

High Bickington Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113378
Local Authority	Devon
Inspection number	378689
Inspection dates	19–20 September 2011
Reporting inspector	Martin James

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	47
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sally Anoyrkatis
Headteacher	Rob Norton
Date of previous school inspection	9 December 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by an additional inspector. The inspector visited nine lessons or parts of lessons, and a number of shorter visits were also made to classrooms to look at samples of pupils' work. Five members of staff were observed teaching. The inspector held meetings with the Chair of the Governing Body, staff and pupils. He observed the school's work and looked at a wide variety of documentation including teachers' planning, the school improvement plan, monitoring and evaluation sheets, assessment records and safeguarding information. The responses from the staff and pupil questionnaires were analysed, as were the 40 responses from parents and carers.

The inspector reviewed many aspects of the school's work. He looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- To what extent do teachers make suitable allowance for the different needs of pupils, especially the more able?
- What provision is made for improving attainment in writing?
- To what extent has the school developed national and global links to enhance community cohesion?
- What is the impact of subject leaders and governors in improving provision in the school?

Information about the school

High Bickington Church of England Primary School is much smaller than the average sized primary school. Nearly all pupils are from a White British background. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is lower than the national average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average, and the proportion with a statement of special educational needs is similar to the average. These pupils' needs cover a wide range including moderate learning difficulties and speech and language disorders. The school has recently started to make part-time provision for nursery-aged children, with this provision being under the control of the school governors. On the days they are present, they form a foundation unit for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage with those of reception age. When these children are not in school the reception-aged children are integrated into one class with pupils from Years 1 and 2. Through the rest of the school the pupils work in a variety of class arrangements according to the subjects being taught. These are either Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, or Years 1/2, 3/4 and 5/6. In recognition of its work, the school has received a number of awards including Healthy Schools Plus status and the Quality Mark award.

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

High Bickington Church of England Primary School is a good school where pupils achieve well. Care, guidance and support are good and consequently pupils feel safe. Pupils enjoy school, as illustrated by their above average attendance, and their behaviour and attitudes are good throughout. Pupils contribute well to the local community, with the school being very much part of that community. Parents and carers are very positive about the school. For example, one said, 'High Bickington is a lovely, friendly school and I am very happy that my child attends there.' Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage, and they usually reach average standards by the time they leave Reception. Pupils make good progress through Years 1 to 6 and, by the end of Year 6 overall attainment is above average, although writing is not quite as strong as other subjects.

Effective teaching and a good curriculum are crucial factors in the good progress made by all pupils. In lessons, teaching assistants are deployed well and teachers make good use of a variety of resources and approaches to make those lessons interesting. Teaching is clearly focused on helping pupils to improve and teachers successfully plan for the varying ages and abilities of pupils in their classes including those who are more able. Much help and advice is given to pupils during lessons, although marking and their targets are not always so successful in helping them understand how to develop their work further. The curriculum is well planned to give pupils an interesting array of work, which they say they enjoy. Pupils report that the topic on the rainforests was a particular favourite. The school regularly reviews its curriculum, with a current emphasis being placed on further increasing the use of writing in other subjects, as this strategy has not always been fully exploited in the past. The school has done much to promote community cohesion, both in school and locally. However, there is still scope to improve pupils' understanding of the cultural diversity to be found further afield, both within the United Kingdom and abroad.

The headteacher, other staff members and the governing body have successfully provided a pleasant, safe environment, where the pupils enjoy their learning. They are a dedicated team, committed to improving the provision they make for their pupils. They have evaluated the school's effectiveness accurately and current planning reflects a clear awareness of what is needed to take it forward. This, together with the improvements made since the previous inspection, means that the school has a good capacity to improve further.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards in writing, to match those achieved in reading and mathematics, by:
 - ensuring pupils have more opportunities to practise and develop their skills through the other subjects of the curriculum
 - ensuring that through marking and target setting all pupils understand clearly how to improve their work.

