

North Tawton Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113259
Local Authority	Devon
Inspection number	338129
Inspection dates	22–23 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Denise Morris

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	156
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dawn Wood
Headteacher	Nicholas D'Agorne
Date of previous school inspection	3 May 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Approximately half of the time was spent looking at learning. Inspectors saw 11 lessons. Five teachers were observed. Inspectors held discussions with leaders, staff, pupils and governors. They observed the school's work, and looked at pupils' work, school planning documents, assessment procedures, safeguarding arrangements, the school development plan and minutes of recent governors' meetings. Inspectors received 87 responses from parents to the inspection questionnaires.

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

- the achievement of pupils with different needs
- whether teaching is sufficiently challenging
- the impact of leadership and management in raising attainment.

Information about the school

This is a smaller than average primary school serving the town of North Tawton and surrounding farming area. Most pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, mainly speech and language difficulties or medical difficulties, is similar to most other schools. The school has acquired Healthy School status. There is Early Years Foundation Stage provision for children from the age of four who share their education with their older peers in Year 1. A playgroup that is not managed by the governing body shares the same site and is subject to a separate inspection.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

This is a satisfactory school. It provides a sound education for all pupils. The headteacher and staff place a strong emphasis on promoting pupils' personal development and on positive relationships in all areas of the school. As a result there is a calm and settled learning environment and many aspects of pupils' personal development are good. They behave well in and around the school. They are polite and helpful and older pupils care for younger ones. They have a good understanding of the importance of leading healthy lives and regularly bring fruit to school. They take part in the daily aerobics class with enthusiasm. Pupils' social and moral development is good. They clearly know right from wrong and are developing good awareness of social issues. For example, the school council recently planned and organised a fund raising event for Haiti in which pupils purchased a 'paper brick' to represent real ones for the people to build new homes. Pupils feel safe and secure at school and insist that there is absolutely no bullying. Pupils say that they like school and enjoy attending. However, they do not all come to school as often as they could and not all pupils are punctual. As a result attendance is low.

Pupils' academic development is satisfactory. They make satisfactory progress during their time at the school and by the time they leave in Year 6 their attainment in English and mathematics is just below average. They make good progress in science. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make similar progress although they do not always meet the targets in their individual education plans. More able pupils do not always reach their potential. As a result too few attain the higher levels in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6. Teaching is satisfactory with some good teaching in the older age groups leading to some accelerated learning in Years 5 and 6. In a few lessons there is lack of pace and expectations are too low. Although all pupils have targets, they are not all sure what these are or how they can improve their work, and pupils' progress is not always checked regularly enough. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage get a satisfactory start to their education in their spacious and welcoming classroom. They make satisfactory progress during their Reception Year but do not always have enough opportunities to make choices about their learning or to choose their own activities.

Leadership roles are carried out satisfactorily. The senior management team has recently been strengthened and new coordination of literacy and numeracy is beginning to have a positive impact on the quality of provision and in enriching the experiences offered to pupils. Good quality new assessment systems have been introduced and although these are not yet fully embedded they are beginning to help leaders track pupils' achievements and identify those who require additional support. The governing

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body has also been recently strengthened and governors have a clear vision for the future. The school has made a satisfactory start in developing its strategy for community cohesion and pupils have good productive links with a school in Llandudno, which has resulted in many of the older pupils learning to speak some Welsh. Leaders, managers and governors know the issues facing the school and are accurate in their assessment of what needs improving. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. This, together with the improving leadership and particularly the strengthened governing body, means that there is satisfactory capacity to improve.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement in English and mathematics for all groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are more able, by:
 - improving the pace of learning and the expectations of what each group of pupils can do in lessons
 - ensuring that pupils know their targets and how to improve their work
 - checking their progress regularly.
- Develop opportunities for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage to improve their independence in learning by making more choices about where they want to play and work.
- Ensure that pupils come to school regularly by working closely with them and their parents.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Children enter Reception with knowledge and skills that are below those levels expected for their age, particularly in communication, language and literacy, social and emotional development and in their knowledge and understanding of the world. They make satisfactory progress across all areas of the school so that by the end of Year 6 attainment in English and mathematics is just below the national average. Attainment in science by Year 6 is above average because pupils make good progress in this subject. Pupils achieve well in information and communication technology (ICT). A few pupils, particularly those with special educational needs and or/disabilities, do not make as much progress as they could because tasks do not always match their abilities. Similarly, a few of the more able pupils do not achieve their full potential because there is a lack of challenge in some lessons.

