

# Shirwell Community Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	113167
<b>Local Authority</b>	Devon
<b>Inspection number</b>	338112
<b>Inspection dates</b>	27–28 January 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Paul Sadler

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	38
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Jeremy Mills
<b>Headteacher</b>	Simon Allen
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	5 January 2007
<b>School address</b>	School Lane Shirwell Barnstaple EX31 4JT
<b>Telephone number</b>	01271 850295
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one additional inspector. About half of the time was spent observing pupils' learning, including observation of six lessons taught by two teachers. Meetings were held with governors, staff, pupils and a small number of parents. He observed the school's work, and looked at documents, including those relating to pupils' progress and the safeguarding of their welfare, and school development planning. The results of questionnaires completed by staff, pupils and the parents and carers of 34 pupils were analysed.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- pupils' attainment and progress, especially for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and in mathematics in Years 3 to 6
- the quality of self-evaluation and development planning and their use to identify and tackle key priorities
- the quality of learning and provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage
- the school's contribution to community cohesion.

## Information about the school

The school serves a rural part of North Devon. Almost all pupils are of White British ethnicity. The proportion of pupils with a range of special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average and includes pupils with profound and multiple disabilities. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in a class with pupils in Years 1 and 2. However, for much of the time they are taught separately and the inspector treated these as separate lessons for the purpose of observation.

The headteacher, who teaches for three days each week, took up his post in September 2009.

**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

Prominent on the desk of the enthusiastic and dynamic new headteacher is a well-thumbed and heavily annotated copy of the publication, 'Twenty outstanding primary schools 'excelling against the odds' (Ofsted 2009). This is used as a tool for staff training and reflects his high aspirations for the future of the school, which are increasingly shared by staff and governors. On his arrival, the headteacher rapidly conducted an accurate audit of the school's strengths and weaknesses and began to successfully tackle the latter, for example, by raising pupils' attainment and progress in mathematics, making improvements to the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum, improving communications with parents and carers and ensuring that all staff play a part in school leadership. This good start is already having a positive impact on pupils' outcomes. School stakeholders are determinedly driving improvements and this demonstrates the school's good capacity for further improvement. These actions, however, have yet to be formally recorded in a long-term plan with clear criteria to judge success.

Children mostly start school with skills and knowledge expected for those of their age. Data must be treated with caution due to the very small number of pupils involved. However, over the last three years pupils' attainment in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 6 has been average but rising. In 2009 attainment in English was above average. The school's records of pupils' progress and their current work show that attainment is continuing to rise, especially in English, and that their progress, including that of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, is accelerating. Pupils' behaviour is excellent, as is their adoption of healthy lifestyles and their contribution to the community, reflecting their excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Other aspects of their personal development are good, so their overall achievement is also good.

Pupils' increasingly good progress is brought about by good teaching, especially in English. A particular strength is the level of trust between pupils, so that they routinely share their work with each other and ask each other for help. Teachers use this very well, with older pupils using their more advanced work to model to the younger ones what they can achieve as their next steps. Work is also well matched to pupils' learning needs and teaching assistants are used well to make sure all get the support they need. A relative weakness is in mathematics in Years 3 to 6, where a slower pace of learning and an occasional lack of clarity in the purpose of the task and of how it relates to the pupils' longer term targets, leads to slower rates of progress. Nevertheless, some good mathematical work was seen when, for example, a pupil with special educational needs made her own decision to use a display of pizzas divided in different ways to solve

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problems involving fractions. This also reflects the good curriculum, which allows pupils to develop their skills in a variety of contexts and uses the exciting local environment well to promote learning. For example, all pupils are enrolled by the school as members of the National Trust.

Parents and carers agree that their children are cared for well and that those with special educational needs get the help they need to make good progress. Good relationships also exist with the other agencies involved in their welfare. The school meets current requirements to keep pupils safe and makes a good job of encouraging them to learn about the wider world and promotes community cohesion well.

