

# Black Torrington Church of England Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	113372
<b>Local Authority</b>	Devon
<b>Inspection number</b>	325803
<b>Inspection date</b>	10 February 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Shirley Billington

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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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	22
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
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Karen Wooldridge
<b>Headteacher</b>	Celia Luff
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	4 October 2005
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Black Torrington Beaworthy EX21 5PU
<b>Telephone number</b>	01409 231262
<b>Fax number</b>	01409 231262

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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is a very small primary school. A significant number of pupils join or leave the school during the year. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average but varies considerably in different year groups. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in the same class as those in Years 1 and 2.

There have been several changes in staffing arrangements in the past two years. The headteacher was appointed in April 2008.

## 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. There are significant strengths in the care and support provided for individual pupils and the wide range of experiences that the school offers. These are aspects that particularly please parents. As one said, 'the staff create a fantastic atmosphere in which children thrive and there are always interesting and imaginative activities'. Pupils are also very positive about their school and thoroughly enjoy all that it offers. This is evident in their exemplary behaviour and the very good relationships that extend across the age ranges. Those in Years 5 and 6 are adamant that there is nothing that they would change and express regret that they are going to have to leave eventually.

Very small numbers in each year group means that there is considerable variation in the profile of different cohorts. The overall trend is for children to start school with skills broadly in line with expectations. Whatever their starting points, they do well in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Progress has improved over the past year and many children are now exceeding expected standards by the start of Year 1. This is because of improvements to the learning environment that provide good opportunities for children to engage in well-planned practical experiences. However, it is not always possible to ensure that children take full advantage of what is on offer. There is limited additional support for the class teacher, who works hard to meet the needs of pupils in Years 1 and 2 as well as the youngest children.

Pupils are also making good progress in Years 1 to 6. Those pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and those who join the school mid-year, often make rapid gains as a result of good analysis of their needs and well-targeted support. Pupils do particularly well in English. However, progress in mathematics is not quite as good, particularly for more able pupils, who are not always sufficiently challenged by the tasks they are given in lessons.

Pupils benefit from good teaching and a stimulating curriculum. Good links with other schools extend opportunities for learning in subjects such as art, physical education and design and technology. Visits, visitors and a wide variety of clubs and special events also enthuse pupils and extend their experiences. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used well across a range of subjects and the older pupils have particularly good skills in this area. Pupils are given a good deal of responsibility for organising their learning and they work well together. They have excellent awareness of the need to stay safe and to take care of each other. The older pupils are mature and sensible and well prepared for the next stage of their learning and later life. However, they have limited understanding of life in a culturally diverse society, an area that the school has identified for further improvement.

The headteacher has been instrumental in leading a range of improvements over the past year. Parents and governors are very positive about her influence, making comments such as, 'she has improved the school immensely with her hard work and enthusiasm'.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

The youngest children get off to a good start. They are secure and confident and often show sustained concentration when working on practical activities. Children make good progress in all areas of learning. They do particularly well in their personal and social development and in developing early skills in reading and writing. Progress in these areas has been boosted by the introduction of a structured approach to teaching sounds and letters. There have been significant

improvements in provision over the past year. The environment has been reorganised to provide good opportunities for children to learn through practical activities. An outdoor area is well equipped to provide opportunities for structured play, but lack of support staff means that this cannot be used as frequently as it might be. Children's progress is tracked systematically, with good use being made of observational notes and photographs to record their achievements. These provide good information for parents, who are welcomed as partners in their children's learning.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Accelerate the progress of more able pupils, particularly in mathematics.
- Extend pupils' awareness of cultural diversity in modern Britain.
- Provide more support for the class that caters for Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 pupils in order to better meet the learning needs of the youngest children.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Results of national tests and assessments vary considerably year on year because there are such small numbers of pupils involved. Outcomes are affected by the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties in a particular cohort and by the high mobility rate. The trend over time is of broadly average standards, as represented by test results. However, the majority of pupils make good progress in relation to their starting points. Those with learning difficulties and those who are new to the school benefit from an individualised approach to planning their learning. More able pupils make at least satisfactory progress but do not always move forward fast enough, particularly in mathematics.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils show great respect for each other and relationships are very constructive. They enjoy taking on responsibilities in and around the school. The school council plays an active role in developments and has been responsible for designing a page for the new school website. Pupils are actively involved in the local community and raise significant sums for a nominated charity each year. Pupils' good understanding of what it means to lead a healthy lifestyle has resulted in a Healthy School award. They have an excellent understanding of how to keep safe, evident in their thoughtful contributions to a recent local travel plan. Attendance is above average. Pupils are exceptionally keen to come to school, as was evident during the inspection when many made their way through snow and flooded roads! Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is particularly strong. They show appreciation of the world around them and their responsibility towards the local environment. However, they have limited awareness of the diversity of cultures represented in everyday Britain.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching is well focused and purposeful. Relationships are very positive and teachers know their pupils exceptionally well. This enables them to target questions and adapt activities to meet a range of needs. Just occasionally, more could be demanded of more able pupils, who

