

Kentisbury Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113157
Local Authority	Devon
Inspection number	338110
Inspection dates	24–25 November 2009
Reporting inspector	Eileen Chadwick

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	27
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Cathy Slow
Headteacher	Jayne Peacock
Date of previous school inspection	1 October 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one additional inspector. The inspector visited eight lessons and held meetings with governors, staff, parents and groups of pupils. She observed the school's work and looked at its improvement plans, assessment records, pupils' work, curriculum plans, and safeguarding and welfare procedures.

The 17 parent questionnaires were also examined.

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

- Children's attainment on entry to the Early Years Foundation Stage and their progress in Reception.
- The evenness of pupils' progress in Key Stages 1 and 2, especially that of lower-attaining and more-capable pupils.
- The consistency of good teaching across the school and the systems for ensuring pupils' learning needs are met in the context of mixed-age classes.
- The impact of leadership and management on raising standards, especially through self-evaluation systems, and how the federation is enhancing provision at Kentisbury.

Information about the school

Kentisbury Primary is an exceptionally small, rural school situated on the edge of the Exmoor National Park. Pupils come from a very wide area and a variety of social and economic backgrounds. All are White British and an above average proportion are entitled to free school meals. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or learning disabilities, including statements of need, is above average. These pupils have mainly language, behavioural and physical learning difficulties. The proportion of pupils joining and leaving the school other than at the usual time is well above average with many newcomers entering in Key Stage 2. The children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are in Reception and taught in a mixed-age class with Years 1 and 2 pupils. The other class is for pupils in Years 3 to 6. The headteacher has recently returned after being absent since the start of the academic year.

Just under three years ago the school became federated with Parracombe CE(VC) Primary School and Lynton CE(VA) Primary School to form the West Exmoor Federation. The schools share a governing body, headteacher and senior and middle leadership teams. In January 2009, a separate inspection was carried out by HMI on the new leadership structure under the heading, 'New models of school leadership: influences and outcomes'.

The school awards include: Eco School, Active Mark and Healthy Schools.

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

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school which is still improving. It has some outstanding aspects to its work. Excellent care, support and guidance and a stimulating curriculum enhance pupils' interest in school and help to promote their exceptionally good behaviour and good attendance. Outstanding partnerships with federated schools considerably broaden the curriculum and pupils' learning and social experiences. The school fully lives up to the federation's motto, 'Together, we love learning.' The very good leadership of the headteacher and the shared vision and commitment of the whole team to excellence and enjoyment have ensured that school improvements have gathered pace since the previous inspection.

Pupils achieve well. When they start school, most have skills which are lower than those levels expected for their age. As a result of well-planned provision and good teaching they make good progress so that by Year 6, standards are average in English, mathematics and science. Children get off to a good start in Reception and this continues throughout Key Stage 1. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good progress. The school has robust procedures for helping pupils to 'catch up' from any past underachievement although there is scope to increase the proportion working at higher levels in writing and mathematics. In mathematics, intervention procedures focus mainly on raising attainment to average levels. Pupils develop their ability to write for a range of purposes but spelling, punctuation and handwriting are weaker aspects for pupils at all ability levels. Homework has been inconsistent during the period of disruption to senior staffing.

Leadership and management are good. The deputy headteacher, in close partnership with the headteacher, is a strong leader and manages the school on a day-to-day basis when the headteacher is working in another school. Together with the governing body, they ensure that the focus on accelerating progress is always a priority and that it is shared by all staff. The school benefits from the good leadership and expertise of subject leaders drawn from across the federation. Good self-evaluation, including rigorous monitoring of teaching, has led to teaching and learning that are mainly good and occasionally outstanding. Improvements have been achieved because previous performance has been rigorously reviewed and robust action has been taken to eradicate weak practice. Lesson plans focus well on the different ages and abilities of most pupils but do not always show how the oldest, most-able pupils will learn at higher levels. Occasionally, work is too easy for these pupils or literacy tasks are too hard for the lowest-attaining pupils. Governors are a real asset and provide strong support and good challenge. Good teamwork by all concerned has been a major contributory factor to recent improvements. With achievement and progress levels getting better, higher