**What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Raise standards and improve pupils' progress in mathematics by ensuring that:
  - all lessons are conducted at a brisk pace
  - pupils clearly understand the purpose of each activity, and of how it relates to their learning targets.
- By the summer of 2010, embed the school's identified priorities in a clear, succinct plan that:
  - sets clear milestones and targets on the road to improvement
  - forms a reference point against which key stakeholders can assess the school's progress.

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

By the end of Reception most children reach the age-related expectations, reflecting good progress from their starting points at school. This continues in Years 1 and 2, by the end of which pupils can write accurately and at length. After a task involving addition, Year 2 pupils demonstrated to those in Year 1 how they had added three numbers together. While Year 1 had been asked to add two numbers, the more able quickly grasped the concept and asked to add three numbers. In Years 3 to 6, all pupils wrote thoughtful, imaginative stories. Year 6 read out their work and younger pupils commented on the wide vocabulary and subtlety of style used to create an atmosphere. A Year 4 pupil pondered whether to start a new paragraph: 'Ah, the next sentence is about the same thing, so it's part of the first paragraph', she said.

These examples reflect pupils' increasingly above average attainment and good progress, although these features are not always reflected in mathematics in Years 3 to 6. There are strengths in other subjects too, including music and art.

Pupils' outstanding behaviour is a reflection of the high expectations and consistent approach of staff. For example, during lunchtime each pupil is allocated a place with a correctly arranged setting of cutlery. They bow their heads in silence while a brief prayer is said, then each group of pupils in turn queues in a quiet and orderly manner to collect their food. Pupils choose from an excellent range of healthy food and together with regular exercise this contributes well to their excellent understanding of how to lead

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healthy lives. They have a keen sense of their own safety around the school including the use of the internet. They express a few fears about their personal security which the inspector found not to be justified. Pupils make an excellent contribution to the community by, for example, caring for younger and disabled pupils, improving and caring for the environment and through charity collection.

Pupils' attendance is above average, although it is affected somewhat by the school's relatively relaxed attitude to the taking of holidays in term-time. The skills pupils will need in later life are developing well. While there are a few shortcomings in their numeracy, their literacy, self-confidence and ability to learn both independently and in teams are notable strengths.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	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
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>1</b>

**How effective is the provision?**

Observations of lessons during the inspection confirmed that throughout the school, pupils make good progress regardless of their background or ability. In all classes, teachers are skilful at creating a positive learning environment based on the very good relationships between staff and pupils. For example, in the Years 3 to 6 class pupils are

<sup>1</sup> 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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treated calmly and with respect as mature young people, and they respond very well to this approach. They are allowed to find their own best approaches to learning and usually make good progress as a result. Teachers have good subject knowledge, and use information and communication technology well to add interest to lessons. Teaching assistants also make a positive contribution to this encouraging picture. In the Year R to Year 2 class, for example, they are used very well to enable pupils to learn with those of similar age and ability.

Assessment is used well to match work to different ability groups and pupils are involved in assessing their own and each other's work. Older pupils, however, do not have a clear idea of how their attainment relates to national standards. There are plenty of opportunities in the good curriculum to use the skills learned to solve problems and explore the environment, and school leaders rightly plan to develop these opportunities further. While there is a satisfactory range of additional activities, pupils say they would like more. For example, there are very few opportunities to take part in team sports through collaboration with other schools. There are good opportunities to learn to play musical instruments, of which the majority of pupils take advantage.

Pupils are known to all staff as individuals and there are good arrangements for their care and welfare. New arrangements for reporting pupils' attainment and progress are much appreciated by parents. They provide an accurate and comprehensive picture of how well each pupil is doing.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

## How effective are leadership and management?

The new headteacher's drive and ambition are permeating the school at all levels, for example in the good governing body and in leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage. He has rightly identified that curriculum leadership needs strengthening further at all levels in the school. For example, new ways of analysing data have been introduced so that leaders can make regular checks on pupils' progress and quickly address any underachievement. Last term, the headteacher, in partnership with governors, drew up a robust and accurate analysis of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Rapid progress has been made at tackling the weaknesses but the actions have not yet been incorporated into a written strategic plan. Governors and the local authority are offering helpful support and challenge.

