

Offwell Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113359
Local Authority	Devon
Inspection number	325800
Inspection date	17 September 2008
Reporting inspector	Christine Huard

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	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	94
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	10
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	I Piper
Headteacher	Claire Cowlard
Date of previous school inspection	17 October 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Offwell Honiton EX14 9SA
Telephone number	01404 831417
Fax number	01404 831417

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

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

the impact of actions being taken to raise standards in writing and numeracy;

the effectiveness of systems to track progress and how these are used to decide on actions to raise standards and set targets for improvement;

the effectiveness of the restructured management team and governors in ensuring the continued success of the school.

Evidence was gathered from an examination of the school's documentation, parents' questionnaires and pupils' work, observations of pupils in classes, around the school and in the playground, as well as interviews with subject leaders, pupils, governors and parents.

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.

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Description of the school

Children attend the school from the village and surrounding area. A significant minority attend from further afield and come to school by bus each day. The school achieved Healthy School status in April 2008, and the bronze award for its travel plan; it also holds the Activemark. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is a little below average.

Provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is made in the Reception class.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This outstanding school provides an excellent education in an exciting and stimulating learning environment, which fully reflects its Christian ethos. The school has sustained the high standards identified at the previous inspection, has fully addressed the one area identified for improvement and has continued the drive to improve further. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive. One parent echoed the views of many: 'The teaching and learning opportunities are excellent with a rich and creative range of learning experiences provided. It is a caring, welcoming place for my child to develop and grow.' Pupils are proud of their school and, asked why their school is special, Year 6 pupils answered unanimously, 'Our core values, they represent us, they belong to us alone.' They expanded by explaining they were part of an 'ethos group' which helped to formulate what values the school should adopt as being most important in its daily life. These values – sharing, loyalty, forgiveness, honesty and caring – were chosen by all the children and are understood by all.

The key to the school's success is the dynamic leadership of the new headteacher. She has systematically and sympathetically introduced changes which have built on and extended the school's previous successes. As a result, she has the whole-hearted commitment and support of the whole-staff team and governors. All have willingly taken on new challenges in order to provide the best possible education for the pupils. As the chair of governors explained, 'We can always improve.'

Children in the Reception class (EYFS) receive an outstanding start to their education. Activities match their individual needs in a lively and exciting learning area. They have a wide range of opportunities to develop and learn indoors and out. However, the access to the outdoor area is to some extent determined by the weather as at present there is insufficient shelter for the children in inclement conditions. Pupils in Years 1 to 6 bubble with enthusiasm. They attain standards that are well above the national averages because they are interested and inspired by what they are being taught. The school has reviewed its curriculum in order to provide more relevant and exciting opportunities for writing across a wide range of subjects. The school has rightly identified writing as being an area of comparative weakness, although standards are still above national averages. As a result of actions taken, pupils chatter enthusiastically about their learning. Pupils in Year 6 eagerly explained how they had been writing biographies of Caroline Lawrence, who has written a series of stories which link to their work on the Romans. Although standards of mathematics showed a slight decline in 2007, they have once again reached previous high levels because of an appropriate emphasis on numeracy and on pupils being given challenging opportunities to apply their skills and knowledge in problem solving.

The pupils love being at school and this is reflected in their very good attendance. The excellent behaviour, eager responses and excitement generated in each classroom illustrate how pupils greatly enjoy their education. Teachers ensure that pupils know what they are going to learn. They use resources, such as interactive whiteboards, skilfully. Teachers are particularly successful at planning a wide range of tasks in order to meet the needs of all pupils in these mixed-age group classes. These are carefully devised to meet the learning needs of all pupils so that all are appropriately challenged or supported. This excellent planning is a key factor in why the pupils manage to achieve so well. Parents in particular appreciate this; as one said, 'Each child is placed at exactly the right level of learning.' Pupils say marking is particularly helpful and gives useful advice about how they can improve further.

The teachers carefully monitor the progress made by every pupil. Staff make excellent use of the information gained from data and use this to set challenging targets for individuals, groups and the school as a whole. The pupils know and understand their own personal targets and strive hard to achieve them. The school makes excellent provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Similarly, pupils who are especially gifted or talented are identified, and care is taken to make certain they are sufficiently challenged, both in and out of the classroom.

