

Sherwell Valley Primary School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 113240 |
| Local Authority | Torbay |
| Inspection number | 325777 |
| Inspection dates | 27–28 January 2009 |
| Reporting inspector | David Edwards HMI |

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.

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 3–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School (total) | 640 |
| Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS | 0 |
| Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years | 0 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Steven Penfold |
| Headteacher | Roger Hughes |
| Date of previous school inspection | 22 June 2006 |
| Date of previous funded early education inspection | Not previously inspected |
| Date of previous childcare inspection | Not previously inspected |
| School address | Hawkins Avenue Torquay TQ2 6ES |
| Telephone number | 01803 613296 |
| Fax number | 01803 617038 |

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|--------------------------|--------------------|
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Sherwell Valley is a large primary school. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. A few pupils are from ethnic minority groups and none is at the early stage of learning English. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below the national average, although the current numbers of pupils with a statement for special educational needs is average. Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provision is made through the school's own nursery. The school provides before- and after-school care for children from the end of the EYFS to age 11.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

'Sherwell Valley is a well respected, well managed and happy school.' 'Relationships are excellent and I feel very well informed of my child's work and progress.' These comments, written by parents who responded to the Ofsted questionnaire, reflect the views of the large majority of parents, who support the school and are happy with their children's progress.

Inspectors agree; Sherwell Valley is a good school that is striving to provide an outstanding education for all its pupils. The school offers extended provision through a before- and after-school club that is popular with parents and pupils. Indeed, pastoral care and support in academic work are already outstanding. This is because excellent relationships between adults and pupils are established from the moment children start school in the Nursery. Vulnerable pupils and those who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities are particularly well supported. Pupils say they feel very safe and confident that any concerns they have will be listened to and dealt with promptly. The school has improved academic guidance since the previous inspection and, as a result, pupils are now fully involved in assessing their work and know what they need to do to improve. It is no surprise, therefore, to find pupils' personal development and well-being to be outstanding. Children enjoy coming to school and their attendance is above average. Pupils' behaviour is excellent, which ensures they make the most of their time in school.

Teaching is good because teachers understand the needs of their pupils and provide stimulating lessons that engage pupils' interest. The curriculum ensures an appropriate focus on basic skills as well as offering many exciting opportunities to participate in the wide variety of extra-curricular activities on offer after school. However, the school is also aware that the curriculum does not always provide enough challenge for all groups of pupils and individuals.

The majority of children start school with skills that are in line with those usually expected of their age. They settle quickly to their learning in the EYFS because of the high quality care provided, and they make good progress. In Key Stage 1, as a result of improved teacher assessments, standards in writing and mathematics are improving. The majority of pupils now make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. However, writing is still an area for further improvement throughout the school. Boys in particular and some more able pupils do not achieve the standards they should. Pupils' progress in Key Stage 2 is now good. The improved standards seen in 2008 are the result of effective teaching and the improved tracking of pupils' progress, which represents good achievement overall.

The headteacher has worked determinedly, with the able support of experienced senior leaders, to ensure he has built a senior leadership team that leads by example, works well as a team and supports one another. Consequently, all staff are focused on providing high quality care and education to all pupils. The governing body has developed procedures to keep itself well informed, which in turn enables governors to offer good levels of support and challenge. The good progress made by the school since the last inspection demonstrates its continued good capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The EYFS team work closely together to form strong and caring relationships with the children. Resources are well organised and accessible to children at all times. The majority of children start school with skills that are in line with national expectations and those children who have

experienced the school's outstanding nursery provision make excellent progress in their personal, social and emotional development, which is seen through their enjoyment of learning. The school ensures there is an appropriate emphasis on staying safe and being healthy.

Effective teaching underpins children's good progress. This results in particularly good progress seen in children's physical development, the use of number and understanding letters and sounds. Children enjoy the outdoor learning environment, although the lack of a covered shelter restricts the use of this area when wet. There is a good balance between adult-led and child-led activities, with children often taught in small groups. Each child's progress is carefully monitored, with outcomes used to identify the next steps in learning. Effective leadership ensures targets are shared with parents. Pupils are regularly encouraged to discuss their progress using their personal record books. By the end of the EYFS, most children have made good progress in their learning and are well prepared for the next stage in their development.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing throughout the school by shaping the curriculum to ensure appropriate challenge is provided for all groups of learners and especially for boys and the more able.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards are above average by the end of Key Stage 2, but they have not been as high in Key Stage 1. Children start school with skills that are broadly in line with national expectations and make good progress in their early years. Transition arrangements into Key Stage 1 are managed carefully as teachers continue to nurture and support pupils in their learning. Until very recently, some pupils in Key Stage 1 did not build on this good start and, although progress in reading was good, writing and standards in mathematics in 2008 remained average at the end of Year 2. More recently, teachers in Key Stage 1 have worked hard in developing strategies to monitor pupils' progress more effectively and as a result, progress in Key Stage 1 is now good. The improved standards seen in English, mathematics and science at Key Stage 2 in 2008 are also the result of effective teaching and the improved monitoring and tracking of pupils' progress. This represents good achievement overall.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The school's very strong caring ethos supports pupils' excellent enjoyment of school. Pupils know how to take responsibility for their personal safety and are very well aware of the importance of healthy eating. Popular after-school clubs encourage pupils to adopt a healthy lifestyle. Pupils are always polite to adults and show care of each other and resources. At playtimes, good systems of support to make friends ensure incidents, when they do occur, are resolved effectively. Children have confidence in their teachers. 'They listen to you and help you to sort things out,' said one happy child. It is no surprise to find that pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is excellent at all times. Pupils follow instructions carefully and have many opportunities to demonstrate their well-developed collaborative skills in lessons. This prepares them very well for their future economic well-being. Pupils have a strong sense of responsibility, which they demonstrate through the many positive contributions they make to the school and wider community, for example, fund raising for charities and the school

