion of the 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

In twelve months the school has moved from a position where pupils' achievement was inadequate to a position where it is now satisfactory and improving. During the year, teachers have begun to closely focus on what all individuals need to do to improve, and this has enabled all pupils to catch up. Staff fully realise the importance of sustaining the current momentum. Standards are now in line with average. Pupils' achievement in mathematics and science has shown particularly good improvement, but writing and pupils' speaking skills are taking longer to improve. Discussions showed that pupils have only a limited range of vocabulary and thereby struggle to express themselves fully in pieces of writing. Although higher attaining pupils have improved their work significantly over the last year, they still do not always reach the levels of which they are capable. The achievement and progress of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and of the small number who speak English as an additional language, are good and sometimes very good due to the strong support provided for them.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Children in the Foundation Stage and pupils across the school are friendly and polite and there is an atmosphere projected in all classes of strong relationships and individuals getting on well together. Pupils spoken to showed a good knowledge and understanding about how to keep themselves fit and healthy, and also had a good knowledge about areas such as Internet safety. They have no qualms about seeking adult assistance should they encounter a problem. The democratic elections for the school council, the participation of the school in local events and

the charity fund raising they do mean pupils have a good awareness and involvement in contributing to both the immediate and wider community. The work pupils do in personal, social and health education lessons and many other activities does much to boost their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. The school makes a sound effort to expand pupils' knowledge about how people in other cultures live. Nonetheless, a few pupils spoken to showed a limited understanding about this area. Pupils acquire sound basic skills in subjects such as mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT) to help them progress satisfactorily in the future. Staff rightly recognise that within the current improvement programme there remains much scope for strengthening pupils' basic skills, especially in areas such as writing.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Significant improvement in teaching since the last inspection has resulted in pupils' standards and achievement improving at a good pace. Teachers have worked extremely hard. They have involved themselves in a wide range of training to help fine tune their classroom practice to meet the needs of the pupils more precisely. They have come a long way in a short time. The hub of the improvement is teachers' precise knowledge of the progress and attainment of all individuals, as a result of the implementation of very clear assessment and tracking systems. Using the assessment information well, staff design clear programmes of work to support pupils and boost their performance where needed. This has proved especially beneficial for individuals recognised as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and the few pupils arriving in the school with English as an additional language. Tracking information shows these individuals make particularly good progress. Teachers and teaching assistants work very well as a team to support pupils and make some good use of shared expertise from other schools in the federation to boost what they do. Staff realise that the process of fine tuning their lesson planning and target setting is still 'work in progress'. For example, there remains much scope for enhancing the programmes of work for higher attaining pupils to boost their progress further. Lessons in writing do not always give enough opportunities to expand pupils' written and spoken vocabulary. Also, there is not enough emphasis on providing the kind of writing tasks that strongly motivate and interest all pupils. Whilst teachers provide useful homework for pupils, the approach to the provision is not consistent or clear across the school so that there are variations between the classes, and expectations for what pupils should be doing are not made clear enough for pupils and their parents.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Children in the Foundation Stage receive a lively and interesting curriculum that focuses very well on the particular needs identified by staff in children's speaking and listening, personal, social and emotional understanding and their knowledge and understanding of the world. Across the rest of the school, all the required areas of the National Curriculum are covered in full. Teachers provide comprehensive planning for all lessons and work closely together to ensure there is good continuity in learning across the age groups. Whilst it is rigorously applied, many aspects of the current curriculum are lacklustre. Staff have very rightly recognised that many activities need 'spicing up' to match more precisely with pupils' interests and to provide them with more tasks that will spark their imaginations and motivation.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school is vigilant in ensuring pupils' safety. Full procedures are in place to cover all areas of health and safety, including good procedures for child protection. Staff provide high quality pastoral care for all individuals. They are very good at helping children beginning school in the Foundation Stage and those joining other year groups to settle in quickly and easily. Pupils spoken to say, 'One of the best things about our school is that you know everybody and everybody helps each other.' This is accurate and reflected in the friendly 'family atmosphere' feeling around the school. In this way, the ground work is well prepared for boosting pupils' personal development and ensuring they progress confidently. Staff have done a good job across the year in upgrading the academic support and guidance they provide. Of particular note are the clear targets established for most pupils. The one area where targets are not sufficiently clear is with the higher attaining pupils, especially in the older age groups. These targets are not clearly defined enough to ensure that pupils know precisely what to do to ensure they get to perform at their full capabilities.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher, staff and governors have worked very well with local authority colleagues to ensure that good quality plans have been written and implemented. These plans are being carried forward at a good pace with all of the initiatives proving to be very fruitful in ratcheting up pupils' attainment and progress. Understandably, some areas of the plans are taking longer to achieve than others, for example improving pupils' writing and boosting the performance of the higher attaining pupils. Nevertheless, the school is well focused on moving forward further with these areas. The school makes good use of all of its links with partner organisations to enhance provision.

Some parents have concerns about the organisation of the school as part of a federation of schools. A few of them feel that the process of becoming federated has contributed to difficulties experienced by the school in recent times. There is no indication that this perception is accurate. There is evidence that the sharing of expertise between the schools has had a positive impact on the school's good rate of recovery and progress this year. However, it is clear from the parents' views that there is further scope for showing them and explaining to them the wide ranging benefits the school receives from being organised in this way. Staff also rightly recognise that there is further potential for accruing even more benefits from the federation system.

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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?	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	2
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	3

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	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	3

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?	3
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	3
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

12 June 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Lynton Church of England Primary School, Lynton EX35 6AF

- It was really good fun coming to see you. Thank you for making us so welcome, talking to us and helping us during the inspection. Right now your school is doing a satisfactory job and has improved a lot recently. Here are some of the most important bits of the inspection report that I thought you might like to know about:
- You work hard in lessons and make satisfactory, and sometimes good, progress. Your achievement by the end of Year 6 is satisfactory.
- Your personal development is good. You clearly enjoy your time in school and get on well together and with all of the staff.
- The school's curriculum is satisfactory but your teachers are right in looking at ways they can make it even more interesting and exciting for you.
- You told us how well you get on with your teachers and teaching assistants; they provide you with good teaching.
- The staff do excellent work to make sure you are properly looked after.
- Your headteacher does a really good job of helping everyone work together to ensure that things keep improving.

To improve further, the school should now:

- Make sure that you get plenty of opportunities to talk about the things you are going to write about so that you can learn to use words that will make your sentences even more lively and interesting.
- Make the curriculum more interesting and exciting for you.
- Provide clear targets for those of you who sometimes find work easy – so that you are always fully challenged by the tasks you do.

I know that you will want to help the staff improve things by working as hard as possible, particularly with improving your writing.

Thank you again for all of your help.

Yours sincerely

Laurie Lewin Lead inspector

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Lead inspector