

Wolborough Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113477
Local Authority	Devon
Inspection number	311289
Inspection dates	19–20 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Faysal Mikdadi

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	217
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mitzi Belsher
Headteacher	P F Ball
Date of previous school inspection	9 June 2003
School address	Union Street Newton Abbot TQ12 2JX
Telephone number	01626 202050
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Wolborough is an average sized primary school. Pupils are largely White British with a small number coming from minority ethnic backgrounds. A small number speak a home language other than English. Two headteachers share the job of managing the school. When children join the Nursery, their prior attainment is well below that expected nationally.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Wolborough provides good quality education. One parent speaks typically when saying that this is 'a happy school where children make good progress'. Pupils much enjoy learning, feel really safe and secure, and are well prepared for their future lives. They achieve well. As soon as children join the Foundation Stage they are successfully helped to make good progress in personal development and language skills. In Key Stage 1, progress continues to be good overall, although boys' writing skills are weak. By the end of Year 6, standards in English and mathematics are above average. The trend in science had been an improving one but results dipped in 2007. The school has worked out the reasons and it is successfully addressing the pupils' inability to handle data as part of their investigative work in science. Good teaching helps children make good progress. Both parents and pupils spoke well of teachers with one reflecting the general feeling saying that 'teachers know the children well and work hard to support them'. Lessons are brisk and pupils work well. Teachers give effective one-to-one support. They also mark well but short-term targets are not fully known by pupils, which mean that they do not always know what they are working towards over time. Pupils speak of being happy at school and this is confirmed by their good responses to the warm and safe environment in which they work. Relationships are very good and in the Foundation Stage they are excellent. All of this promotes the pupils' social and personal development well, nurturing the personal qualities that will help them as they grow older. Pupils are keen to take part in the school community through the many opportunities offered to them.

The two headteachers work well together to give effective leadership to the school. They have, with the support of a good governing body and an effective teaching staff, accurately diagnosed the school's strengths and weaknesses and put in place measures that are making successful improvements. For example, the school has spotted weaknesses in the curriculum relating to science and writing and has successfully amended it to help improve performance. Senior managers and teachers have maintained excellent links with outside agencies and with the home in order to help promote the pupils' learning. This has included inviting parents into the school to help with their children's learning. Capacity for continued improvement is good.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

When the children first arrive, they are quickly settled in and given strong support with their literacy and social skills. They also benefit from excellent relationships and from adults working closely with parents. Children make good progress within a happy and secure environment. They make particularly good progress in their personal and social development. Children are successfully encouraged to be independent. Very good use is made of outside facilities despite their limitations within a restricted built up area. There are occasions when parts of the outside area are somewhat muddy which limits children's play space even further.

Children join the Foundation Stage at different times and many leave during the year. Teachers have adjusted well to this and ensure that learning continues uninterrupted and they are successful in settling newcomers in quickly. This process is helped by excellent links with parents and outside agencies.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that short-term targets are shared more consistently with individual pupils.

- Improve boys' writing standards in Key Stage 1 by providing more opportunities to practise.
- Improve Key Stage 2 pupils' handling of data in carrying out investigative scientific work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

When children join the Nursery, everyone works hard to improve their language and social skills. As a result, children make good progress, which continues during the rest of their school life. By the end of Key Stage 1, despite some variability in test results from year to year, standards are broadly average. Pupils reach the national expectation in speaking, listening, reading and mathematics. Girls' writing skills are better than those of the boys, which remain below national expectations.

From Year 3 onwards, pupils' progress improves a lot in literacy and numeracy. The first is because of the successful focus on language skills. There has been an improving trend in both English and mathematics in the Year 6 test results over the last three years and standards are now above average. Science had also improved previously, although in 2007 results dipped because of the pupils' lack of investigative skills, particularly in interpreting data.

Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve as well as their peers. Although the number of pupils with English as an additional language is small, these pupils achieve particularly well because of the good support they receive. The school works hard to ensure that every pupil receives the same opportunity to do well. The school has identified the need to improve science in Key Stage 2 and boys' writing in Key Stage 1. Measures put in place have begun to show some positive results, especially in boys' writing.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Parents speak highly of the way that their children settle into school quickly and of what one typically calls 'the happy, family atmosphere of the school'. This is a school where every child matters. Consequently, pupils much enjoy learning and feel really safe in a secure and warm environment. Pupils understand well what they need to do to remain healthy and they enjoy the opportunities provided for physical activity. As academic performance improves through the school, pupils' basic skills prepare them well for future lives. There is a strong community ethos allowing pupils to make useful contributions to their community through charitable work, taking on responsibility and enjoying parents visiting their literacy sessions.

Pupils in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2 show good levels of independence for their age. This provides a firm base for their good progress through Key Stage 2. They are happy to work collaboratively and do so with consideration for each other. All pupils are cheerful, well mannered, well behaved and generally chatty with visitors whom they happily welcome.

