

West Alvington Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113404
Local Authority	Devon
Inspection number	338161
Inspection dates	14–15 October 2009
Reporting inspector	Alex Baxter

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	31
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr R Rew
Headteacher	Rachel Perkins
Date of previous school inspection	5 September 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one additional inspector. The inspector visited seven lessons and an assembly. The inspector also visited morning play and lunchtime activities and held meetings with governors, staff, pupils and parents. He observed the school's work, and looked at school plans and policies, records of assessments and the tracking of children's progress and the provision and planning for pupils who are vulnerable or have special educational needs and/or disabilities. In addition, 23 parental questionnaires, 18 pupils' questionnaires and 11 staff questionnaires were scrutinised.

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

- The progress that children make in their learning and whether this is equally good for all groups of pupils.
- How well teachers, including those in the Early Years Foundation Stage and particularly those in Years 3 and 4, provide the right level of challenge to secure improvement for individuals and groups of children.
- The degree to which leaders and managers at all levels, including governors, bring about continuous improvement by monitoring pupils' outcomes and using targets.

Information about the school

This village school is smaller than the average primary school. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in a combined Reception/Years 1 and 2 class. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average and in some year groups, at times, it is very high. The number of pupils who join or leave the school other than at the usual times is above that normally expected. At the beginning of the 2009/10 school year, the school became a member of a federation of two schools, with a shared governing body and executive headteacher.

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?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

West Alvington is an outstanding little school. As a parent commented, reflecting the views of others, □□□The ethos of the school is one of valuing every child in a clear, but not overstated, Christian community where they are encouraged to learn and feel at home together□□□. Leaders and managers have made significant improvements since the last inspection. These include, for example, establishing consistently good and better teaching, which employs strengthened methods of assessing pupils□□□ work and sharper targets to promote improvement. As a result, standards have risen and are now above average, especially in mathematics. In addition, pupils are now fully involved in and equipped to contribute to their own learning. Given the high proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities in the school, this above average level of attainment clearly represents excellent achievement.

Governors state, □□□We have worked hard to achieve success and are determined to keep this into the future□□□. This strong commitment to continued improvement is fully shared by all those associated with the school and is the key philosophy underpinning the decision to federate with its partner school. The newly appointed executive headteacher works very closely with all staff, but especially the new head of teaching and learning. In a similar way, the creation of a new governing body, drawn from governors of both schools, has widened the expertise available and strengthened the vision for the future. These developments, together with excellent self-evaluation based accurately on a comprehensive understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and building upon a proven track record of improvement since the last inspection, show an excellent capacity for the school□□□s future development.

This is a highly inclusive school where all staff work diligently to safeguard pupils□□□ welfare and provide a consistently high standard of care, guidance and support. Helped by the small size of the school, all pupils are known well, have their needs met and feel valued. However, what really makes this such an outstanding school is the high quality of teaching, which inspires pupils□□□ very positive attitudes and excellent behaviour. Pupils are committed learners and contribute enthusiastically to their own and each other□□□s learning. Pupils enjoy coming to school because learning is fun and relationships are warm and very supportive; as a result, they all make outstanding progress.

Staff promote excellent links with parents and the resulting warm relationships support the pupils□□□ confidence and high regard for the school. Parents also help staff with a wealth of extra-curricular activities and school trips, which add to the good learning opportunities offered by the school. At times, though, older pupils have limited opportunities to learn as individuals using computers. The school uses and maintains its

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small site and buildings extremely effectively. The youngest children derive increasing benefit from the relatively new covered area, but they are not always able to choose for themselves whether to learn in or out of doors.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further encourage the development of independent learning by providing more opportunities for:
- older pupils to undertake research using computers
- children in the Early Years Foundation Stage to choose more freely whether to learn indoors or out of doors.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**1**

The inspector's observations of lessons clearly showed how pupils' total commitment to and interest in their learning were in direct response to their teachers' understanding of their needs and consistently high expectations. Every pupil in the school is included equally and enabled to make outstanding progress. Teachers stimulate and build upon the pupils' ideas through careful questioning and by encouraging them to test out and develop their ideas further by discussing them with each other. This very well considered learning strategy underpinned all the English and mathematics lessons observed and was clearly appreciated by the pupils who were always very keen to learn.