- Promote community cohesion further by:
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to find out about, and communicate with, people from cultures and backgrounds different from their own, both within the United Kingdom and globally.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils show real enjoyment in their learning, and the work seen in lessons and in pupils' books confirms that their achievement is good. Consequently attainment overall is above average by the time pupils leave the school. Standards have improved since the previous inspection. The progress being made by pupils was clearly observed in lessons, with boys and girls performing equally well. In an English lesson in Key Stage 1, for example, the thoughtful encouragement of appropriate and interesting words by the teacher ensured that pupils then made good progress in improving the quality of their writing. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve well. In a mathematics lesson on shape, observed in Key Stage 2, for instance, the teacher fully involved them throughout, thus ensuring that their learning matched that of their classmates. The pupils' good progress from their lower-than-expected starting points, together with their enthusiastic participation in their learning, illustrates that the school is preparing them well for their future education and their life at work.

Pupils are well behaved and have sensible attitudes to their work. They are courteous to each other and to adults, and they move around the school in an orderly fashion. Pupils have a clear awareness of how to stay healthy. They eat healthy meals, and they are keen to point out that these often include vegetables they have grown in their own garden. They also benefit from the good range of physical activities provided. Pupils say they are pleased with their contribution towards the school gaining Healthy Schools Plus status. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall, although their understanding of the multicultural society in which we live is more limited. Pupils are very keen to take on the responsibilities that the school offers them, and they recognise that they are working for, and helping, each other. The school council, together with other pupils, contributed most successfully to the exciting new facilities that have been provided on the playground. Pupils are also very involved in the wider village community, through such events as the summer fete, taking part in musical activities in the

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church and welcoming residents into school.

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	2
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	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	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 make good, thoughtful use of the accommodation available, and they create an interesting and welcoming learning environment for the pupils. This includes a stimulating array of resources. Relationships are a strength, and as a result pupils are keen to learn and ready to work hard. Teachers use a good range of strategies to engage the pupils, including using the interactive whiteboards effectively. Explanations are clear and reflect teachers' good subject knowledge. Occasionally, however, they do not give pupils quite enough opportunities to discuss their work to help them check and then extend their understanding. Planning is detailed and the work provided caters well for the varying needs of the pupils. Pupils are provided with targets for improving their work, although discussions with them suggest that some know these better than others, especially in relation to writing. Marking routinely provides pupils with praise, but is less successful in clarifying for them how to develop their work further.

The interesting and varied curriculum has a positive impact both on pupils' learning and their enjoyment. Pupils particularly value the wide range of outings and clubs which enrich the curriculum. The school has successfully developed subject links to enhance the interest and relevance of the curriculum through the provision of topics and themes. There is a clear recognition in the school that some pupils have difficulties with their writing skills. Consequently the staff are currently reviewing the

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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planning of work both in subjects and topics to ensure that they provide more opportunities for pupils to develop these skills. The pastoral care provided for pupils contributes well to their sense of well-being. Pupils are well known to staff members and they make their welfare a priority. Pupils are keen to point out that they also enjoy looking after each other and keeping each other safe. The transitions from home to school and on to secondary school are smooth and efficient. Staff have worked rigorously and successfully to ensure pupils' good attendance. Pupils are regularly reminded about the need to take care, for instance when using computers.

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	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher, supported well by other members of staff, has been successful in creating a caring school with a strong ambition to improve. This shared ambition is well illustrated by the improvements made since the previous inspection, including in teaching and learning. The monitoring of teaching is thorough and areas for improvement are clearly identified and addressed. Great effort is taken to ensure that no form of discrimination is tolerated in the school and that equal opportunities are promoted effectively. For instance, information from tracking procedures is used rigorously to ensure that all pupils, including boys, girls and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make equally good progress. Safeguarding procedures are consistently and diligently applied to ensure that all pupils are well protected. For example, the identity of all visitors to the school is carefully checked and confirmed. Community cohesion is promoted satisfactorily. There are good community links, both in school and locally. However, in its own evaluation, the school recognises that links beyond the local community are not so well developed. A useful start has been made through contacts established with a school in Uganda.

