

Horrabridge Community Primary School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 113253 |
| Local Authority | Devon |
| Inspection number | 325782 |
| Inspection dates | 10–11 June 2009 |
| Reporting inspector | Mike Burghart |

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 under pilot arrangements; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | 82 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | David Cloke |
| Headteacher | John Clarke |
| Date of previous school inspection | 17 June 2006 |
| School address | Walkhampton Road Horrabridge Yelverton Devon PL20 7SZ |
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Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out by one additional inspector. He visited eight lessons and held discussions with staff, governors, pupils, parents and a representative of the local authority. He observed the school's work and looked at documentation, such as the school development plan and records of pupils' progress, and took into account parents' views as given in the Ofsted questionnaire.

The inspector reviewed many aspects of the school's work. He looked in detail at the following.

- The quality of writing to determine that pupils, especially the more able, make enough progress and reach the standards they are capable of.
- The effectiveness of provision (particularly teaching) in ensuring that pupils do not underachieve, especially in Years 3 to 6.
- The reasons why girls have tended not to do as well as boys.
- The success of the school's leadership and management in securing the capacity to improve.

Information about the school

This is a small school serving a rural area. Virtually all pupils are of White British heritage. The size of year groups varies widely from 14 in Reception to only four in Year 2. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in a class with Year 1 pupils and each of the other two classes contains pupils from more than one year group. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well above the national average, with a high incidence of pupils with statements of special educational needs.

The school has suffered from a period of instability and a variety of staffing changes over the last two years. The current acting headteacher, who joined the school in January 2009, is seconded from a local primary school. He is set to remain in post for at least another 14 months. Two of the three other teachers have been at the school for less than a year.

Inspection judgements

Grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness

3

Capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This school provides pupils with a satisfactory education. Having been through a period of uncertainty which negatively affected pupils' achievement and progress, the school is making rapid improvements under the strong leadership of the acting headteacher. It is too soon to see the full impact of new initiatives on standards, but it is clear that weaknesses in girls' attainment and the underachievement of more able pupils are being tackled successfully. Pupils make satisfactory progress, many from below expected starting points when they first start school, to reach broadly average standards at the end of Year 6. There are indications that progress has accelerated this year with the introduction of new assessment procedures in English and mathematics, and targets identified for individual pupils. However, these are not fully embedded and standards of writing remain below average throughout the school and a priority for improvement. Pupils' personal development is satisfactory, with clear strengths in moral and social aspects. Pupils get on well together at work and play. They respond well to learning opportunities provided by their teachers, with positive attitudes and, notwithstanding occasional problems which are well handled, good behaviour. Pupils are happy to be at school and keen to join in the excellent range and number of extra-curricular activities that have been introduced this year. Parents are extremely supportive of recent changes at the school. Comments such as 'I have nothing but praise for the headteacher and staff and the way the school has helped my child' are typical. The school has a deservedly good reputation for the way pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are supported and included in all activities. Care for all pupils is good and support and guidance are effective in helping pupils feel safe, develop self-control and learn to respect others.

Teaching is satisfactory overall, but school and local authority records confirm what was seen during the inspection, that there are also some strong features. These include the quality of questioning, relationships, the way mixed-age classes are managed, and the contribution of teaching assistants. Until recently, the impact of teaching on pupils' learning has been restricted by the quality of curriculum planning. The school has recognised this and begun a process designed to develop links between subjects, using a more thematic approach to make learning more relevant. While children are happy and well cared for in a bright, stimulating environment in Reception, the curriculum on offer provides too few opportunities for them to learn through play. Activities are usually directed by staff and this limits children's development as independent learners.

The school has clear educational direction founded on the robust and accurate self-evaluation of the acting headteacher supported by the staff. There is a determination to make improvements and good development planning based on effective analysis of data. The acting headteacher has very quickly established a strong teamwork ethic with staff, parents and governors playing crucial roles. Substantial improvements to the overall profile of leadership and management underpin the school's good capacity to improve. Governors are very supportive of the school and, following an appreciation that they needed to be more involved in monitoring the school's performance, have revised their working practices. They are now in a much better position to act as critical friends, but weaknesses, for example in determining and monitoring the school's strategy for community cohesion, remain.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards, especially in writing by:
 - embedding the good practice already begun in the use of assessment to measure progress and set targets for pupils
 - continuing to improve the way staff challenge more able pupils.
- Develop curriculum planning, by building on work recently started to:
 - improve links between subjects
 - increase opportunities for those in Reception to make choices and become more independent in their learning.
- Further improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - developing the way governors monitor the impact of decisions made in terms of pupils' learning and progress
 - formalise the school's strategy to promote community cohesion, particularly with regard to pupils' awareness of the diversity of lifestyles in the United Kingdom.