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quality teaching and embedded ambition for further development, the school has a good capacity to continue to move forward.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards in writing and in mathematics at the higher level by:
 - improving spelling, punctuation and handwriting by more rigorous teaching in these areas
 - providing robust intervention procedures in mathematics to accelerate the progress of more-able pupils.
- Improve the consistency of good teaching by:
 - always providing enough challenge for more-able pupils and ensuring literacy tasks are never too hard for lower-attaining pupils
 - ensuring lesson plans show how the older most-able pupils will learn
 - ensuring regular homework supports pupils' school learning.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Pupils thoroughly enjoy school because they feel very safe, lessons are well organised and excellent relationships provide a very positive framework for learning. The pupils joining in different year groups are given extremely good support and integrate very well. Pupils see the relevance of their classroom learning because of the way in which they are encouraged to apply skills to everyday life. For example, in a good mathematics lesson for pupils in Years 3 to 6, pupils eagerly solved problems when calculating times related to favourite television programmes. The teacher engaged pupils from the beginning by using good quality resources, providing well-matched work to pupils' previous skills and involving every pupil through focused questioning.

Pupils' progress in Reception and Key Stage 1 has recently improved because of better use of assessment for matching tasks to the wide range of abilities and enhanced arrangements to meet the learning needs of different ages, especially in reading and phonics. The school has been effective in maintaining average standards in Year 6 in the past few years, despite the large increase in the number of pupils joining Key Stage 2 with gaps in their skills and knowledge or with special educational needs. Pupils make good progress in enhancing their speaking and thinking skills because of the rich opportunities that are provided. For example, when pupils in Years 1 and 2 investigated the conditions needed to make ice melt, they tested their own ideas and explained their thinking, receiving good individual support from staff. The school acknowledges that more rigorous teaching of spelling, punctuation and handwriting is needed to accelerate achievement in writing.

Pupils learn to work independently and are competent when using computers in different subjects. They are responsible and mature in the way they share ideas and solve problems. They play key parts in contributing to the work of the school and their

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community, for example through the school council, eco-work, fund raising and charity work. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Along with demonstrating their responsibility within school, of special note is pupils' respect for other cultures, religions and lifestyles. Older pupils set very good examples to younger pupils through their attitudes, excellent behaviour and willingness to take responsibility, for example in caring for their beautiful environment through their eco-work. Reflecting the school's Healthy School and Activemark awards, pupils show they understand how to lead healthy lifestyles. Pupils' good achievement in basic skills and good attendance means they are well prepared for the future.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teachers know each pupil very well and, where pupils have particular learning or behavioural difficulties, staff manage these skilfully and sensitively. Teachers make sure pupils know exactly what they should be achieving in each lesson and provide good feedback so pupils know how well they are doing. They manage pupils extremely well and use information and communication technology to extend pupils' learning,

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

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encouraging them to work hard and do their best. A good range of approaches is deployed to help pupils learn, for example through listening and watching as well as through solving problems. Accurate assessment information helps teachers to plan activities that usually build well on pupils' previous learning. This is very effective in phonics where ability grouping and teaching in small groups helps teachers to match pupils' learning to the wide range of attainment. However, there are occasional instances when there is not enough planning for the older more-able pupils to learn at higher levels. Occasionally, literacy tasks are too hard for lower-attaining pupils.

The creative curriculum enables teachers to plan activities that cross subject boundaries and make learning interesting and relevant. Art and design and outside visits and visitors provide practical starting points and bring academic learning alive. Some particularly good history, literacy, art and design and technology links were seen when pupils learned about the Romans and created Roman money purses. The curriculum is complemented by a good range of after-school clubs, and excellent partnerships with other schools enrich the curriculum. Regular joint curriculum events, such as science weeks with partner schools in the federation, greatly enhance pupils' learning and social development. These events provide pupils with excellent opportunities for interacting and learning with pupils of a similar age and prepare pupils extremely well for their future secondary education.

Extremely strong care, support and guidance contribute very effectively to the personal development and well-being of all pupils. The school has exceedingly good partnerships with outside specialists, for example for vulnerable pupils and those with pronounced special educational needs, including disabilities, to ensure pupils' welfare and medical needs are well met. The arrangements to support families living in isolated communities are very good.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher's drive, clarity of vision and commitment are fully recognised by staff and governors who share her passion for enabling the three schools in the federation to work cohesively whilst preserving the individual identity of each school. Morale among staff is high and there is shared ambition and drive for the school and federation to achieve excellence. The leadership structure is well thought through and empowers leaders at all levels to play a full part in raising achievement. The school is active in

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tackling discrimination and promotes equality of opportunity well.