From generally below average skills on entry, evident in the high proportion of children entering with special educational needs and/or disabilities, pupils make exceptional progress. By the time they leave the school, pupils across the range of abilities have achieved exceedingly well so that attainment in English, mathematics and science is above average. These levels of attainment reflect year on year improvement and the proportion of pupils exceeding average standards continues to rise.

Pupils enjoy school and undoubtedly feel safe there; this is fully evident in their good attendance. Their behaviour and attitudes to learning are exemplary. All these qualities are clearly apparent in the way older pupils, without being asked, willingly adjust their work and play to include the younger ones, whether in lessons or during play times. All pupils, including those who have complex emotional needs, mirror the example of adults who work in the school as they learn and derive enjoyment from each other. Pupils contribute very fully to the life of the school, for instance by taking responsibility and making their views known as members of the school council, or by becoming literacy buddies and helping other pupils with their reading and writing.

The pupils are particularly enthused by the new federated link with their partner school. They comment appreciatively about their joint residential visits and a recently shared hosting of a visiting theatre group. They talk proudly of their new friends in their partner school and express excitement about links with their specific buddies, which are intended to enrich their learning. The pupils make outstanding progress in developing their self-confidence and independent learning skills as they move through

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the school. These are particularly evident in their imaginative writing and expressive art and craft work.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

How effective is the provision?

The high quality of teaching and learning is underpinned by the teachers comprehensive understanding of the needs of each pupil and their skill and determination in tackling their individual needs. All pupils, across the range of abilities, are presented with learning activities and tasks that are closely matched to their stage of development. For example, pupils are often grouped by ability not age at key times during their writing, reading and mathematics lessons and this significantly accelerates their learning and progress. Teachers and their assistants are particularly successful in teasing out pupils ideas through careful questioning. They are skilled at keeping pupils on task by the astute use of praise, adhering to a fast pace of learning and by developing the pupils own skills as independent learners. Pupils relish the timed challenges presented to them, for example, in Years 3 to 6, mentally multiplying two-digit numbers. Pupils show considerable skill as they move through the school, not

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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only in evaluating the quality of their own work, but in expressing appreciative opinions about each other's efforts and offering constructive ways of improving. This was evident in literacy lessons, for example, as pupils suggested more descriptive adjectives and adverbs to enrich their sentences.

The staff have significantly improved the way they assess and mark the pupils' work since the last inspection. Now pupils are given very clear next steps and targets in order to improve their work, and literacy and numeracy challenges and guidance adorn the walls of all working areas. Assessment information gives a clear picture of how well children are doing in different areas of learning and helps ensure that all groups achieve equally successfully.

The excellent care, guidance and support provided by all staff are clearly apparent in the very considerate and enthusiastic way that all the pupils conduct themselves while at school. The school's excellent links with parents are a key factor in encouraging the pupils' very positive attitudes to learning and love of school. The excellent progress of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, which very often enables them to attain average standards, reflects the exemplary support they receive.

The curriculum is enriched by a very good range of clubs and visits. Literacy, numeracy and scientific enquiry are strongly promoted, as are the expressive arts and religious education. Pupils develop good skills in information and communication technology, but do not always have enough opportunity to undertake independent research using computers. Given the very small year groups, the breadth of pupils' interaction is sometimes limited, although the school's new federated link is helping the pupils to mix and learn with more pupils of their own age and ability.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	1
	1
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?

