

Bolham Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113337
Local Authority	Devon
Inspection number	325797
Inspection date	26 November 2008
Reporting inspector	David Townsend 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.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	105
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	4
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dick Busby
Headteacher	Laura R Austin
Date of previous school inspection	11 October 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Bolham Tiverton EX16 7RA
Telephone number	01884 253576
Fax number	01884 253576

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

One of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an Additional Inspector carried out the inspection and evaluated the following:

The proportion of pupils, including higher attainers, making good progress in lessons and over time, across each core subject and key stage

How well the school promotes pupils' cultural development

How well target setting is being used by leaders to drive school improvement and by teachers to maximise pupils' progress in lessons.

Evidence was gathered from the school's self-evaluation, the school's assessment records and observation of the school at work, discussions with staff, parents and governors, and an analysis of parental questionnaires. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, are not justified. These have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

In this smaller than average school the percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average, as is the proportion of minority ethnic pupils. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities including those with moderate learning and speech and communication needs, is currently average. Children join the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) at the start of the Reception Year. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school has been below the level expected nationally in the past, but is currently more in line with this level. More pupils join or leave the school during Years 1 to 6 than in most primary schools.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Bolham Community Primary School is a good school that is popular with pupils and parents alike, and they are right to praise its positive and welcoming ethos. Pupils are cared for well and are developing as happy, confident and articulate learners. Achievement is good. The school tracks the attainment of each individual pupil with care, identifies those making slow progress much earlier and takes effective action to remedy this. Good partnerships with parents and good support from local authority consultants are keys to the success of the improvements in this aspect of the school's work.

Children make good progress in the Reception class because teachers help them to become independent learners at an early age. They also progress well in Years 1 and 2. At the end of Year 2 the proportions of pupils reaching expected National Curriculum levels in writing and numeracy are above average, although fewer pupils reach the higher levels. Standards are average in reading.

Standards have risen to above average by the end of Year 6. In 2008, this represented good progress during Years 3 to 6 in relation to the pupils' low Year 2 test scores, and shows how they caught up on previously lost ground. The proportions of pupils reaching expected levels rose in English, mathematics and science to above average, a particular improvement in science, where standards were below average the year before. The school's involvement in the Intensifying Support Programme (ISP) has been a success. Additional group teaching was organised for pupils at risk of failing to meet age-related expectations and their basic skills have improved markedly. However, whilst able pupils did especially well in English in 2007, too few pupils are reaching the higher levels in mathematics and science. Pupils who join the school late and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress. The school identifies each pupil's needs at an early stage and ensures they receive both one-to-one and group support. Close links with parents are established and the school liaises closely with external specialists from the local authority to provide effective individual programmes for pupils with speech and language needs. Pupils in the current Years 5 and 6 are on track to meet the challenging targets that have been set for them.

Teaching is good overall but there is some that is satisfactory. Work is generally well matched to the needs of pupils and the activities set make learning enjoyable. Pupils behave and concentrate well in class. Relationships in class are good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use this well to help pupils make links in their learning across subjects. They regularly assess their own work and that of their classmates. However, on occasion the pace of learning slows and teachers miss opportunities to provide further challenge for able pupils.

Pupils enjoy school and speak with enthusiasm about the good curriculum on offer to them. They make good progress in learning in subjects such as art, sport and music because they receive specialist teaching in these areas. For example, high quality models, paintings and murals are on display around the school, linked to themes studied in class about the Egyptians and the Ancient Greeks. Music has a high profile in school. Pupils keenly attend the after-hours music club and instrumental tuition and the school is regularly involved in local arts festivals. Pupils even stage their own musicals. All this leads to above average attainment in singing and good opportunities for pupils' self-expression and creativity.

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, social and moral development, are good. They have a keen sense of right and wrong, are polite and behave well.

They cooperate very well together at work and play and this is particularly noticeable in the way older pupils look after younger pupils through the mentoring system. They have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles. Initiatives such as 'Kids Kitchen' have increased their knowledge and helped them put this into practice. They adopt safe practices. Pupils have many opportunities to contribute to the school community. The school council is very active: for example, it is taking a lead on the current 'sustainable schools' project. Attendance is average and the school is taking effective steps to reduce unauthorised absences. Pupils are developing good learning habits that will equip them for the future and their computing skills form an important part in this. Nevertheless, their understanding of the global dimension of community and of other cultures within British society is less well developed.

The quality of both the pastoral care and academic guidance on offer to pupils is good. Careful attention is paid to health and safety so that pupils operate in a safe and secure environment. Staff are caring and approachable and consequently children are confident that they can talk to them about any problem that arises. Procedures to support pupils with disabilities or with specific health needs are well established and communicated. Safeguarding procedures are robust. Pupils are fully aware of their learning targets and review their progress towards them regularly. They use their targets to move on to the next stage in their day-to-day learning. This aspect of the school's work is much improved since the last inspection.

The headteacher leads the school well and has a clear understanding of its strengths and areas for development. The cycle of analysing performance, taking action and evaluating its impact is utilised well and subject leaders play an integral part in this. Challenging targets have been set and these inform the school's improvement planning, which is generally good. However, the school recognises that there has been insufficient focus on the particular needs of more able pupils and steps are being taken to raise the profile of this part of the school's work. Governors and staff have worked hard to establish close links with parents, the local community and other schools and are already using these to good effect in enhancing learning opportunities for pupils. The governing body holds the school to account for the standards achieved and plays an effective role in determining priorities. Given its track record, the school has good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children settle quickly and happily into the Reception class. There are carefully structured induction procedures and well-established routines. Parents are encouraged to be closely involved from the outset. Children's welfare is a high priority for staff. This helps children feel secure and able to approach them confidently. Children learn and develop well because they have access to well-resourced indoor and outdoor learning areas that enable them to develop as independent learners. They experience a good balance of structured play activities and adult-led tasks. They enter Reception with knowledge and skills that are broadly in line with expectations for their age but with weaknesses in some aspects of their communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. Good use of assessment information, high quality planning and strong support from all adults in the EYFS team ensure that children make good progress across all areas of learning. There are particular strengths in their personal, social and emotional development. By the time they enter Year 1, children are working at levels that are above expectations for their age in all areas of learning except in their writing. The EYFS is well led and managed and there have been good improvements to the provision.

What the school should do to improve further

- Refine the school's use of its information on pupils' progress to ensure that teachers consistently challenge able pupils to extend their thinking further.
- Develop pupils' understanding of the global dimension of community and of other cultures within British society.

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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	2
The attendance of learners	3
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 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?	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

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

27 November 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Bolham Community Primary School, Tiverton, EX16 7RA

I am writing to thank you for welcoming us to your school and telling us about life at Bolham Community Primary School. We enjoyed meeting and talking with you and looking at your work, especially the wonderful displays of art.

Yours is a good school. Here are some of the things we liked in particular.

- You enjoy school and achieve well in a number of subjects, including art, craft and design and music.
- You are polite, caring and behave well within class and around school.
- The teaching team makes sure that good help is on hand if any of you fall behind in your work.
- You appreciate that your lessons are always interesting.
- All the adults make sure you are well looked after.
- Children get off to a good start in their learning in the Reception Year.
- Your headteacher and the other people who help run your school are doing a good job.

In order to make your school even better, we have asked your teachers, with your help, to:

- use the information they hold to provide more challenging work for those of you who are ready to move forward more quickly in your learning
- help you all learn more about the cultural traditions and lives of people in different parts of the United Kingdom and across the world.

We wish you all every success in the future.

Yours faithfully

David Townsend

Her Majesty's Inspector