

# Burlescombe Church of England Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	113350
<b>Local Authority</b>	Devon
<b>Inspection number</b>	311225
<b>Inspection date</b>	12 March 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Rowena Onions

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4-11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	80
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Dennis Palmer
<b>Headteacher</b>	Susan Brewer
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	30 June 2003
<b>School address</b>	Burlescombe Tiverton EX16 7JH
<b>Telephone number</b>	01823 672521
<b>Fax number</b>	01823 672521

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

The school is much smaller than average and serves the village of Burlescombe and the surrounding district. Almost all pupils are of White British origin and all speak English as their first language. Few pupils have free school meals. An above average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities but no pupil has a statement of special educational need. Attainment on entry to the school varies from year to year but is broadly average. A significant number of pupils enter the school after Reception, with a considerable proportion entering into Years 5 and 6. A few of these pupils are of traveller background. The school has Eco School status.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Burlescombe Church of England Primary School is a good school. It also has some outstanding features. It is particularly successful in promoting pupils' personal development. The pupils are a delight. They are lively, confident and articulate. Strong personal, social and health education means they know how to keep themselves safe and well and are willing to take very positive action to ensure this. They are enthusiastic about school, particularly about the wide range of enrichment activities, including the visits they make to places of educational interest, making comments such as 'the visits make you want to learn'. Pupils become increasingly reflective about their learning. They understand the importance of knowing how to improve their work and older pupils describe the targets set for them by their teachers as important in 'helping you challenge yourself'. Teachers help them to know how to improve through very good quality marking.

Pupils make good progress. Children progress well in Reception and currently most are on track to meet the standards expected for this age child, with a good proportion set to exceed them. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 are also making good progress in English, mathematics and science. They are well taught. A good mix of the teaching of skills and opportunities to practise them helps pupils to achieve well. Activities, such as a topic to look at the impact of the local quarry on the environment, give pupils reasons for learning, for example how to write letters or a report after a visit. This helps ensure that they work hard in school and makes a significant contribution to ensuring their future economic well-being.

Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are currently making satisfactory progress in reading, writing and mathematics. These younger pupils, like the older ones, have an enthusiasm for learning which means that they try hard and want to learn. They have good relationships with their teachers and want to please them. Higher attaining pupils in Year 2 progress well in English and mathematics. They find work is challenging because they are taught with older pupils and have to think hard. For other ability groups there are some occasions when the curriculum is based too strongly on that for the younger pupils. When this happens, learning for the older pupils slows down.

The school provides outstanding levels of care. Each pupil is known and valued. The significant number of pupils who face the challenge of settling into a new school are supported very well. Although those who are only in the school a short time before they leave in Year 6 do not always succeed in attaining the expected Level 4, their progress is often very rapid. The governor who commented, 'We do the very best we can for the time that we have them,' summed up the importance placed on this by the school. Skilled support by teaching assistants enhances the work done in class enabling pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to make good progress.

The headteacher provides strong leadership and sets a very clear direction for the school. Staff and governors work together as a team to promote improvement and there are very strong and particularly effective links with, for example, other smaller schools that broaden the opportunities that can be provided. The success of actions, such as those to improve standards in writing and the quality of marking, shows that these actions are well judged. This demonstrates that the school has good capacity to improve further. Although subject leadership contributes to school improvement, subject leaders have not always had sufficient opportunity to monitor work in all classes to help them ensure that all pupils make equally good progress.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

The children in the Reception year, who are placed in a class with Years 1 and 2 pupils, are catered for well. They are provided with a good curriculum that enables them to learn to make choices, to become independent and to broaden their knowledge, as well as to gain early skills in communication, language and literacy and in mathematical development. These children are taught well and gain from the attention given to them by skilled teaching assistants. Good leadership of the provision by the headteacher ensures that the children's attainments are tracked and the work that is planned for them is appropriate to their changing needs.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that all pupils in Years 1 and 2 make good progress by ensuring that the curriculum for Year 2 pupils is always appropriate for their age.
- Extend the opportunities all leaders have to gain a clear understanding of the whole-school strengths and weaknesses in their areas of responsibility.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Because year groups are small, standards in each year group vary greatly. In 2007, standards were about average in Year 6, but this represented good progress when taking into account both the starting points of the pupils and the significant impact that pupils entering the school late in Key Stage 2 had on the overall results. Year 6 standards are set to rise this year, showing pupils have made good progress since an average performance at the end of Year 2. School improvement work has addressed a former weakness in writing and pupils now make as good progress in this area as they do in their reading and mathematics. Higher attaining pupils, those who entered the school recently, traveller pupils and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are all achieving well. Year 2 pupils are on track to attain just above average standards, which will represent satisfactory progress for a group who were similarly just above average when they entered Year 1. Higher attaining Year 2 pupils, however, have made good progress from their starting points.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 1

