

Exwick Heights Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	134172
Local Authority	Devon
Inspection number	381627
Inspection dates	22–23 November 2011
Reporting inspector	Paul Garvey

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	327
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dr Laurie Burbridge
Headteacher	Lorraine Dunn
Date of previous school inspection	5–6 July 2007
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Age group	3-11
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They saw teaching and learning in 20 lessons, taught by 13 teachers. A number of shorter visits were made to classrooms to look at pupils' work. The inspectors held meetings with senior leaders, groups of pupils, staff, other adults and the Chair of the Governing Body. They observed the school's work, and looked at pupils' books and tracking data showing pupils' attainment and the progress they are making. They also looked at a wide variety of documentation including teachers' planning, the school improvement plan and safeguarding documentation. They also considered 107 responses to the questionnaire received from parents and carers as well as those from pupils and from staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Whether progress is rapid enough across the school.
- Whether the school's provision is sufficiently strong to support high-quality outcomes.
- Whether leadership and management are strong enough at all levels and thus whether leadership and management have sufficient capacity for further improvement.
- Whether the school gives enough priority to developing pupils' awareness of religious, cultural and socio-economic differences between people in localities away from the local area.

Information about the school

Exwick Heights Primary School is larger than the average primary school. The school moved into new premises in January 2008, following two and a half years on a split site, and a new deputy headteacher was appointed in September 2008. There are a Nursery and two Reception classes, four classes in Key Stage 1 and six classes in Key Stage 2, four of which are of mixed ages. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is lower than the national average. The proportion of children from minority ethnic backgrounds is low, as is the percentage who speak English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs is above average and the number of pupils supported by a statement of special educational needs and/or disabilities is average. The school holds a number of nationally recognised awards including Activemark and Healthy Schools.

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

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

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

This is an outstanding school. It is a highly inclusive and extremely caring learning community in which all groups of pupils are able to thrive. Led by a very well-respected headteacher, leaders and managers at all levels, including the governing body, have driven standards higher. All leaders know the school very well and there is a relentless focus on excellence. Self-evaluation is thorough and accurate, and this has allowed the school to improve markedly in a wide range of areas since the previous inspection. An example of this is in the transformation of the Early Years Foundation Stage into the cohesive and outstanding unit it now is. This provides a launch pad for academic improvement. Attainment is above average and often high, reflecting outstanding achievement. Thus, the capacity for further improvement is outstanding.

Teaching, curriculum and care, guidance and support have all been developed to excellent levels and this has been crucial to the school improving pupils' attainment. In the best lessons, learning is extremely rapid. When the pace occasionally drops, it is due to teachers leading their pupils' learning too much. In these lessons, pupils do not benefit sufficiently from opportunities for independence and access to varied sources of information to contribute to their own learning. Overall, this excellent provision has led to outstanding outcomes for students.

At all levels, staff present excellent role models, being very willing to learn themselves through well-organised professional development. This is then reflected in excellent pupil attitudes to learning. Behaviour, both in class and around school, is outstanding. Even very young pupils exhibit friendliness and helpfulness towards each other, as a result of the care they receive from adults and the example they set. As a consequence, pupils enjoy school very much and attend extremely well. Indeed, two parents and carers said that their young children did not like the weekends as much as weekdays because there is no school! Pupils lead very healthy lifestyles and say that they feel extremely safe. They are willing to take on many different roles in school and this extends to their excellent contribution to the school and local community.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By the next inspection, raise attainment to be consistently high by;
 - giving a greater degree of independence to pupils to enable them to contribute more to their own learning

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Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

From often low bases, especially in literacy and numeracy, all groups of pupils make outstanding progress in their time at the school. In recent years, pupils’ attainment has risen to above average and, in some years, to high levels. Some unevenness between pupils’ attainment in mathematics and English has been eliminated in the current cohort, by close monitoring of pupils’ progress. This has allowed carefully targeted, very effective support to be given to any pupils that fall behind. Assiduous and caring work by all adults to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those whose circumstances may make them vulnerable, means that they progress outstandingly well.

Pupils’ enjoyment of their learning is evident in all areas and this helps them to achieve exceptionally well. In Nursery and Reception classes, parents and carers have the opportunity to bring in their children before the school’s normal start time, and in all three classes, children settle immediately, playing and learning happily with their friends. Pupils told inspectors they feel very safe and that any instances of poor behaviour, or bullying, are quickly and effectively addressed. Pupils themselves take on responsibility for behaviour management. For example, class councils have a role in deciding whether a pupil should win back their ‘red badge’ for good behaviour, after working hard to overcome a previous behaviour difficulty. The school has achieved both the Healthy Schools award and the Activemark. These reflect the excellent knowledge that the pupils have to keep themselves healthy and the pupils regularly win sporting awards where they show the local community how well they have adopted healthy lifestyles.