Relationships between adults and pupils are strong and pupils are keen to please their teachers. They behave well, listen carefully and work well with their peers. They are fully aware of the importance of healthy eating and even the youngest children know that it is important to eat five portions of fruits and vegetables every day. Pupils work safely with tools such as scissors and put them away carefully. They have good links with the local community, distributing harvest goods, attending church services and

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getting involved in local issues such as the redevelopment of the local park. Pupils show empathy with those less fortunate than themselves and regularly raise money for charities. Older pupils act as peer mediators to ensure that all pupils feel comfortable in the playground. The school council is active and takes its responsibilities seriously. Pupils have a reasonable awareness of other lifestyles through their visits to France but their understanding of other cultures is limited by a lack of meaningful experiences of the wider world. Satisfactory literacy and numeracy skills, combined with pupils' good behaviour and good ICT skills, provide most pupils with satisfactory preparation for their futures. This is despite the low attendance of a minority of pupils who take holidays in term-time and a few who do not come to school as often or as punctually as they could.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
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	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	4
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching, although satisfactory overall, is variable. Some good teaching was seen during the inspection. This was particularly evident in an ICT lesson where pupils in Years 5 and 6 searched for information on the Second World War. Many pupils knew how to use hyperlinks to find what they needed. The brisk pace of teaching and

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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some good assessment led to good achievement by all groups of pupils. They were fully engaged and challenged to do their best. In other lessons pupils sit for too long on the carpet and as a result the time allocated to their tasks is limited. Activities are not always linked to ability. There is sometimes a lack of challenge for the highest ability pupils, and too little attention paid to making learning fully accessible for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. As a result learning and progress are satisfactory rather than good.

Pupils have access to a broad and balanced curriculum with some good enrichment activities and after-school clubs which are well attended. Pupils are learning to speak French to support their bi-annual trip to France. Older pupils are also developing a good understanding of their partner school in Llandudno and are proud of their emerging Welsh. Pupils spend a large proportion of their time on basic skills. This is not always productive because a few pupils say they are bored. The curriculum does not provide for the different ability groups in the school as well as it could.

The school keeps pupils safe. It provides satisfactory care, guidance and support. Procedures to improve attendance are just beginning to work and there is evidence of a small rise in attendance this year. Provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is satisfactory. Pupils say that there is always someone to talk to and their personal needs are well met but they do not all make sufficient progress towards meeting the targets on their individual education plans. The guidance given to more able pupils is not always regular or rigorous enough to help them all meet their full potential. Induction and transition procedures are particularly good and there are effective systems for supporting pupils' personal needs.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	3

How effective are leadership and management?

The senior management team has been recently strengthened and new subject leaders have been appointed. Together they have begun to put new procedures in place to improve achievement, increase the rigour of assessment and improve attendance. There is emergent evidence that these procedures are beginning to work. Attendance rates are showing a small rise recently, leaders now have a clear view of how well each pupil is doing term by term, and achievement in science particularly has improved.