Pupils are lively and responsive in class, and thoughtful and reflective in assembly. They are considerate in their dealings with each other. The playground is a joyful and harmonious area where Year 2 pupils happily and willingly fulfil the role of 'buddies' to the youngest children. Pupils have an excellent understanding of the importance of a healthy lifestyle and the need to stay safe. They have a very mature understanding of their responsibility to the global, as well as local, community. The school council is very active and aware of its role in bringing pupils' views to the notice of the school management as well as organising a range of fundraising events. They are very aware of contemporary environmental concerns and their excellent numeracy, literacy and information and communication technology skills provide a very good preparation for their future economic well-being. Pupils are nurtured very well, and the care and support provided for them are excellent. They receive excellent guidance for both their personal and academic development. They know that if they have a problem it will be sorted out, and they feel safe and secure.

Staff and governors have an excellent understanding of how well the school is doing. Targets set for future development are demanding – but the school thrives on challenge. Their self-evaluation is realistic and accurate in its assessment that there is an outstanding capacity to improve further. The action taken to address the hiccup in mathematics last year shows a clear understanding of the school's ability to take swift, decisive and successful action. The robust monitoring system ensures that the quality of teaching and learning is rigorously evaluated. Teachers are mutually supportive. They share good practice and discuss strategies for helping pupils to become independent in their learning. The school improvement plan and subject plans are meticulous, and are vital constituents in the concerted efforts to drive this school forward. As one parent said, 'The school is excellent; my child enjoys himself every day.'

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children enter the Reception class with a wide range of learning experiences which vary considerably from year to year. They make outstanding progress and they join Year 1 having reached above average standards. The care and attention given to children's welfare is excellent. Children happily settle into school because of the superb induction process to prepare children for when they join the class. Parents appreciate this and the approachability of staff and their willingness to sort out any problems. Children learn very effectively because a wide range of activities is provided for them across all areas of the curriculum. There is an excellent balance between those activities led by the teacher and those that children choose for themselves. However, more could be done to develop and utilise the outside area to make it as stimulating as the interior. A major factor is the lack of shelter, which means that access is, to a certain extent, determined by prevalent weather conditions. The classroom is bright and exciting and provides an inviting environment for children to work in. The teaching is animated and enthuses the children. Tasks are carefully matched to children's individual needs and there are plenty of opportunities for them to question and explore on their own. Monitoring of children's progress

is rigorous and action is taken to provide excellent additional support where it is needed. The leadership and management of the Foundation Stage and the support provided for the teaching are outstanding.

What the school should do to improve further

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- Provide shelter for the outside area for the youngest children so that opportunities to develop their skills and learning can continue uninterrupted whatever the weather.

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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?	1
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?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
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?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	1

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	1
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	1
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?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
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?	1
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	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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**

18 September 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Offwell CE Primary School, Honiton EX14 9SA

Thank you for the very warm welcome you gave me when I visited your school. You all seemed to be very happy and it was good to hear how you really enjoy your work and all the extra activities in which you are involved. I was particularly impressed with your commitment to the 'core values', which exemplify all that you are. Your school gives you an excellent education, and is working hard to make it even better.

These are the things I liked best:

- Your behaviour is excellent and you are really keen and enthusiastic about your learning.
- You are all doing extremely well in your learning, particularly in English, mathematics and science.
- You take very seriously the importance of eating healthily and taking physical exercise.
- Teachers make learning interesting and fun for you, and you know how to improve your work from marking and target setting.
- You have an excellent, varied curriculum and you all seem to appreciate the extra opportunities that have been provided for you.
- The teachers and staff take excellent care of you while you are in school.
- Your headteacher leads the school extremely well and all the staff are very keen to make it even better.

There is one thing that could be even better:

- I would like the children in the Reception class to have as many opportunities to learn outside as possible so I have asked that the outside area be adapted so that more shelter is provided for them.

I am glad you enjoy your school and hope you will continue to work hard to ensure that it stays as successful as it is now.

Very best wishes

Mrs Christine Huard Lead inspector