The pupils’ spiritual awareness is promoted by excellent display work and through a varied curriculum, enhanced by regular visits from a governor who is also a reverend minister. Awareness of cultures beyond the pupils’ immediate area is effected by a number of school links and some excellent cross-curricular topic work. The high levels of enjoyment of pupils at Exwick Heights was very well exemplified by pupils in a mixed-Year 3/4 class spontaneously and happily singing along to a background song while changing for physical education.

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

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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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	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Pupils receive very high levels of care, guidance and support from all adults. This extends across the school. Pre-school pupils attended and enjoyed a taster afternoon in Nursery, playing with present Nursery children, which readied them for when they would soon join the school. In Year 6, pupils made excellent progress during high-quality, individual and group support from parents and carers who are volunteers. These exceptional levels of care are warmly appreciated by parents and carers, who feel welcome in the school and say how well the school cares for their children. One comment from a parental questionnaire was typical of others in saying, 'My child thoroughly enjoys coming to school. Without the teachers and teaching assistants, my son would not be where he is today.' Excellent arrangements for pupils to move between years are such that pupils confidently transfer from the Early Years Foundation Stage into main school. Year 6 pupils, though not wishing to leave, were already beginning to feel confident about moving to their secondary school. High-quality support for families, as well as for the pupils in school, is a priority. Together with the school's outstanding work in partnership with a range of outside agencies, this allows them to encourage pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable into school on a regular basis.

The majority of teaching observed by inspectors was outstanding and all teaching was at least good. Outstanding relationships between pupils and adults are at the core of this excellent practice. This allows pupils to be safe and confident in their learning and thus to make outstanding progress. Excellent planning and assessment leads to all pupils being very well supported. Individual target setting allows an accurate determination of each individual's learning path. The pupils enjoy having time to reflect and discuss with their friends, in order to improve their understanding. The reason why pupils' attainment is not yet consistently high is due to pupils sometimes having to rely too heavily on input from the teacher. Thus, they are not always enabled to contribute fully to their own learning. Where teaching was outstanding, pupils had a greater degree of independence. This was illustrated very well in a Year 6 lesson where pupils of all abilities displayed mature social skills when debating how a donation should be used at a Christmas party. They showed that their moral education was being served extremely well; they understood people's

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right to speak and the mechanics of debate. The teacher was used as a reference facility and only then through the debate chairperson.

The outstanding curriculum enables pupils of all abilities to enjoy their learning and thus to succeed. Planning is rigorous and caters for individual needs by providing a broad experience for the pupils, through particular provision and cross-curricular topic work. The colourful and inspiring artwork on displays around the school indicates that the school caters well for gifted and talented artists. Topic work is planned on a two-year rolling programme and the teaching of this is closely monitored by experienced and skilled subject leaders. Enjoyment of one cross-curricular topic was seen in the books of Year 4 pupils, in which pupils proudly showed inspectors their excellent writing skills and the depth of their research. The pupils were keen to point out the displays of the masks and pyramids they had constructed. As a result, they could talk eloquently about the importance of the Rosetta Stone, the excavation of the tombs and techniques for mummification in Ancient Egypt. A range of extra-curricular activities engages pupils and adds to their experiences. A well-attended recorder club saw pupils keen to show off the skills they had learned and practised at home. Information and communication technology is very well used to enhance learning. In a class of pupils from Years 5 and 6, the teacher modelled handwriting using the interactive whiteboard, and the use of this technology was seen to have a marked positive influence on the quality of learning.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders and managers are outstanding at all levels and this has resulted in the school's overall effectiveness being outstanding. The headteacher, her leadership team and all staff are passionate about learning and have driven improvement by successfully working towards the clear objective of raising attainment. This work has been very well supported by a governing body which challenges the school robustly when necessary. Under an able and knowledgeable chair, it has helped to guide the school carefully along its path of continuing improvement. Robust monitoring of teaching and learning, by leaders and managers, has led to a marked rise in the quality of teaching. Assessment has improved in parallel, in order to strengthen the school's determination to focus on individual needs. Assessment systems are well understood by all, leading to pupils knowing their challenging targets and what they need to do to achieve them. In consequence, all groups of pupils have equal

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opportunities to achieve outstandingly well and no groups feel they are discriminated against.

The relationship with parents and carers is excellent. Family learning sessions are well attended, and home visits by the Early Years Foundation Stage staff help families to be confident that their child will be happy at school. Coffee mornings, supported by a translator, help to break down potential barriers for the parents and carers of pupils whose first language is not English. Their children are very well integrated into school life. Differences between cultures are celebrated and, together with good links to schools in the United Kingdom, North American Indian Reserves, and France, this allows pupils to learn about other cultures in an outstanding way. The school is an extremely cohesive community and there are excellent links with the immediate community. Procedures for safeguarding pupils are exceptionally good. Staff are very well trained, child protection procedures are exemplary, security is tight and the school hosts termly safeguarding meetings with other schools. This is one example of the excellent partnerships which the school has developed. Effective links with secondary schools enhance learning, especially with sporting opportunities. The school also hosts multi-agency support meetings, and its work with a wide range of partners, especially with the local police, helps to keep pupils very safe and make its partnership work outstanding.

