

Horwood and Newton Tracey Community Primary School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 113154 |
| Local Authority | Devon |
| Inspection number | 289527 |
| Inspection date | 12 June 2007 |
| Reporting inspector | Laurie Lewin |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 3–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School | 74 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Steven Clarke |
| Headteacher | Ian Dickerson |
| Date of previous school inspection | 28 January 2002 |
| School address | Lovacott Barnstaple EX31 3PU |
| Telephone number | 01271 858373 |
| Fax number | 01271 858373 |

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a small school. Nearly all the pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is slightly below the national average. The proportion of pupils joining or leaving the school other than at the usual times is higher than that found in most other schools. When they start school in the Nursery, children mainly show attainment that is lower than that expected for their age, especially in communication, language and literacy.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The school provides a good quality education for its pupils. Good leadership and management ensure that pupils achieve well. High quality pastoral care ensures that pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding. Good quality provision for Nursery and Reception children helps them get off to a good start and progress well. Most of them attain the expected levels in all areas of learning by the time they start Year 1. As a result of good teaching, pupils continue to achieve well as they move through the school. By the time pupils reach the end of Year 6, they attain above average standards. However, standards in writing are weaker than in other areas. Over the past year, teachers have worked successfully to help pupils improve their sentence construction and use of vocabulary in writing. However, pupils do not always apply the skills they have learned on a consistent basis across the range of their written work.

Parents have a high regard for the school and the work of the staff. In particular, they feel that their children greatly enjoy school. One parent summed up the views of many, saying: 'My children come home with a buzz of excitement about what they have been doing during the day'. Relationships between staff and pupils are very strong and pupils get on extremely well with each other. There is a supportive family atmosphere throughout the school so that all individuals feel completely safe and fully encouraged in all that they do. Pupils are very well motivated and enthusiastic. They enjoy their lessons because teachers plan very effectively to ensure work is interesting. Teaching assistants are well trained and well deployed. They provide valuable support that significantly enhances pupils' learning, especially for those individuals who have learning difficulties or disabilities. The good quality curriculum is enriched by a wide range of extra activities, trips and visitors coming in to work with pupils. However, the links between subjects are not sufficiently well developed to extend pupils' learning. For example, chances are sometimes missed to extend pupils' writing skills in subjects such as science and history.

Good care, guidance and support ensure that all pupils progress confidently. Behaviour throughout the school is excellent. The school has established excellent links with partner organisations, the local village and a school in Africa. These links result in pupils developing a high level of social awareness. The links also ensure that pupils have an excellent level of involvement in contributing and working with others to improve things in the immediate environment and wider world.

The headteacher is very successful in creating good teamwork that ensures staff and governors work closely together. The governors do an excellent job. They have wide-ranging expertise, which they use skilfully to support the headteacher and staff. The school accurately evaluates its own performance. It has developed at a good pace in recent years, especially with improving the building and facilities, and has a good capacity to sustain improvement in the future.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve pupils' writing by ensuring they apply the skills they are taught in the different types of writing that they do.
- Develop better links between subjects to extend opportunities for pupils to apply their skills.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

All pupils, including those with learning difficulties or disabilities, achieve well throughout the school. The wide range of practical experiences children have in the Nursery and Reception ensures that they make good progress in all of the areas of learning. In Years 1 and 2, pupils continue to progress well and the current cohort in Year 2 is on course to attain slightly above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of the year. Pupils continue to do well in Years 3 to 6 and current work shows they reach above average standards in most areas. However, written work remains a relative weakness. Pupils' skills in sentence construction and their use of descriptive vocabulary have improved. However, the skills pupils have acquired are not yet embedded in their work and used on a consistent basis. The school's national test results in recent years have not done justice to the good achievement evident. This is due to very small cohorts being tested, the influx of pupils into the school in Years 3 to 6 and the underperformance of a few individuals with specific short-term social and emotional problems.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