Strong systems for sharing expertise across the federation at both senior and subject leadership levels enable the school to benefit from a far wider range of expertise than would otherwise be possible in such a small school. Robust arrangements for monitoring the impact of the school's work through observing and evaluating teaching and checking assessment data both involve senior and subject leaders. These systems enable leaders to see the whole-school picture and support teaching where improvements are needed, drawing on the wide range of expertise in the federation. The governing body is well organised, provides good support and is knowledgeable and well informed, including about achievement matters.

There are robust procedures for safeguarding. Community cohesion is good. Pupils develop a clear understanding of the school, local and global community and, through close contact with schools in the federation, visits and visitors, develop a wider view of the range of cultures in Britain today. Leaders have evaluated the effectiveness of their provision on outcomes for community cohesion and have identified the need to strengthen links with multicultural, larger city schools.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children settle quickly because of the good induction procedures. They enter with a wide range of skills and knowledge but, overall, they are below expected levels, especially in their speaking and listening skills. Children make good progress and, by the end of Reception, children attain the expected levels for their age, although writing is

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still a little below average. Their progress in reading, phonics and developing independent learning skills is improving through recent improvements for teaching these areas. More-able children are quickly identified and given more challenging work and, on occasions, work with older children, for example for phonics. The promotion of children's welfare and safety is good and they feel safe and are very happy. They are eager to learn because of the warm and welcoming atmosphere and the interesting tasks they are given.

Teaching and learning are good because good planning ensures children's learning needs are well catered for. There is a strong focus on improving language, literacy and numeracy skills through the provision of a broad, practical and interesting curriculum. Adults plan a wide range of worthwhile and stimulating learning activities indoors and outdoors. A good balance is struck between more formal, adult-led activities and those children select for themselves. Children benefit considerably through regular opportunities to learn and play with children from other schools in the federation. During the inspection children were thrilled to become 'investigators', for example when, through their play, they found out which objects floated and which sank. Adults intervene well at such times to develop children's thinking and language skills. Leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are good. Leaders keep a close watch on teaching. Assessment is thorough and used well to identify the impact of teaching on children's learning.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Most parents who returned the questionnaires and who spoke to the inspector were pleased with the experiences the school provides for their children. They believe the school keeps their children safe and that they enjoy their time at the school. A significant number said how well their children had progressed since moving to this school. However, a few parents expressed concern that their children were not progressing as well as they had previously, due to recent staffing disruption. The school has now recovered from the longer-term absence that caused this and children are now mostly making good progress. A few parents felt more-able children's progress was not always consistent and homework was irregular. The inspector agreed that these are both areas for improvement.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Kentisbury Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspector received 17 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 27 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	10	59	6	35	1	6	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	6	35	10	59	1	6	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	6	35	7	41	3	18	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	8	47	5	29	4	24	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	7	41	4	24	2	12	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	6	35	8	47	2	12	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	10	59	5	29	1	6	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	7	41	6	35	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	9	53	6	35	1	6	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	4	24	8	47	4	24	1	6
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	6	35	10	59	1	6	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	5	29	9	53	3	18	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	9	53	5	29	3	18	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
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.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
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.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



25 November 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Kentisbury Primary School, Kentisbury, Barnstaple EX31 4NG

Thank you so much for helping me learn about your school. I really enjoyed finding out about how much you like school and learning about the interesting things you do.

First, you need to know your school is a good one where you make good progress. Here are some of the many things your school does well:

- You make good progress in English, mathematics and science.
- Those of you in Reception get off to a good start.
- You help to make your school such a special place because you are very well mannered, work hard and behave well. You are a credit to your school.
- You understand how important it is to keep fit and healthy and enjoy sport. You know you should not eat too many sweets and cakes.
- You have many interesting learning opportunities, including visits, visitors and clubs.
- You have some great opportunities to take part in different activities with other schools, for example in science, especially with Parracombe and Lynton.
- Your headteacher leads you all very well and all the staff and governors think very carefully about what is best for you.

This is what I am asking your school to do to improve:

- Help some more-able pupils to reach even higher standards in mathematics.
- Help you to improve your spelling, punctuation and handwriting.
- Make sure your work is never too easy or too hard.

I hope you will continue to enjoy school and continue to work hard in all you do.

Yours sincerely

Eileen Chadwick

Lead inspector

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