

Furzeham Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113190
Local Authority	Torbay
Inspection number	311143
Inspection date	18 June 2008
Reporting inspector	David Edwards HMI

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 on roll	
School	280
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sue Milner
Headteacher	Andrew Kinder
Date of previous school inspection	18 April 2005
School address	Higher Furzeham Road Brixham TQ5 8BL
Telephone number	01803 853347
Fax number	01803 853347

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors, who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following two issues: the progress the school has made in addressing the areas for development identified in the previous report of 2005, and how effectively the leadership and management of the school are ensuring continuity and a focus on raising standards of achievement.

Evidence was collected from lesson observations, interviews with the headteacher and chair of governors, and discussions with pupils and teaching staff. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but no evidence was found to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Furzeham Primary School is larger than the average primary school, and includes a nursery where children attend part time. Most pupils are of White British heritage and very few are learning English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average overall, but the percentage with a statement of special educational needs is significantly above average. The school has achieved awards for Active Schools, Healthy Schools and Information Communication and Technology.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

'I cannot stress enough what a positive experience my daughter has had with her primary education at Furzeham School.' This view from a parent sums up the school beautifully. Furzeham is indeed a good school and all staff and governors are working hard to provide a well balanced and enjoyable education for the children. As a result pupils make good progress in their learning and achieve above average standards. Central to the effectiveness of this school are the clear educational direction provided by the headteacher and the commitment by the governing body to ensure that despite recent and significant changes to the physical structure of the school, along with changes in staffing, pupils' progress and standards of achievement remain high. It is no surprise, therefore, to find that the school is held in high regard within the local community and enjoys the overwhelming support of parents. 'I cannot praise the staff and headteacher enough for their positive help and attitude,' wrote another parent.

Effective steps have been taken since the last inspection to strengthen the Early Years provision so that children quickly settle into school and begin to make good progress in their learning. The assessment of pupils' work has also improved so that teachers are better able to track progress and plan lessons that effectively meet the needs of all learners. In addition, regular reviews of pupils' progress enable teachers and support staff to implement specific programmes of intervention so that pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, as well as more able groups or individuals, make good progress. However, the school does not analyse pupils' progress against national benchmarks. As a result, pupils' targets, although based on detailed information gathered from tracking their individual progress, are not yet sufficiently challenging to help the school reach even higher standards. Pupils make good progress in Years 1 and 2 and many achieve standards that are above national expectations in reading, writing and mathematics. By the time pupils leave school at the end of Key Stage 2, standards are above average in mathematics and science and particularly high in English, where more able pupils achieve especially well.

Teaching throughout the school is good and some lessons observed were outstanding. This is because teachers possess good subject knowledge, are skilled questioners and have high expectations of themselves and their pupils. The school's self-evaluation correctly identified the relative weakness in science attainment in Key Stage 2 in recent years and much has been done to integrate science into the curriculum, making it more practical and enjoyable for pupils. For example, in a science lesson the teacher's good subject knowledge and careful questioning of pupils enabled them to demonstrate a good understanding of how organisms adapt to the environment in which they live.

The curriculum is now outstanding. The displays around the school are testimony to the high standards of creativity shown by pupils and their obvious enjoyment of learning. Teachers have worked extremely hard to make learning relevant and have used the local and wider environments most effectively to achieve this high standard. Furthermore, teachers carefully plan for mixed age classes so that pupils of all abilities are provided with work that is well matched to their needs. Pupils' work is marked effectively, guiding them to understand their next steps in learning, and pupils appreciate this and talk confidently of how targets help them improve further. Support staff also play a valuable role in effectively supporting the curriculum and extending pupils' learning. The spiritual, social, moral and cultural development of pupils is good and promoted successfully through the curriculum, assemblies and teachers' high expectations of behaviour. Relationships between pupils and staff are good and the behaviour