'The best thing about this school is that it is a really friendly place ... the staff always help you ... our teacher's jokes aren't always very good but he tries really hard to make the work fun ... we all get a chance to be involved in everything.' These views expressed by older pupils reflect their deep sense of enjoyment and involvement. There is a pleasantly relaxed, yet purposeful and enthusiastic, atmosphere apparent in all classrooms, with an excellent level of interaction between staff and pupils. Pupils are extremely knowledgeable about the need to stay healthy and fit and readily discuss the potential benefits of being vegetarian or the problems of additives in foods. One Year 6 pupil said, for example, 'the work we have done in school now makes me think twice before grabbing an extra packet of crisps at home!' The 'enterprise schemes' that pupils get involved in and the good quality 'real life' problem-solving tasks in mathematics give them excellent skills to help them progress in the future. Links with a school in Gambia and an ongoing project developing the school's allotment in parallel with one in the Gambian school provide the pupils with excellent insights into a different way of life. Pupils' attendance is good and has improved recently as a result of the school's efforts.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Pupils progress well throughout the school because of good teaching. The Nursery teaching is extremely well organised to help all children settle quickly. Nursery and Reception children's needs are very quickly identified and supported. For example, many who start school showing speech difficulties are given specialist speech therapy support. Staff are especially skilled in helping children move ahead in this area. Throughout the school, staff use the strong relationships they have with pupils to encourage all individuals to do their best. Pupils across the school respond well because staff have high expectations for their behaviour and achievement. Teachers have good subject knowledge and the ability to explain things very clearly and succinctly so that all pupils know exactly what to do. Lesson objectives are clear,

but these do not always take sufficient account of the different groups of learners in the class. This means that occasionally, work set does not extend pupils as much as it could do.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Pupils are provided with a broad range of interesting experiences during the school day. Staff go to much trouble to plan projects and activities that encourage pupils to develop an interest in learning. The school makes excellent use of its partnerships with other organisations and the visitors coming in to the school to boost pupils' learning. For example, the visit from the headteacher of the school they are linked with in Gambia, has done much to inspire, interest and motivate the pupils. The curriculum is especially well focused on promoting pupils' personal development to a high degree, with a very strong emphasis on boosting understanding of the need to stay fit and healthy. The school offers a very wide range of extra-curricular activities. Links between different subjects are not sufficiently developed. This means that chances are sometimes missed to link the skills being learned in one subject with work being carried out in another and thereby extend pupils' understanding further.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school is vigilant in ensuring pupils' safety. All procedures, including those to ensure child protection, are fully in place. Staff know all individuals really well, cater for their needs sensitively and provide high quality care and support. Staff are very good at helping new pupils who have transferred to the school to settle in quickly. Pupils have absolutely no qualms about seeking adult assistance if a problem occurs. The excellent relationships established throughout the school ensure that pupils feel fully encouraged. The teaching assistants are a valuable asset to the school. They work extremely well with the teachers in directing their support towards the pupils who most need it at different times. Good levels of ongoing interaction and discussion between staff and pupils ensure that pupils receive a lot of good clear guidance. However, although some good marking is seen in pupils' books, this is not consistently the case. Occasionally, pupils are not given sufficient advice through the marking about how they can improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Good leadership and management have helped the school move forward at a good pace in recent years. Effective actions have been taken to help standards and achievement improve. A clear vision is established to show where the school is going. The headteacher has done a good job with involving all members of the school community in evaluating how well the school is performing. As a result, there is good clarity about what is working well and what needs improving. A philosophy of 'constant and never-ending improvement' is very much built in to the way in which the leadership and management of the school operates. The governors play an excellent role in this respect, questioning, monitoring and supporting extensively to help staff find ways of maintaining the momentum of improvement. The school development plan carefully lays out all intended improvements. However, the school's progress is slightly hampered by the lack of clear prioritisation. Some aspects of the school's development plan lacked detail in respect of intended actions.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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| Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate | School Overall |
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Overall effectiveness

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

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

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

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

Annex A

Leadership and management

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| How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners? | 2 |
| How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education | 2 |
| How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets | 2 |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can | 2 |
| How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money | 2 |
| The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities | 1 |
| Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements? | Yes |
| Does this school require special measures? | No |
| Does this school require a notice to improve? | No |

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

13 June 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Horwood and Newton Tracey Community Primary School, Barnstaple, Devon EX31 3PU

- I am writing to let you know how much I enjoyed coming to visit your school. Thank you for making me so welcome and helping me during the school's inspection. I enjoyed talking to many of you and particularly appreciated the very helpful discussion with some of you in Year 6. What a bunch of chatterboxes! The school is doing a good job. In particular, the staff are especially good at making sure you enjoy your time in school. Here are some other things I noticed:
- as a result of the good work of your teachers and the teaching assistants, you achieve well and you reach above average levels by the end of Year 6
- your behaviour is excellent; you work with lots of enthusiasm in lessons and get on really well with staff
- I was very impressed by how much those of you I spoke to know about the need to keep yourselves fit and healthy
- you have a good curriculum and a very good range of extra activities
- the school does a good job of taking care of you so that you always feel safe
- your school is well led and managed so that it keeps improving and your headteacher and staff work really well together.

What the school needs to do to keep it improving:

- improve your writing even more – make sure you use what you have learned about the importance of using interesting words and good sentences in all your written work
- make clear links between subjects to help you practise and extend your skills in lots of different ways.

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

Laurie Lewin Lead Inspector