council, which also manages its own budget. Although attendance is very good, there are a few pupils who are persistently late.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers plan interesting lessons that motivate pupils. In the best lessons, pupils respond well to challenge, which enables them to make rapid progress. Modern foreign language teaching is a particular strength of the curriculum that further enhances pupils' communication skills, as seen in a Key Stage 2 presentation assembly conducted entirely in French. Attractive displays throughout the school support pupils' learning and celebrate achievements effectively. Where teaching is satisfactory, opportunities for independent working and challenge for all abilities are less evident. As a result, more able pupils do not always make the good progress of which they are capable. Boys do not always make enough progress in their writing. Teachers plan well together and support staff are deployed effectively to support pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. As a result, these pupils make good progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy school so much because they are given many interesting and exciting things to do, both in lessons and in the extensive range of after-school activities. Visitors from the local community are used effectively to broaden pupils' understanding. High quality resources support teachers in providing stimulating lessons and pupils' work is carefully displayed and celebrated throughout the school. Visits and residential trips further enhance pupils' learning and culminate in a popular study visit to France in Year 6. Teachers use information and communication technology (ICT) expertly to promote learning and engage pupils. Pupils also display good levels of competence in ICT, for example, in using the Internet to plan and cost out a foreign holiday. The school is effective in promoting pupils' understanding of community cohesion. It maintains a high profile within the local area by contributing to local events and participating frequently in festivals. Opportunities for pupils to learn about other countries are good but their understanding of multicultural Britain is less well developed.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Relationships between adults and pupils are excellent. Teachers know their pupils well and are sensitive to their needs. Pastoral support is also outstanding. Links with outside agencies ensure support for the specific needs of pupils is provided very effectively. Child protection procedures are understood well by staff and pupils say they feel safe and confident that any concerns they have will be listened to and dealt with promptly. Academic guidance has been improved considerably since the last inspection. Detailed tracking now provides the school with a clear picture of each pupil's rate of progress and attainments. Teachers' marking is thorough and feedback to pupils ensures they have a good understanding of how they are progressing and what they need to do next. Targets are shared regularly with parents as well as pupils. Homework is planned carefully to support pupils' learning and provide families with relevant support activities.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher has worked closely with leaders and managers at all levels to maintain a clear focus on school improvement. As a result, leaders are highly motivated to raise standards further and ensure that the highest quality care and education for all pupils is sustained. Although targets for boys' writing were disappointing in recent end-of-year assessments, senior leaders, through an appropriately focused development plan, have introduced strategies to raise standards in this area. Newly qualified teachers are supported well by senior leaders. All teachers have risen to the challenge of working collaboratively on school improvement issues and morale is high. Governors are well informed and work closely with senior leaders to give strategic direction to the school. They challenge the school and possess a clear vision to sustain improvements. Self-evaluation has been effective in identifying priorities for improvement.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

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| 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

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| 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

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|---|---|
| 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? | 1 |
| 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

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|--|---|
| 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? | 1 |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 2 |
| The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles | 1 |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices | 1 |
| The extent to which 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 | 1 |

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? | 1 |

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 | 1 |
| 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 | 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 |

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

29 January 2009

Dear Children,

Inspection of Sherwell Valley Primary School, Torquay TQ2 6ES

Thank you for welcoming us to your school recently. We really enjoyed our visit and valued the opportunities we had to talk with some of you and see you in your lessons. In return, I want to tell you what we thought of your school. We have decided yours is a good school. There are some things that are outstanding about your school as well, such as your behaviour and your attitudes to your work. Well done! You get off to a flying start in the Nursery. Your teachers also look after you very well and make sure you have excellent support and guidance in all you do. Your headteacher is supported by a very talented staff team. They are working hard to make things even better for you. For example, although the standards you reach by the end of Year 6 are now good, teachers really want to improve your writing skills and make sure you achieve even higher standards – especially for boys in their writing. We were also impressed with your enthusiasm to learn. You really are a credit to your parents and the school. You know how to stay safe and eat healthily; you care for one another and find lots of way to help others, such as through fundraising events.

We have asked the leaders of your school to think of ways they might improve things even more. In particular, we would like them to:

- Raise standards in writing throughout the school by making subjects even more exciting so that each of you is encouraged in your lessons to achieve your very best, especially boys and those of you who find learning easy.

I am sure that if you continue to hold such positive attitudes to your work, like those you showed us when we visited your school, you will all succeed very well in the future.

Yours faithfully,

David Edwards Her Majesty's Inspector