Attendance is satisfactory. Up till last year the figures for attendance were below the national averages with high levels of unauthorised absence. Since September 2007, attendance figures have improved. The school does all that it can to encourage pupils to arrive at school punctually.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is good because all teachers start lessons quickly and maintain a good pace with effective questioning and varied activity. Teachers keep reinforcing what the pupils have learnt. They also insist on pupils listening carefully. Learning outcomes are always set and teachers make sure that the pupils understand what is required of them during each lesson. In the Foundation Stage, relationships are excellent which helps to keep the children working happily. Music, singing and interesting tasks are used well to motivate them. In Key Stage 1 lessons always start with a lively mental warm up session and, along with good planning and very good relationships, pupils are helped to enjoy their learning. Teachers provide opportunities for practical hands-on work, which also helps motivate learners in all years.

Occasionally, teachers intervene too much during lessons. Noise levels can rise without being challenged in a few cases. The younger children are sometimes required to sit down for too long and they then begin to get a little restless.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Curriculum planning takes into account the fact that when children start school they need support with their language and social skills. Consequently, children receive endless opportunities to listen and respond. Teachers and their assistants successfully encourage them to be considerate with each other and to behave well from the very beginning. The school has recognised omissions in the curriculum that have held back the writing skills of younger boys, and are putting this right. The curriculum now includes more opportunities for them to have hands-on experiences, which motivate them well. For example, pupils making an Egyptian mummy were required to write up their plan of what they wanted to do. In their keenness to get to the making part of the exercise, they cheerfully got on with their writing and so finished it quickly and well. They encourage language skills further by making good provision in French. In Key Stage 2, teachers focus on helping pupils interpret data in order to help them report on scientific investigations. It is too early to judge the full impact on boys' writing skills in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 science standards. Early indications are that there has been a positive impact on standards, especially in writing. The school is limited in its outdoor facilities because of its position in a built up area. The curriculum has been amended imaginatively to compensate for this. For example, pupils use sporting facilities in the town and start each day with a short stint of physical exercise and go on residential trips and other activities in a successful enrichment programme.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

This is a particular strength of the school. One parent speaks typically when she says, 'The school fosters a caring approach and the staff are always keen to offer support.' The good pastoral support ensures the pupils' successful personal and social development. Staff know pupils well and they give dedicated support to all. The result is that individual needs are effectively met, relationships are very good and pupils thrive in a secure environment. Pupils

with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, as well as pupils with English as an additional language, are well supported so that they achieve as well as the rest of the school.

Marking is good and teachers always use it to encourage and praise pupils. During lessons, praise is used a great deal and teachers consistently tell the pupils how well they are doing and how to do better during the lesson. Pupils' short-term individual targets are not always shared with them or their parents. Consequently, pupils do not always know what they need to be working towards and their parents are not given these targets so that they might help promote their children's learning. The school has identified the need to improve assessment strategies further in order to ensure that pupils always have a clear idea of what they need to do to improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The two headteachers work well together to offer clear leadership, which has helped to make improvements. All leaders have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. For example, last summer's Key Stage 1 writing and Key Stage 2 science results dipped. Senior managers analysed the results, located the specific areas of weakness and put the measures needed to improve things. Early evidence is that these measures are having a positive impact on standards. This is an inclusive school with all groups of pupils achieving as well as each other. Capacity for improvement is good.

Pupils' targets set for the next three years are ambitious and they are based on a comprehensive use of available data. Leaders recognise that short-term targets need to be consistently in place and shared with pupils to help them know what they need to do to improve their work further. The school has started to deal with this but it is too early to judge the impact on learning.

The governing body has been helpful in supporting the school leadership. It has also been effective in challenging senior managers where needed. The result is that governors are fully informed and they take part in the successful process of monitoring and evaluation. They have been particularly successful in ensuring that the shared headship is effectively monitored. Along with the school's leaders, they understand the need to improve standards in Key Stage 1 boys' writing and in Key Stage 2 science.

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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 ¹ reached by learners	3
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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
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	3
The behaviour of learners	2
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	2

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

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	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

21 November 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Wolborough Church of England Primary School, Newton Abbot, TQ12 2JX

Thank you very much for making us feel so welcome when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed talking to you. We agree with you when you tell us that your school is a good school.

These are some of the things that are good about your school.

- You make good progress in your work.
- Your teachers are good at helping you do well. Because of that you told us that you enjoy your lessons.
- You are well behaved, kind to each other and you have very good relationships with others. You are well looked after and cared for. You think that your school is a special community and we agree with you.
- You told us that you felt safe at the school and that you liked the healthy food and activities that were offered to you.
- Your two headteachers have been successful in making sure that you make good progress because they and your teachers know what you need to do to improve your work.

We have suggested what the school needs to do in the following three areas.

- Teachers need to make sure that you know exactly what you need to do to perform better by telling you what your targets are and explaining them to you.
- Boys in Years 1 and 2 will need to improve the way that they write.
- Pupils in Years 3 to 6 will have to work on the practical side of science so that test results get better.

Once again, thank you for all your help during our visit. We wish you the very best in your future.

Faysal Mikdadi Lead inspector