Subject leaders demonstrate a good understanding of their various subjects, and they have helped initiate strategies for making improvements. At present they have limited opportunities to observe lessons in other classes, although plans are firmly in hand for this to happen more frequently. Partnerships have been established with a number of other small schools, which have allowed for the sharing of a range of knowledge, skills and expertise. The governing body keenly supports the school and its members are regular visitors. They are closely involved in drawing up the budget and the school's improvement plan, and they contribute effectively to the school's self-evaluation processes. There are good working relationships with parents and carers, and they in turn support the school well in the overall provision for their

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children. The home-school books are successfully used to support these links.

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	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

When children start school their knowledge and skills are usually just below the levels expected nationally, especially in relation to communication, language and literacy, although because of the small numbers present they vary from year to year. Through their time in the Early Years Foundation Stage the children achieve well, and by the end attainment is typically broadly average, although it is occasionally higher. The children are very happy in school and the nursery-aged children have settled in well and relate well to their older classmates. The staff work hard to create a friendly and caring learning environment, and the children also benefit from the good links that are established with parents and carers. Teaching is good and adults provide the children with a good balance of teacher-led activities and chances for them to choose for themselves, and they take every opportunity to help them develop their various skills. For their part the children’s behaviour is good, and they are generally keen to do well with their work. Occasionally, a small number of children lack concentration, wandering from one activity to another, and this slows their learning. However, adults soon ensure they are back on track. The outdoor area is much improved since the time of the previous inspection and is now always made available for the children to use. Staff know the children well, and the frequent observations and assessments of their progress result in tasks being suitably adapted to match their ability levels.

Good, well-informed leadership successfully ensures good provision for the children. Staff members complement each other well in helping them to make good progress. Great care is taken to ensure that all children are equally involved and safety and

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safeguarding are given appropriate priority.

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

There was a high response to the questionnaire sent to parents and carers seeking their views about the school. The very large majority of them are positive about everything the school provides, such as in relation to their children’s learning and the levels of care provided. Comments such as, ‘The children are happy and they learn and achieve well’ and ‘Any issues are always dealt with quickly by members of staff’ confirm their views. A few parents expressed some concern about whether the work being provided for their children was challenging enough to meet their needs. However, in the lessons observed during the inspection the teachers always planned carefully for the different ages and abilities in their classes.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at High Bickington Church of England 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 40 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 47 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	28	70	11	28	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	22	55	17	43	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	23	58	13	32	2	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	23	58	12	30	2	5	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	25	63	12	30	2	5	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	17	43	20	50	2	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	19	48	17	43	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)	19	48	12	30	3	8	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	20	50	13	32	4	10	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	20	50	12	30	2	5	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	20	50	11	28	3	8	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	20	50	13	32	3	8	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	27	68	10	25	1	2	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 all 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 are for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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 pupils' 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.



21 September 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of High Bickington CE Primary School, UMBERLEIGH EX37 9AY

Thank you for making me so welcome when I came to visit your school. I enjoyed coming into your lessons and into your assembly. It was a pleasure being with you and talking to you. Thank you also for filling in the forms on your views of the school; it was most helpful. One of you told me, 'My teacher is my friend', which was good to know. I am writing to tell you what I found out about the school, what I think is good, and what I think could be made better. The headteacher and other staff know what they need to do to make these improvements. Overall, you are in a good school, where you are making good progress with your work.

These things are some of the strengths of the school.

- Teaching is good and teachers provide you with lessons and other activities which you enjoy.
- Your behaviour and your attitudes to your work are good.
- You have a good understanding about eating healthily and taking plenty of exercise.
- The staff know you well and take good care of you. As a result you feel safe.
- Your parents and carers are very pleased with the school.

These are things the school has been asked to improve. I would like your teachers to:

- help you to improve your skills in writing, by ensuring that your targets and marking show you how to make your work even better, and also giving you more chances to practise your writing skills in subjects other than English.
- give you greater opportunities to become more aware of people from communities and cultures different from your own.

You can help too, for example by making sure you know your writing targets.

I wish you all well for the future.

Yours sincerely
Martin James
Lead inspector

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