



High Bickington Church of England Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 113378
LEA Devon
Inspection number 279156
Inspection dates 29 November 2005 to 29 November 2005
Reporting inspector Laurie Lewin RISP

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	High Bickington
School category	Voluntary controlled		Umberleigh
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Devon EX37 9AY
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01769 560324
Number on roll	65	Fax number	01769 560324
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Peter Tucker
Date of previous inspection	22 May 2000	Headteacher	Mrs Jackie Rudman

Age group 4 to 11	Inspection dates 29 November 2005 - 29 November 2005	Inspection number 279156
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a small rural village school. The pupils are all White British and come from the village and surrounding area. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is low, but is above average for pupils with statements of learning difficulties. Although it varies a lot each year, the attainment of children starting school is generally in line with expectations for this age group.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This a good school with some outstanding features. Strong leadership and management ensure that pupils make good progress and achieve well above average standards by the end of Year 6. The headteacher does an excellent job of creating a climate in which all members of the school community work together as a highly effective team.

Reception age group children achieve well because of good teaching. However, the range of curriculum activities for them is restricted because of the cramped accommodation. Throughout the school, teachers are good at designing work that precisely matches pupils' needs and moves their learning on at a good pace.

Excellent support and care for pupils ensures that their personal development is outstanding. The school operates as 'one big happy family' in which pupils feel secure and develop as confident learners. Staff work very well together and make full use of all resources to make lessons interesting.

Staff, governors and parents are all fully involved in evaluating how well the school is doing and have an accurate view of its performance. The school provides good value for money. It has improved at a good rate since it was last inspected, but the potential for further improvement is severely hampered by the limitations of the accommodation.

What the school should do to improve further

- continue to press for the provision of new accommodation to replace the current archaic and cramped conditions so that the school is able to offer a full range of opportunities more efficiently

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils make good progress and achieve well. They start school showing mainly average ability each year. They progress well and standards are above average by the start of Year 1 and again by the end of Year 2; they are well above average by the end of Year 6. As a result of the strong support they receive, pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities progress well. The school sets challenging performance targets for pupils, and results in the national tests show that it is successful in helping pupils achieve these.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. The exceptionally wide range of visitors invited to the school and the very effective ways in which the school promotes personal, social and health education result in pupils having a clear awareness of important issues such as the need to stay fit, healthy and safe and protect the environment. For

example, the school's involvement in helping to plant a local forest and its full involvement in promoting healthy eating mean that pupils have an in-depth understanding about important issues that will affect their future. Discussion with pupils over a very well cooked and healthy school lunch revealed that they know the importance of not eating too many sweets and sugary foods. Pupils know that their views are important and they play a full part, through initiatives such as the school council and regular class discussion opportunities, in helping the school to improve. Pupils show very positive attitudes to all aspects of school life and enjoy coming to school. Attendance last year was slightly below average, but this was mainly because of a surge in cases of ill health, including an outbreak of chicken pox.

The intensive efforts of pupils in assisting with local community projects and their wide involvement in charity fundraising give them a very good awareness of the value of contributing. Through this means and also through the very good skills they gain in subjects such as mathematics, they gain a high level of understanding of how to cope with the practicalities of everyday life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Pupils progress well because of good teaching throughout the school. Teachers are good at using assessment information to help plan lessons that cater precisely for the needs of all individuals.

Pupils say that their teachers work hard to make lessons fun and that staff give them lots of encouragement. This was confirmed in lessons seen, for example in one session where older pupils responded enthusiastically to a mathematics game played on the class interactive whiteboard. Pupils become confident learners because teachers are very good at getting individuals to speak out, participate or, as in the case of the above mathematics lesson, lead parts of the work. Teachers manage class activities well so that all individuals are given strong support. Teaching assistants play a key role here and work very well with pupils.

As a result of the strong support they receive, pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities progress well.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Through hard work and being very well organised, staff ensure that pupils in Years 1 to 6 have a rich and varied curriculum, despite the limitations of the cramped accommodation and lack of a school hall or nearby sports field. The wide range of visitors to the school, including specialist teachers, trips made and the good range of extra-curricular activities provide effective enhancement for pupils' learning. The school is very good at incorporating work that promotes pupils' understanding of how to stay healthy, fit and safe. The school makes very good use of links with other local

schools to boost areas such as sports which would otherwise be very difficult to provide. However, the travel and time consumed significantly eats into the school day and the school budget. The school lacks space to provide as fully as it would like for the Reception age group children. As a result, although good teaching helps children of this age group achieve well overall, their learning is not based as much on practical exploration and play as it could be.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school's arrangements for child protection and ensuring that the pupils are kept safe are very thorough. The school has lots of excellent methods of helping pupils learn to become responsible and mature. For example, the well established school council and the regular 'family group' discussions ensure that pupils have lots of chances to express their ideas and views. The school operates on the principle of being 'one big happy family'. This means that staff know pupils very well and are quick to react to their needs. Strong relationships exist throughout the school so that all pupils feel secure. Younger children, for example, say they feel safe because they know older children will look after them.

The outstanding provision is summed up well by the older pupils who told inspectors ... 'the best thing about our school is that it is a really friendly place where everyone helps each other'.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The school has excellent leadership and management that ensures pupils achieve well and receive a good education. The headteacher, in particular, does an outstanding job of getting the very best out of the staff and all of those who work with the school. She creates a working atmosphere in which everyone works together as a strong and highly effective team. She ensures that there is a clear vision for the school's educational direction. The school works very closely with the parents, the community and partner organisations to enhance its provision.

A very strong accolade for the headteacher and all staff is the way they make sure that the pupils do not miss out despite the severe limitations imposed by the cramped buildings and lack of facilities. The staff remain enthusiastic and positive despite the difficulties caused by their working conditions, such as the lack of a staff room or area for them to carry out lesson preparation. All members of the school community are fully involved in the high quality processes of evaluating how well the school is doing and setting in place plans for future development. They do so very effectively. Governors are fully involved in all aspects of managing the school. They have a clear view of how well it is doing, through their regular visits and briefings from the staff. The school is improving at a good rate. However, despite the very strong commitment and involvement of all of those associated with it, its capacity to improve further is severely hampered by the restrictions of the accommodation.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	1	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

High Bickington Church of England Primary School High Bickington Umberleigh North Devon
EX37 9AY

30 November 2005

Dear Children

I am writing to let you know how much we enjoyed coming to visit your school. Thank you for making us so welcome and helping us during the school inspection. We especially enjoyed hearing about the activities you said you enjoyed. We were impressed by the things we saw and here are some of them:

- You work very hard in lessons and show a lot of interest in the work.
- You reach high standards in English, mathematics and science by the time you are in Year 6.
- Your school feels like 'one big happy family'. Everybody is very friendly and polite and your behaviour is good.
- You like your teachers and you told us that they work really hard to make lessons as much fun as possible. We also think the teachers do a good job.
- You really appreciate all of the extra interesting activities that the school provides for you.
- We think the school does an excellent job of taking care of you.
- We were very impressed to see how knowledgeable you are about the need to eat healthy foods and stay fit.
- We think that your headteacher does an excellent job of organising the school, helping everybody to work together and helping you all to become so successful.

To make things even better in the future, we think the school should keep pushing as hard as possible to get a better building and better facilities for the children of High Bickington.

Thank you again for being so helpful and friendly when we came to see you.

Yours sincerely

Laurie Lewin Lead Inspector

P.S. You are really lucky to have such good lunches cooked for you!