sometimes mark time revisiting things they have already learned, particularly in introductory sessions with the whole class. Teachers make good use of a range of resources to engage pupils' interest and to illustrate key teaching points. Pupils who need extra help benefit from targeted support from a teaching assistant. Pupils' work is marked regularly with clear comments on what they need to concentrate on next. Pupils themselves find this feedback helpful. They are keen to learn and make a positive contribution to lessons.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

A wide range of imaginative activities supports pupils' learning across a range of subjects. Liaison with other local schools enables them to participate in competitive sports such as cross-country running. Older pupils feel that these experiences help them to get ready for mixing with a larger group in secondary schools. Good links are made across subjects, for example, using knowledge of science in design and technology when making pneumatic monsters. Good adaptations have been made to the curriculum over the past year to improve pupils' skills in areas such as spelling. ICT is used well to enable pupils to research and present their work in a variety of ways. The school provides particularly well for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities but there are times when activities are not sufficiently challenging for more able pupils, particularly in mathematics.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils are exceptionally well cared for and parents are confident, as one explained, that they 'feel safe and secure' in school. Procedures and checks in relation to safety and welfare are rigorous and thorough. Pupils are clear that there is no bullying and that, should they be concerned about any issues, they would turn to an adult for help. Parents find that staff are approachable and that the school deals effectively with any concerns; 'should any problems arise they are dealt with immediately'. Pupils' attainment is assessed regularly and the school is strengthening systems so that there are more frequent reviews of their progress to inform planning for the next step. Targets are set for individual pupils but these have only recently been introduced and pupils are not always clear what their targets are. However, they are enthusiastic about the initiative, explaining that it is helpful to have 'something to aim for'.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The headteacher provides a clear sense of direction and the school has moved forward at a good rate over the past year. School development planning is firmly based on good analysis of what is going well and where there is scope for improvement. Effective action is taken to achieve improvement; this has led, for example, to good improvement in the provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage. The school has good capacity to improve further. Governors are supportive of the school, undertaking training and becoming increasingly involved in aspects of strategic management. Staff work effectively as a team and there is a shared sense of responsibility for pupils' achievement and welfare. The school is very much at the heart of its community, with pupils participating in local events and good links being forged with other schools and providers. There is recognition that there is work to do to extend pupils'

understanding of modern British society and of the global community. This is a focus for development over the next year.

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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 <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
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

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<sup>1</sup>Grade 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

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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	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	2

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	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**

12 February 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Black Torrington CE Primary School, Beaworthy EX21 5PU

You may remember that we visited recently to see how you are getting on. Thanks to all of you who talked to us about what you were doing in lessons and what you think about your school. You told us how much you enjoy your time there and your parents told us that they are very pleased with it. I thought you would be interested in what we are saying in our report. We decided that yours is a good school.

There are lots of interesting things to do in lessons and in out-of-school activities. You told us how much you enjoy the various clubs and joining with other schools for things like a shared sports day. You are taught well and staff make sure that you are well looked after. This helps you to make good progress in your learning. If you need some extra help, especially if you are new to the school, your headteacher makes sure that you get it.

One the very best things about the school is you yourselves! Your behaviour is excellent and you work well together. You know how important it is to keep healthy and safe. We were very impressed with all your ideas for the travel plan to encourage everybody to get safely to school.

We have suggested three things that the school needs to do now.

- Make sure that those of you who are quick to learn make faster progress, especially in mathematics.
- Help you to learn more about the different lifestyles and beliefs of people living in Britain and around the world.
- Provide a bit more help in Class 1 so that the younger children can use the outdoor area more frequently.

Thank you again for your help.

With best wishes.

Yours sincerely

Shirley Billington

Lead Inspector