Like their recent predecessors, current leaders and managers do all that they can to ensure that all pupils are consistently included and have their welfare fully safeguarded. Governors provide excellent support to the staff of the school and work closely with them to sustain links with parents. Their decision to establish a new federation affirms the clear intention to build on the very good improvements since the last inspection. Improvements include turning the weaknesses in teachers' assessment and use of targets into significant strengths. These outcomes show that the school provides

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excellent value for money and is very well placed to continue this into the future. The benefits of the federation are already emerging. The collaborative work, for example, of the extended staff and governors □ □ □ leadership teams have strengthened lines of communication and the monitoring of the school □ □ □ s effectiveness. School development planning and identified priorities are now underpinned by excellent self-evaluation. Already, pupils in Years 3 and 4 are benefiting from an increased amount of teaching in small groups, and pupils and their teachers are sharing learning opportunities across the two schools. Activities such as shared residential and theatre visits with the partner school, very close links with the parish church, the teaching of French and developing links with schools in Ghana, London and Birmingham, promote community cohesion effectively.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

As a group, the children □ □ □ s overall skills on entry are lower than those normally expected for children of this age, especially in emotional well-being and language development. Skills are still below average on entry to Year 1, but reflect good achievement from different starting points. The well-resourced outdoor learning area with its relatively new canopy represents a significant improvement since the last inspection. This has extended the learning opportunities offered to the children. These include, for example, role play in the tent at the □ □ □ dinosaur dig □ □ □ and gardening and sand play activities. Currently, there are two Reception children in this class, which includes Year 1 and 2 pupils. Strong leadership and excellent links with

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parents help the children settle confidently into school life and provide a boost to their successful learning. Children make good progress in response to excellent care, guidance and support and good teaching. In particular, because of the very warm and supportive relationships that children enjoy with adults and with each other, they make very good gains in their social development and in developing very positive attitudes to learning at school. At times, however, children are not able to choose when to learn indoors and out of doors. Even so, given the very small number of children in each year group, adults do well to provide effective support without restricting the children's independence.

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	1

Views of parents and carers

Parents have very high regard for the school and the inspector received no parental criticisms. Without exception, all the parents who responded to the questionnaire and those interviewed by the inspector, expressed agreement, indicating that they are entirely happy and have full confidence in the work of the school. Several parents emphasised their appreciation of the very supportive and informative relationships that they have with the staff. Others, including a few whose children have arrived from other schools because their parents have specifically chosen to bring their children to West Alvington, welcomed the way their children settled quickly, enjoy school and make excellent progress.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at West Alvington C of E Primary 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 23 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 31 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	12	52	10	44	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	20	88	2	9	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	16	70	7	30	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	16	70	7	30	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	19	83	3	13	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	18	78	4	17	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	14	61	9	39	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)	14	61	7	30	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	16	70	5	22	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	16	70	6	26	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	13	57	9	39	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	15	65	6	26	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	17	74	5	22	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"> ■ 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.



15 October 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of West Alvington Church of England Primary School, Kingsbridge, TQ7 3PP

Thank you so much for welcoming me to your school. I really enjoyed talking with you and seeing you at work. I was particularly impressed by your excellent behaviour and the way that all the adults who work at the school give you and your parents such close, personal attention. In addition, the very considerate way you work and play together was quite simply a joy to watch. I am pleased to agree with you and your parents that yours is an outstanding school.

These are some of the other main things I found.

- The levels of attainment that you reach in Year 6 are above the national average. These show that you are taught extremely well and make outstanding progress. You are confident, enthusiastic learners and an increasing number of you reach above average levels and standards are rising.
- You are very happy and feel very safe at school because the staff care for you in an outstanding way. They ensure that you enjoy a good curriculum and encourage you to participate very fully in an excellent range of clubs and visits.
- Your executive headteacher, head of teaching and learning, staff and governors run the school extremely well. They work very closely with specialist agencies and staff of other schools and increasingly with the staff who work at your partner school.

Even the best of schools can improve and so I have asked the leaders and managers of the school to:

- increase opportunities for older pupils to undertake research using computers and enable those of you in Reception to more often choose for yourselves whether to learn in or out of doors.

You can help by continuing to give of your best in all that you do.

Thank you again and best wishes for the future.

Yours faithfully

Alex Baxter

Lead inspector

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