A small proportion of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory, but which have areas of underperformance, will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before the next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

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| 3 |
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Pupils' positive attitudes and behaviour make a strong contribution to the quality of learning. They are interested and show that they are prepared to listen; appreciating that in turn staff are willing to listen to them. Relationships throughout the school are good. Coupled with newly introduced target setting, this underpins improvements to progress and achievement as well as ensuring that pupils feel safe and secure in school. Attainment is similar to last year in that standards at the end of Year 6 are broadly average, ranging from below average in writing to slightly above average in some aspects of mathematics and science. However, the current profile actually represents an improvement. More able pupils, of which there are relatively less than in previous years, are not underachieving and the gap between girls' and boys' performance is much less obvious. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities has increased as a result of the school's growing reputation and is a limiting factor in terms of overall attainment. However, provision is successful in helping such pupils to make at least as much progress as others of the same age.

Pupils are well aware of right and wrong and their willingness to work with anyone regardless of friendship does them, and the school, credit. Teachers make good use of this with 'talking partners' where pupils routinely discuss ideas and reflect on what they are learning. The outcomes are seen in much more secure understanding and the beginnings of joint evaluation and assessment of their own and others' performance. Pupils learn from their own mistakes without fear of failure and from observing each other. Outcomes in spiritual and cultural development are satisfactory. Pupils have a developing sense of awe and wonder in terms of nature, colour, music and art. Years 2, 3 and 4 propaganda posters for the Second World War and Years 5 and 6 African masks are good examples of pupils' own interpretation. Awareness, understanding of, and contribution to, the local community are good, but pupils' cultural development is negatively affected by too little opportunity to learn about life in a multicultural society.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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| Pupils' attainment ¹ | 3 |
| The quality of pupils' learning and their progress | 3 |
| The quality of learning for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and their progress | 3 |
| How well do pupils achieve and enjoy their learning? | 3 |
| To what extent do pupils feel safe? | 2 |
| How well do pupils behave? | 2 |
| To what extent do pupils adopt healthy lifestyles? | 2 |
| To what extent do pupils contribute to the school and wider community? | 2 |
| Pupils' attendance ¹ | 3 |
| How well do pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being? | 3 |
| What is the extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development? | 3 |

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is judged as satisfactory as a result of the average and satisfactory nature of outcomes in pupils' attainment, achievement and progress. However, it is clear that there are examples of good practice in all classes and across a range of subjects from teachers and teaching assistants. This is a very good sign for the future. Good questioning, which requires pupils to draw conclusions and offer opinions, and good use of learning objectives to show what is expected, are highlights. Making better use of time in lessons, to avoid pupils waiting too long before they are active is an area for development. Improvements are the result of good teamwork and the significant development in the use of data to identify exactly how pupils are doing in order to set targets. This has been very much led by the acting headteacher. Embedding the process is at the heart of work in hand to develop the relevance and enjoyment value of the curriculum. Pupils and parents are impressed by

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

improvements in how mixed-age classes are managed and how work is marked, with pointers given to show pupils how they can make improvements. In English, in particular, pupils show a good understanding of what will take them to the next National Curriculum level and this is challenging them to achieve, especially the more able in Years 5 and 6. It is not surprising that progress rates are picking up. Extending this process to other subjects and further developing what is known at the school as 'assessment for learning', where pupils become an active part of evaluating their own performance, is already a priority of the school development plan.

Good use is made of advice and training provided by officers of the local authority to improve curriculum provision and the quality of teaching. There are good partnerships with medical services, for example to support pupils with hearing impairment, and secure links with pre-school groups and secondary schools. Staff know pupils well and take good care of them. Very good pastoral and physical care is a fundamental reason for the positive features of pupils' personal development. Such care, along with provision for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, is a clear strength of the school, overwhelmingly recognised by pupils and parents. Support for those new to the school, and in a very small minority of cases to the country, is good.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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| The quality of teaching | 3 |
| The use of assessment to support learning | 3 |
| The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships | 3 |
| The effectiveness of care, guidance and support | 2 |

How effective are leadership and management?

The acting headteacher has the absolute confidence of staff, governors, pupils, parents and the local authority. He is at the centre of the school's new-found impetus and stability. His incisive leadership has in a short time forged a team of staff and governors. He has begun successfully to delegate responsibility, while offering support and holding people to account. The result is that the school knows its strengths and relative weaknesses and is systematically addressing them, with all teachers part of the management process. Assessment information is skilfully used to set the school challenging targets. This has raised expectations, led to interventions being prioritised, and is beginning to raise standards. Substantial improvements to the way more able pupils are challenged are paying off.