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	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

The Reception and Nursery classes both have easy access to a stimulating outdoor environment which matches the high quality of the indoor learning environment. Both have a rich range of play areas and the excellent resources on offer is stimulating to young minds in every area of learning. Children move confidently and

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regularly between Nursery and Reception classrooms, and thus movement from Nursery to their next stage of learning is seamless. The care, guidance and support that all adults invest in them allows them to feel very safe, so that they happily leave their parents and carers as they arrive and are already engaged in activities by the time they leave. All parents and carers that spoke to inspectors during the inspection were extremely pleased with the provision on offer and with their child’s progress. Parents and carers are welcomed into the school’s ‘Foundation Stage Unit’. These excellent relationships between school and home are a cornerstone of the progress made in Early Years Foundation Stage in raising attainment.

Teaching in both Nursery and in Reception is excellent. In Nursery, as a result of excellent planning and carefully designed individual learning, very young children were observed excitedly searching for pictures of sheep. These had been carefully placed to encourage free movement between indoors and outside. The good counting skills the children exhibited, via a tally chart on their clipboards, showed they were making rapid progress. Other children made sparkly stars to consolidate learning about the nativity story and to further physical skills. In Reception, excellent progress with learning the sounds that letters make was effected by using talk partners to check each other’s recognition of letter sounds before they were checked by adults. The social skills demonstrated by the children during this paired work were exemplary.

Children make outstanding progress in the well-led Nursery. This is now fully integrated into the school’s ‘Foundation Stage Unit’ and is providing a boost to early numeracy and literacy skills. This rapid progress continues through Reception. Children now join Year 1 with broadly average attainment, whereas in the past it has been lower, especially in communication, language and literacy skills, and in calculation skills. The Early Years Foundation Stage is extremely well led by an excellent practitioner, who is well supported by a very capable team. The recording and assessment systems are meticulous and accurate, allowing staff to precisely target individual needs. Therefore, they are able to plan the next steps in the children’s learning extremely well.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

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Views of parents and carers

One of the comments from parents and carers that 'my child is very happy and settled at the school' sums up the feelings of many. Of the parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire, all agreed that their child enjoyed school. Almost all parents and carers thought the school kept their children safe, that they were happy at the school, that leaders and managers worked well, and that the school keeps parents and carers well informed. Most agree, or strongly agree, with all the other statements in the questionnaire, though a few did not. During the inspection, inspectors carefully explored the comments of parents and carers who expressed concerns, especially about the school not taking account of their suggestions as well as it could. Overall, they found that the school had developed effective means to allow parents to contribute well to decision making in the school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Exwick Heights 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 inspection team received 107 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 329 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	88	82	19	18	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	83	78	22	21	2	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	68	64	36	34	1	1	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	72	67	32	30	0	0	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	80	75	24	22	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	65	61	36	34	5	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	65	61	39	36	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)	71	66	30	28	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	72	67	31	29	3	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	69	64	33	31	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	59	55	37	35	5	5	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	82	77	23	21	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	85	79	21	20	1	1	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.



24 November 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Exwick Heights Primary School, Exwick, Exeter, EX4 2BG

Thank you for making us so welcome when we inspected your school recently. We thoroughly enjoyed the time we spent talking to you, visiting your lessons, looking at your work and seeing all the exciting things you do. It was a privilege to visit you all and the things you told us helped me greatly in writing this report.

We found that your school is outstanding and is very well led. It is a place where you are extremely well looked after and taught, and this means that your progress is excellent. Your lessons are exciting and this is helped by your interesting curriculum, which you use to good effect to extend your learning. You take on lots of responsibilities around school and you take pride in carrying out these roles. For example, you make important decisions about behaviour on your effective school council. This all helps you to enjoy school and your attendance is high. You all get on well together and with all the adults around you, and your behaviour and social skills are excellent. You eat healthily and take part in a range of activities which help to keep you healthy. You say you are safe in school and all adults help to keep you safe. Links to other parts of the United Kingdom and to other countries help to give you an excellent understanding of life in other areas and other cultures.

However, even outstanding schools can improve and, to help you to learn even better, we have asked your teachers to give you a greater degree of independence in your learning to enable you to learn even more effectively.

We would like all of you to help in this by always asking what you need to do to improve your learning and continuing to work very hard in lessons.

Yours sincerely
Paul Garvey
Lead inspector

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