

Ashwater Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113126
Local Authority	Devon
Inspection number	325758
Inspection date	22 October 2008
Reporting inspector	Michael Barron

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	40
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	5
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Di Westaway
Headteacher	Debbie Tomlinson
Date of previous school inspection	5 October 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Ashwater Beaworthy EX21 5EW
Telephone number	01409 211228
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors. The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

How well pupils presently achieve, especially in numeracy, literacy and science in Year 2 and Year 6

The quality and impact of Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provision

The quality of pupils' personal development, especially pupils' awareness of the multicultural nature of modern British society

The role and impact of the governing body.

The inspectors gathered evidence from discussions with pupils, staff and representatives 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 parental questionnaires. Other aspects of the school's work were not inspected in detail, but the inspectors 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 very small school set in a small village in a rural area of Devon. Pupils are taught in two mixed-age group classes with children in their Reception year sharing a class with Year 1 and Year 2 pupils. All pupils are of White British heritage. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities fluctuates from year to year but is presently lower than the national average. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is also lower than average. The school has gained the Healthy Schools Award and the Activemark Sport Award.

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 has a friendly and inclusive ethos and provides a good education for pupils, preparing them well for the next stage of their education.

It is well led and managed by a dedicated headteacher who provides clear direction for the school. She works well with staff and governors to ensure that the school regularly analyses and accurately evaluates its performance in order to identify and implement improvements where needed. The school has made good progress since the previous inspection, for example in improving the way it uses assessment data when planning work for pupils, and demonstrates a good capacity to improve in the future. Parents are proud of their school. 'I am really happy that our village has such a lovely school in it', being typical of their many positive comments.

The quality of teaching in both of the school's mixed-age classes is good and caters effectively for the needs of all pupils, including children in the EYFS. This is an important factor in ensuring that all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, make consistently good progress and achieve well from the moment they enter the school. As a result, standards are above average, especially in numeracy, literacy and science, in both Year 2 and Year 6. Teachers use a variety of approaches to make learning interesting and pupils say teachers are really helpful and make learning fun. Pupils presently in Year 6 are well on course to meet the very challenging targets set for them in the 2009 national tests.

Pupils really like school. They describe it as a friendly place where everyone gets on very well together. They appreciate that working in classes with pupils older or younger than themselves has helped them to develop a strong sense of community and say they feel very safe and well looked after. They know there is always someone to turn to if they have a problem and understand the importance of making sensible and healthy choices. Older pupils take the responsibilities they are given seriously and talk confidently about their role in looking after the younger children at lunchtimes. However, even though the school has often tried to promote good attendance, pupils' rates of attendance are satisfactory.

The school has developed a curriculum that ensures learning is relevant, purposeful and enjoyable. Pupils say they like the practical approach to learning in subjects such as science and information and communication technology (ICT) and this helps them to make good progress. Regular visitors to the school and visits to places of interest, for example, the Tate St Ives, effectively build up pupils' knowledge of the world outside their isolated locality. Pupils play an active role in the community and talk enthusiastically about the school's participation in local events. They are also aware of the importance of their involvement in fund raising for local and overseas charities. The school provides a wide range of popular extra-curricular activities for pupils, including sports clubs, which help pupils to keep fit, and activities such as the gardening club, which build up their understanding of environmental issues. The quality of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. However, whilst moral and social development is strong and is reflected in pupils' excellent behaviour and consideration for others, pupils' appreciation and understanding of the multicultural nature of modern British society is quite limited and not as well developed as other aspects of their cultural education.

The quality of academic guidance and support for pupils is good. Teachers work well with teaching assistants to ensure that pupils requiring extra help are well supported and make the same good progress as other pupils. However, although the school has implemented good procedures to track pupils' progress and to set challenging targets for improvement, the quality

of teachers' marking varies and does not always give pupils a firm idea of how to improve their work.

The good quality of pastoral care, guidance and support for pupils is the basis for their good personal development and well-being. Parents appreciate the caring way the school looks after their children and comment on the 'supportive ethos and atmosphere' the school provides. Good induction and transfer arrangements help pupils settle quickly into new routines. Health and well-being are securely safeguarded and child protection procedures meet current government requirements.

Staff work well together to ensure the school meets the needs of all pupils. However, there have been several recent changes to the membership of the governing body. Although it fulfils its statutory duties effectively, it is only now beginning once again to offer the school a realistic level of support and challenge. Even so, individual governors play an active part in school life and have a sound understanding of the school's strengths and areas in need of development. The school is well resourced and uses these effectively to enhance learning. Partnerships with others and links with external agencies are good and used well to enhance provision and support pupils' well-being.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children in the EYFS share a class with Year 1 and Year 2 pupils. They make good progress after entering the Reception year with a level of skills typical for children of a similar age, because teaching caters well for their needs, regardless of their abilities. As a result, children usually achieve the expected goals in all areas of learning and enter Year 1 with average standards. Many do better than this.

Leadership and management of the EYFS are good. The class teacher and effective teaching assistant work well together to ensure children thoroughly enjoy learning. The classroom is a colourful and exciting place which provides children with a safe and secure environment. Lessons effectively blend opportunities for children to learn both independently and with adult direction. The recording of children's progress is thorough and is used consistently well to plan future work. Staff work effectively to ensure there is always a strong emphasis on language development, especially with regard to writing and reading. This ensures that children make good progress in developing their language and communication skills.

Progress in personal, social and emotional development is good and parents appreciate the good care and support their children receive. Behaviour is outstanding and, even at this relatively early stage in the school year, children play and work well together and are happy to share and take turns. Regular visits to interesting places are used well to build up children's growing understanding of the immediate world in which they live. However, the school does not have a separate outdoor area for EYFS children, or any outdoor covered area at all. As a result, children have only limited opportunities to work outdoors in lessons when other pupils are using the playground or when it is raining, and there are occasions when this can restrict their learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the outdoor provision for children in Reception.
- Increase pupils' awareness and understanding of the multicultural nature of modern British society.

- Ensure that teachers' marking consistently provides pupils with effective guidance about how to improve their work.

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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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	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/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
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 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

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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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	3
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**

23 October 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Ashwater Primary School, Ashwater, EX21 5EW

Thank you for welcoming us to your school. Everyone was very friendly and both inspectors soon realised why you like your school so much. We enjoyed talking to you about what you like the most about school and seeing you all working well in lessons. Your parents believe that this is a good school and we agree with them. Here are some of the things we particularly like about your school.

- Your teachers succeed in making lessons interesting and this helps you to make good progress and reach above average standards.
- You really enjoy everything about your school.
- Your personal development is good; your behaviour is excellent and you are very friendly, caring and polite.
- Your headteacher, teachers and governors lead and manage the school well.
- We believe your headteacher and teachers can make your school even better. We have asked them to:
 - Improve the outdoor area so that children in their first year at the school have somewhere to work and play outside in lesson time, especially when other children are using the playground and when it is raining.
 - Make sure teachers' marking always shows you how to improve your work.
 - Help you to find out more about the customs and traditions of people living in this country who are from different cultural backgrounds to your own.

You can help your school to improve by continuing to work hard.

We wish you the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Michael Barron Lead inspector