Governance is satisfactory, with strengths in how governors have managed appointments and difficulties arising from a small budget generated by low numbers on roll and a large building. Although governors are very supportive, how they have evaluated the impact of their decisions on pupils' performance has been a weakness. Governors admit that they have been insufficiently involved in monitoring standards and pupils' achievement. Until recently, this left the school vulnerable. Governors have a growing partnership with teachers. Their much improved involvement in analysis of results, and appreciation of how pupils are doing, have led to more

effective deployment of staff and resources. For example, releasing the acting headteacher from part-time class teaching in favour of creating opportunities for mathematics to be taught in ability groups is improving pupils' achievement. The way the school promotes community cohesion is effective in encouraging pupils' awareness of what it is to be part of the local community and satisfactory in their growing appreciation of global differences in culture, faith and customs. However, pupils' understanding of the United Kingdom as a multicultural society is a weakness arising from how opportunities are managed, and an area for improvement.

Despite some minor procedural issues, safeguarding procedures are effective in ensuring pupils are safe and this is consistent with the good level of care which is evident in practice.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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| The effectiveness of leadership and management in communicating ambition and driving improvement | 2 |
| The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination | 2 |
| The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures | 2 |
| The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met | 3 |
| The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers | 3 |
| The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being | 2 |
| The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion | 3 |
| The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money | 3 |

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children in Reception are well cared for. There is an effective process of induction, with a sensitive programme of home visits and the opportunity for children to spend time in school before they join. As a result, children are happy, settle in quickly and soon learn school routines and expectations. They show that they are prepared to listen, share, take turns and be considerate. Relationships are good and behaviour is excellent. Children are given a secure start to their education and overall make satisfactory progress across all areas of learning. There are strengths in how children are introduced to reading and basic mathematical development skills, such as sorting and comparing by size and shape. Provision is satisfactorily led and managed. However, personal development in terms of how children make choices of activities, material and methods is restricted because activities tend to be adult directed. This limits children's ability to begin solving problems and show independence, and negatively affects work further up the school in investigative mathematics and science. Support for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is effective in helping children to make the same progress as others. Those with disabilities are fully included and care for them from teachers and assistants is very good.

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| Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage | 3 |
| The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage | 3 |
| The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage | 3 |
| Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage | 3 |

Views of parents and carers

Parents have extremely positive views and are very pleased with the school's fast growing reputation. They are confident that the school is well run, that teaching is effective, and that all staff care for their children. They appreciate the school's efforts to involve them in their children's education and, in return, support the school well in fundraising and helping in class and on trips.

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Horrabridge Community Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. If a parent has more than one child at the school, we asked them to record an answer against all the questions, for each of their children.

The inspector received 42 completed questionnaires. In total, there are 57 parents and carers registered at the school.

What inspection judgements mean

| Grade | Judgement | Description |
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| Grade 1 | Outstanding | These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. In 2007-8, 15% of schools were judged to be outstanding. |
| Grade 2 | Good | These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well. In 2007-8, 49% of schools were judged good. |
| Grade 3 | Satisfactory | These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils. In 2007-8, 32% of schools were judged satisfactory. |
| Grade 4 | Inadequate | These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves. In 2007-8, 5% of schools were judged inadequate. |

Common terminology used by inspectors

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| Attainment: | the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons. |
| Progress: | the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started. |
| Achievement: | the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, training or development. This may refer to the acquisition of skills, knowledge, and understanding or desired attributes. Attributes include qualities or personal competencies which are important to the development of the pupil; for example personal, social, cultural, emotional or health. |
| Capacity to improve: | the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement. |
| Leadership and management: | the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school. |



12 June 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Horrabridge Community Primary School, Yelverton PL20 7SZ

A huge thank you for your warm welcome and help when I came to visit your school. I was impressed by your school councillors who told me all about life at Horrabridge. They were keen to tell me that they had chosen your new headteacher at his interview!

I can tell you that the school is what adults call satisfactory but, as I am sure you know, it is improving fast. You can be proud of your behaviour and attitudes which show you are willing and eager to learn. Well done!

Here are some of the school's highlights.

- Your headteacher and staff make a good team and run the school well. They make sure you are safe and take good care of you.
- Support for those of you with special learning needs is good.
- You are lucky to have an excellent range and number of clubs and activities.
- You are being helped to grow up as healthy, considerate young people who know how to keep themselves and others safe.
- This is a happy school. You obviously enjoy being there.

To make the school even better, this is what the staff and governors need to concentrate on.

- Improving standards of writing which, although they are better than they were, are still not high enough.
- Developing the work teachers plan so that there are more links between subjects. In Reception, children need to have more opportunities to choose activities for themselves.
- Improving the way governors find out how well you are doing. They need to make sure that you learn more about the different lifestyles in different parts of our country.

You can help by continuing to do your best. Best wishes for the future.

Yours faithfully

Mike Burghart
Lead inspector

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