Because of high expectations and motivating schoolwork, pupils show outstanding standards of behaviour. They know the value of friendship and strive to make their school an extremely harmonious place. Initiatives like 'peer mediation', where pupils learn to help each other sort out difficulties, are very productive in helping them mature and learn to become good citizens. Pupils are keen to take on responsibility, both in classrooms and through the school council. Through such activities and through close links with church and village communities, pupils are developing an excellent understanding of how to contribute to community life. Pupils' excellent understanding of how to stay safe and healthy means that they want to expand the activities that help them, for example wanting to plan additional physical activities to add to the already wide range available. Pupils are very highly supportive of each other and know the need to be understanding of differences. They know it is important to know about cultural differences, agreeing with one pupil who linked this understanding with the absence of wars. Very good levels of skill in information and communication technology (ICT), along with very

relevant practical experiences during lessons, contribute to their excellent preparation for their future economic well-being.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching in the school is successful in motivating pupils to want to learn. Relationships are positive and this means that lessons are conducted in an atmosphere that moves learning on well. The skills of teaching assistants are also used very well to the particular benefit of lower attaining pupils. Teachers enable pupils to gain self-confidence and self-belief. Pupils are well managed and in one class gain greatly from the way many instructions are given in French. In Years 3 to 6, expectations are high and teachers are very clear about what they expect pupils to learn in each lesson. Pupils' strong personal development means they strive to live up to these expectations and this aids their progress. In Years 1 and 2, however, pupils are not always as clear about what learning is expected. When this is the case, their progress is not as rapid.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

There are many strong elements to the school curriculum. In particular, the way learning is organised into topics that are of interest and relevance to the pupils and the way visits, visitors and first-hand experiences are used to enhance learning. The way the curriculum is structured, particularly in Key Stage 2, ensures that pupils gain and develop good skills. These include the presentation of work using ICT and undertaking research, while also gaining skills and knowledge that are specific to each subject. Personal development is underpinned by strong systems to develop personal, social and health education. For example, pupils grow fruit and vegetables in the school garden, which links with aspects of healthy living. Whilst a freedom to choose from activities for pupils in Years 1 and 2 successfully eases the transition between work in Reception and Year 1, it is not always clear what older pupils are gaining from the activities they are undertaking.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 1**

Pupils' personal well-being is promoted strongly, not only by thorough health, safety and child protection procedures but also by the importance placed on pupils' personal development. The Christian ethos is maintained well through links with the church and the local community, meaning that pupils get a sense of 'belonging'. Strong partnerships with others beyond the school ensure that those with additional needs and difficulties are successfully supported. Pupils have every opportunity to get personal support where there is a need. Tracking of pupils' attainments is used to set challenging targets for their academic progress. Pupils and their parents are fully aware of these and pupils know how they can be used to help improve their work. Close relationships with an on-site nursery ensures a smooth entry into school.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

Burlescombe Church of England Primary School is a self-evaluating community in which pupils, staff and parents are encouraged to play a full part. Governance is good, with governors providing time, work, support and challenge to help sustain and improve the school. In the main, the school has an accurate picture of its strengths and weaknesses and takes prompt and successful action to improve. Work is regularly monitored and standards tracked, although subject leaders have a less clear picture of the quality of education and progress for the younger pupils than they do of those in Years 3 to 6. The school uses the information it has about pupils well in, for example, providing additional support for those who are attaining standards that are lower than those expected for their age. Parents' views of the school are largely positive. They are particularly pleased with the openness and approachability of the school. The school has good procedures to act upon any concerns they may have. Pupils contribute to the evaluation and improvement of the school, for example through being proactive in pushing forward a much-needed redecoration of the toilets.

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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?	1
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 <sup>1</sup> 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	1
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	2
The behaviour of learners	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?	1

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	2
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**

13 March 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Burlescombe Church of England Primary School, Burlescombe, EX16 7JH

We really enjoyed our day at your school and would like to thank you for your help and friendly conversations. I know you will be pleased to know that we think yours is a good school.

This is what we liked most about your school.

- There is a really good range of exciting and interesting activities provided for you by your teachers and helpers that help you enjoy your time in school.
- Most of you make good progress in your work, but a few younger ones could be doing even better.
- You know what you need to do to improve your work.
- You all learn to get on very well with each other.
- You know how to keep yourselves safe and well extremely well and are happy to make choices that help you to do this.
- Your school takes exceptionally good care of you all.
- Sometimes activities for Year 2 pupils are not helping them to learn as much as they could.

To make things even better, this is what we have asked your school to do now.

- Help the pupils in Key Stage 1 to make better progress by making sure all activities are really challenging.
- Give some teachers more time to get to know what is happening in other classes.

Once again, thank you. I know that you will all continue to try hard with your work and that you will carry on helping all the grown ups to make sure Burlescombe Church of England Primary School continues to be a happy, thriving place.

Best Wishes

Rowena Onions Lead inspector