of pupils is outstanding, shown by their considerate attitudes to one another. They say that bullying is rare and is dealt with promptly. Consequently, pupils feel extremely safe and thoroughly enjoy their time at school. One pupil said, when asked about his views of the school, 'I love it here, and I have lots of friends.' Pupils have a very well developed understanding of how to eat healthily and how to stay safe. The school takes seriously its role in safeguarding pupils and all necessary precautions are in place to ensure a safe and secure learning environment. Many pupils actively participate in the extra-curricular activities on offer after school, making a good contribution to school life and to the wider community. The well established school council is actively involved in decision making processes within the school. Most recently, for example, they were involved in the appointment process for the new headteacher. The outstanding personal qualities and good basic skills shown by the majority of pupils mean that they are very well prepared for transfer to secondary school and later life.

Attendance remains satisfactory. The school does all it can to ensure pupils attend regularly and arrive on time, yet despite its best efforts to improve attendance it has not yet been able to secure the support of all parents to ensure that their children attend more regularly.

The school's leadership and management remain effective and indeed resilient to the significant challenges faced by the school recently through changes in the senior leadership team and the disruptions caused by major building works. The headteacher has worked determinedly, with the support of his staff, to maintain the vibrant learning culture that is so evident within the school. This has become increasingly recognised by parents as a valuable and necessary resource for the wider community. He has also ensured the school has maintained the caring and open attitudes that are so appreciated by pupils and parents. The forward thinking of the governors, borne out in the recent appointment of a new headteacher, is indicative of the school's clear and accurate awareness of its strengths and areas for improvement, and means that it is well placed for the future.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision for the Foundation Stage is effective. On entry to the school, children settle quickly to learning and make good progress. This is because teachers and support staff are quick to identify the learning needs of individual children. They record accurately and in detail the progress that the children make so that by the time they enter Key Stage 1 standards are above average in most areas of learning. Teachers plan and work effectively together with support staff to provide exciting and creative learning opportunities. The recently remodelled Foundation Stage is safe, secure and carefully organised to promote learning and independence. For example, a 'pirates' theme for the day ensured all children were engaged in a wide variety of stimulating activities that developed their language, writing and personal skills most effectively. The creative redesign of the outdoor play space also effectively extends learning opportunities for younger children and especially boys.

What the school should do to improve further

- Use all available data on pupils' academic progress to set more demanding targets and so maximise their achievement.
- Work with parents and the wider community to improve attendance.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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

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

Achievement and standards

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

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

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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	2
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

19 June 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Furzeham Primary School, Brixham TQ5 8BL

I am writing to say thank you all for being so welcoming and friendly when I came to inspect your school recently. I really enjoyed meeting with you in lessons and out in the playground. I particularly enjoyed the assembly from class 6 and looking at all the great displays and art work around the school that you have been studying. All this evidence helped me to decide that yours is a good school. What is more, I think your behaviour in and around school is outstanding. Well done! If you continue to maintain such positive attitudes to learning you will achieve well in life.

Here are some of the things that I particularly liked about your school. When you start school in the Foundation Stage, you settle really well and make good progress in your learning. You understand about how to keep safe and lead healthy lifestyles. You are caring to one another and think it is important to help others. Your teachers and other adults work very hard to ensure your lessons are interesting and help you to achieve good standards. You have many fantastic opportunities to learn in interesting ways because of the outstanding curriculum the teachers have provided for you.

- I have asked your headteacher and governors to think about ways they could make Furzeham Primary School even better for you:
- I would like him and the teachers to find ways to make better use of your marked work to set harder targets so that as many of you as possible are encouraged to reach even higher standards.
- Some of you do not attend regularly enough to benefit from all the good things that are on offer at school. I would like your parents to ensure that attendance at school is a top priority.

I have every confidence that you will all continue to do your best and work together with your teachers to keep Furzeham Primary School a good school. Make the most of all the opportunities your teachers offer you and you will go on to achieve very well in the future.

Best wishes for the future

Yours sincerely

David Edwards Her Majesty's Inspector