Leaders are effectively supported by the new governing body, which has a clear understanding of the issues facing the school. Governors are rightly monitoring teaching

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rigorously to ensure improvement, which is fragile. Effective support from the local authority has helped the school to focus on the right priorities recently. Governors fully meet their statutory responsibilities and are offering a good level of challenge to the school. Safeguarding, including child protection procedures, meets requirements. Parents are pleased with the school and with the information they receive. The school works appropriately with other schools and the local community to promote pupils' welfare, though there are few links with local businesses. The school takes its responsibilities for promoting equality and tackling discrimination seriously, although it recognises that certain groups of pupils are not making the progress of which they are capable. The school's strategy for community cohesion is developing appropriately. An audit has identified the school's context and there are productive links with a contrasting school. The strategy is in the early stages in relation to developing pupils' awareness of other cultures. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enjoy themselves in the Reception class which they share with pupils in Year 1. They benefit from the older role models and this, combined with good induction procedures, helps them to quickly settle. Parents are pleased with their children's progress. Most make satisfactory progress and attain the levels expected of them in personal, social and emotional development, and in their physical and creative development. They attain just below typically expected levels in mathematical development, communication, language and literacy and in their knowledge and understanding of the world. Children feel safe and happy. They show good awareness of

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healthy eating as they choose fruit at snack time. They play well together and listen carefully to their teachers. Sometimes they sit for too long on the carpet and do not have enough time to chose activities for themselves or initiate their own learning. Children enjoy looking at presentations on the interactive whiteboard, but too often this is difficult for them to see due to lack of appropriate blinds to keep the light out.

Leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Some exciting activities are provided; for example, some boys were very eager to search for small toys and dinosaurs in the class sandpit and worked diligently to see how many they could find. The outdoor area is spacious but is not regularly used well enough to support learning. Too often children just use the bikes and scooters and do not have enough other activities to engage them in learning. The lack of outdoor adult observations means that there are lost opportunities to assess children's achievements in this area. In the classroom there are many good annotated assessments showing how well children are doing.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

Parents are very supportive of the school. They are pleased with the school and feel that their children are safe and secure. 'There is a lovely focus on friendship, supporting each other and problem solving. The staff team is now strong, effective and dedicated', wrote one parent. Another commented, 'I am very pleased with the extra-curricular activities which are really adding to my child's enjoyment and development. I am very pleased with the dedication and enthusiasm of the staff.'

A few parents expressed concerns about the large class sizes. The school has advanced plans to change the way pupils are grouped next year to try to lower the numbers in each class. A few parents do not feel that the school deals effectively with difficult behaviour. During the inspection behaviour in and around the school was good. Behaviour strategies were working well and pupils were polite and helpful. Records of incidents did not indicate any difficulties with behaviour at the school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at North Tawton 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.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	57	66	27	31	2	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	50	57	35	40	2	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	33	38	51	59	2	2	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	32	37	42	48	5	6	3	3
The teaching is good at this school	36	41	43	49	3	3	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	29	33	52	60	2	2	2	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	34	39	49	56	2	2	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)	31	36	43	49	3	3	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	32	37	45	52	3	3	2	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	20	23	53	61	9	10	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	22	25	47	54	6	7	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	30	34	48	55	4	5	4	5
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	42	48	38	37	4	5	1	1

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.



24 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of North Tawton Primary School, North Tawton EX20 2HB

Thank you for your help in our recent visit to your school. We enjoyed meeting you. This letter is to tell you some of the things we found out about your school.

- Your school gives you a satisfactory education.
- You told us that you enjoy school but some of you do not all come to school as often as you could.
- You make satisfactory progress in mathematics and English, but good progress in science.
- You behave well and know that it is important to be healthy. I was pleased to see that you choose lots of fruit and vegetables at dinnertime.
- You told us that you feel safe at school and that there is no bullying.
- You go to lots of after-school clubs and we know that you really enjoy your trip to France. We noticed that some of you could speak some French and some Welsh. Well done for that!
- Your teachers and leaders keep you safe.
- The youngest children in the Reception class like coming to school and quickly settle.

We are asking your leaders to do three things to make your school even better.

- To help you do better in mathematics and English. You can help with this by working hard in lessons and making sure you know what your targets are.
- To make sure that the reception children have more choices about what they want to do.
- To make sure that you all come to school regularly and on time. You could really help with this by making sure you come to school as often as you can.

Thank you again for your help.

Yours sincerely

Denise Morris

Lead inspector

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