

Holywell Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113380
Local Authority	Devon
Inspection number	311239
Inspection date	15 October 2007
Reporting inspector	George Logan

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	89
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mark Cooke
Headteacher	Graham Jones
Date of previous school inspection	13 January 2003
School address	Tawstock Barnstaple EX31 3HZ
Telephone number	01271 345908
Fax number	01271 326167

Age group	4-11
Inspection date	15 October 2007
Inspection number	311239

© Crown copyright 2007

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This small school serves the village of Tawstock and the immediate area. However, some pupils come from much further afield. Almost all pupils come from White British backgrounds. No pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well below the national average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory education, and has a number of strengths. Parents are highly supportive of the school and most comment upon it in glowing terms: 'My daughter loves coming to school – there is a fantastic family atmosphere.' They are justifiably positive about its many strengths as a community.

Overall effectiveness is satisfactory rather than good because, although standards are generally above average, pupils' achievement is not as consistent as it should be. The very small numbers give rise to considerable variations in performance from year to year. More often than not, children have skills in advance of those normally found when they enter school - considerably so for the current Reception. The broad trend in recent years has been of above average standards by the ends of Year 2 and Year 6. Achievement in the Foundation Stage (Reception class) is broadly satisfactory but inconsistent. Because planning is not modified sufficiently to recognise their needs, some children, especially those who are particularly able, do not make enough progress. Teaching sometimes lacks pace and challenge. Achievement picks up in Years 1 and 2 because of the dynamic teaching, high expectations and more effective use of assessment information. For the older pupils, achievement has been satisfactory over several years. However, the implementation and refinement of a robust tracking system now provides staff with a detailed overview of individual progress. This, supported by effective teaching and carefully targeted support, is leading to improved progress for pupils across Years 1 to 6. The few pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are identified accurately. Intervention is effective, enabling these pupils to achieve well.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher sustains a significant teaching commitment in order to support the four-class organisation. This limits his management time. His evaluation is satisfactory. Not all identified weaknesses are tackled with the same level of urgency so that improvement is sometimes slow to come through. However, there was a prompt response to weak performance in mathematics in 2006. This underpinned a significant improvement in both standards and achievement in 2007, with the school comfortably exceeding its targets. There has been satisfactory progress in developing the management skills of subject leaders and co-ordinators. The capacity for further improvement is satisfactory.

The curriculum is satisfactory, although outdoor provision is not planned for sufficiently in the Foundation Stage. Extra-curricular and enrichment elements are good, especially for a small school. While care, guidance and support are satisfactory overall, pastoral aspects are good. Academic guidance is less strong because the use of individual targets remains underdeveloped, particularly in mathematics. Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Their behaviour is exemplary, while the school's support for healthy lifestyles is good. Pupils achieve high levels of attendance.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Foundation Stage provision is broadly satisfactory and offers children a secure start to their education. Standards are generally in line with those expected nationally. There are effective links with pre-school settings and relationships between staff and pupils are good. However, there are areas for development. Children enter school with skills that vary considerably from year to year - broadly similar to those normally found in the last school year, but well above

those expected for current Reception children. Their progress also varies. Last year, children made at least satisfactory progress in the six areas of learning, with most children achieving, and a few exceeding, the expected goals, as a result of satisfactory teaching. Personal and social development, communication and language skills and physical development are usually the strongest elements. However, the current cohort, already very able, is making slower progress. Teachers' planning lacks flexibility and takes insufficient account of what children already know, so that lessons lack pace and challenge. There are too few opportunities for children to initiate activities, so the more able pupils make slower progress than they should. The outdoor curriculum is underdeveloped and the rich opportunities in the outdoor environment are not effectively used.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the use of assessment in the Foundation Stage to ensure that children are sufficiently challenged to make good progress.
- Improve the quality of outdoor learning in the Foundation Stage curriculum and ensure that children have more opportunities to initiate activities for themselves.
- Ensure that pupils are clear about the targets they need to achieve to further raise their standards in mathematics.

A small proportion of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. With such small cohorts, attainment on entry to Reception can vary significantly. More often than not, it is above the expected level. Children make broadly satisfactory progress in Reception, although progress is less brisk for able groups because planning does not take sufficient account of their starting points. On entry to Year 1 in most years, standards are similar to those expected. In Years 1 and 2 pupils benefit from good teaching and generally make good progress. Although broadly average in 2007, standards by the end of Year 2 are above average in most years. Standards at Year 6 have also been above average in recent years and progress through Years 3 to 6 has been at least satisfactory. The implementation of an effective tracking system, together with well targeted support and challenging teaching, is underpinning increasingly good achievement across the school. Improved provision for gifted and talented pupils and the strong performance of able pupils in Year 6 in 2007 ensured that the school's targets in English and mathematics were comfortably exceeded.

Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress, because their needs are identified accurately, support is effective and their progress is closely monitored.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are assured and confident. Attendance is excellent, reflecting pupils' positive attitudes and commitment to school. Behaviour is exemplary. Relationships are a significant strength. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Moral and social development are good. However, the school could do more to extend pupils' awareness of the diversity of cultures in contemporary Britain. Pupils work together well. They learn that it is important to

stay safe, be healthy and make a positive contribution to society. Pupils show a clear sense of community when they raise money for local and national charities. There is great pride in the local community and the local heritage. Pupils show commitment to the school council, recognising the opportunity 'to make our school a better place'. Pupils feel safe and say there is virtually no bullying. They support others through a 'buddy' system. Pupils show a good commitment to the healthy lifestyles agenda, with a high proportion of older pupils taking part in physical activities.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching is broadly satisfactory in the Foundation Stage. Elsewhere the quality of teaching is generally good, with some lessons outstanding. The close knowledge staff have of the pupils, together with increasingly sharp assessment information through tracking, ensures that work is matched carefully to pupils' needs. Most lessons have a brisk pace and provide good challenge for pupils. These factors are contributing to improving achievement. Relationships are good and behaviour is managed effectively. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are supported well by well prepared and effective teaching assistants and make good progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school makes effective use of restricted space to provide a broad and generally balanced curriculum, enriched by regular visits out of school. The school has yet to review the overall curriculum so that there are too few links between subjects to help pupils apply their skills in a broad range of situations. Pupils themselves feel that they could have more opportunities to use information and communication technology (ICT) to support their learning in other subjects, for example. The support for pupils with learning difficulties is managed well and is appropriately matched to need, while the provision for gifted and talented pupils has been imaginatively developed. A recently implemented programme satisfactorily supports pupils' personal, social and health education. In spite of limited access to apparatus, the school makes satisfactory provision for physical education. However, aspects of the Foundation Stage curriculum remain underdeveloped, including outdoor provision.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Pastoral care is good. Adults promote pupils' health, safety and welfare successfully. Supervision is effective. Pupils are confident that there is always an adult to support them. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils are robust and carefully monitored. The school has secure links with external agencies, ensuring that pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are effectively supported. Academic guidance is broadly satisfactory. Across the school, pupils' progress is tracked effectively, so that underperformance can be identified quickly. Pupils are developing confidence in evaluating the quality of their independent writing. There are whole-school improvement targets in literacy. However, while there has been some progress in writing, there is no structure of individual targets in numeracy. Pupils generally receive clear information through marking on how to improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher is held in high regard by parents. He carries a significant teaching commitment to facilitate the current class structure. The school satisfactorily evaluates areas for development. A central weakness in 2006, underachievement in mathematics, was correctly identified. Decisive action led to significant improvement in 2007. The improved pupil tracking system is now impacting upon pupils' achievement. Some areas, such as individual target-setting (an issue at the last inspection), have had less prompt response. Necessary changes are not always tackled with sufficient urgency. Monitoring of lessons is not always sufficiently incisive to enable weaker features to be identified and tackled. Middle managers and subject leaders are increasingly effective, leading to improvements in the management of literacy and in the support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and consequent benefits for pupils' progress. Older pupils identified as gifted or talented are supported well and make generally good progress. The school shows satisfactory capacity for improvement. Governance is satisfactory. Governors fulfil their legal responsibilities well and work in effective partnership with the school. They recognise their responsibility to challenge, as well as support, the school's leadership.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

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

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3
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?	3
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

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?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
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	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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

17 October 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Holywell C of E Primary School, Barnstaple, EX31 3HZ

Thank you for making us welcome when we visited your school. For both of us, it was our first time in a thatched school, so it was a rather special occasion. So many of you were keen to talk to us that we did not really have enough time with you! We appreciated our conversations and were impressed by your confidence, your care for each other and your enthusiasm for school. We found that Holywell C of E Primary is a satisfactory school.

The things we most liked about your school are:

- You are extremely well behaved, work hard and your attendance is good. Your teachers look after you well and mostly give you satisfactory guidance about how you can improve your work.
- The teaching is satisfactory, often better. Most of you make steady progress and do as well as most other children of your age.
- The curriculum is satisfactorily organised and you support clubs well.
- The school is managed satisfactorily and the school leaders know what to do to make things even better.

We have asked the staff to make some changes so that the school becomes more effective.

- Give children in the Foundation Stage some more challenging activities to help them make good progress.
- Make better use of the interesting outdoor environment in Foundation Stage and give children opportunities to choose activities they would like to do.
- Make sure that you have personal targets to help raise your standards in mathematics further.

You can help by continuing to work hard and do your best. We wish you all success in the future.

Yours faithfully

George Logan Lead inspector

17 October 2007

Dear Pupils



Inspection of Holywell C of E Primary School, Barnstaple, EX31 3HZ

Thank you for making us welcome when we visited your school. For both of us, it was our first time in a thatched school, so it was a rather special occasion. So many of you were keen to talk to us that we did not really have enough time with you! We appreciated our conversations and were impressed by your confidence, your care for each other and your enthusiasm for school. We found that Holywell C of E Primary is a satisfactory school.

The things we most liked about your school are:

- You are extremely well behaved, work hard and your attendance is good. Your teachers look after you well and mostly give you satisfactory guidance about how you can improve your work.
- The teaching is satisfactory, often better. Most of you make steady progress and do as well as most other children of your age.
- The curriculum is satisfactorily organised and you support clubs well.
- The school is managed satisfactorily and the school leaders know what to do to make things even better.

We have asked the staff to make some changes so that the school becomes more effective.

- Give children in the Foundation Stage some more challenging activities to help them make good progress.
- Make better use of the interesting outdoor environment in Foundation Stage and give children opportunities to choose activities they would like to do.
- Make sure that you have personal targets to help raise your standards in mathematics further.

You can help by continuing to work hard and do your best. We wish you all success in the future.

Yours faithfully

George Logan
Lead inspector