There is a strong and improving partnership with parents and carers, who speak warmly

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of the new headteacher's impact on pupils' progress and learning, and with other schools and external agencies. However the governors have yet to explore the kinds of partnership that might help to secure the school's long-term future in a time of budgetary uncertainty.

The school meets its responsibilities to tackle discrimination and promote equality of opportunity well, particularly so in the field of disability where pupils with significant disabilities are enabled to play as full a part as possible in the life of the school. The school also works hard to minimise the impact of differing numbers of boys and girls in each year group. Safeguarding of pupils is good, with all staff having been recently trained at a level higher than that required, and others having received specialist training, for example in caring for pupils with mobility problems. The governing body also meets its other statutory requirements, including that to promote community cohesion.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

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

## Early Years Foundation Stage

The school's data show that pupils have made good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Effective pastoral care and support in a welcoming environment help children to settle into school well. Detailed assessment of children's learning results in teaching and activities that are well matched to their differing needs. They have a good range of activities, both indoors and out, that are both led by adults or chosen for themselves. Unaided, a child used large apparatus to make a bridge for the Three Billy Goats Gruff. He made sure one upright pillar ' a large wooden box ' had its open side facing inwards so the troll had a hiding place. He checked and adjusted the stability of



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the bridge so the goats did not fall off. In a second example, two children used a computer program to match animals with their young. They used a sand timer to take their turn, learning about sharing, turn-taking and time. Both these are examples of the good learning and development of the children. Children receive good care and welfare, as parents and carers acknowledge, although changes in local pre-schools mean current links with them are not as effective as they might be.

Good leadership and management is in place. The new Early Years Foundation Stage leader, while not a specialist in the field, has actively sought advice and training and is responding enthusiastically to this. For example, the resources are rightly being reorganised following a recent visit from a specialist adviser, and the leader has taken action to further develop professionally.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
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**

Parents and carers are generally very positive about the school, its friendly atmosphere and the care given to pupils. They speak especially highly of the positive impact of the new headteacher, of the improved quality of the information they now receive and of teaching in the Year R to Year 2 class. The inspection evidence supports these views. A minority of parents expressed concern about the quality of teaching in the Years 3 to 6 class. Broadly, inspection evidence does not support this view, although there is scope for improvement in the teaching of mathematics.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Shirwell Community 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 34 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 38 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	22	65	12	35	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	23	68	10	29	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	14	41	17	50	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	11	32	17	50	0	0	3	9
The teaching is good at this school	13	38	15	44	5	15	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	11	32	17	50	6	18	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	18	53	15	44	0	0	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)	6	18	20	59	3	9	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	10	29	20	59	0	0	3	9
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	17	50	13	38	1	3	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	13	38	17	50	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	19	56	12	35	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	19	56	12	35	0	0	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"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
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.**



29 January 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Shirwell Community Primary School, Barnstaple, EX31 4JT

I very much enjoyed meeting you and talking to you when I visited your school recently. You are confident, articulate and friendly young people. I agree with you and your parents that Shirwell is a good school. These are some of the best things about it.

- Children get off to a good start in Reception.
- You all make good progress, and in Year 6 you reach standards in the national tests (SATs) that are average and improving. Your English is especially good.
- Your behaviour is excellent and you look after each other very well. I was particularly impressed by your behaviour during lunch time.
- You are really good at keeping yourselves healthy.
- You do a lot for each other and for other people and care for the environment.
- Teaching is good and you have interesting things to do.
- I really like the way you share your work with each other and make constructive comments. This helps the younger ones to know what to learn next.
- You are looked after well by the staff.
- Your new headteacher, the staff and governors lead the school well.

I have asked that school to do two things to make it even better:

- improve your performance in mathematics by making sure you always understand the task and how it will help you reach your targets
- draw up a plan that will help the school improve and allow your teachers to measure how well it is improving.

I wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Paul Sadler

Lead inspector

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