

Beer Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113424
Local Authority	Devon
Inspection number	325816
Inspection date	24 September 2008
Reporting inspector	Paul Sadler

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	95
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Geoff Pook
Headteacher	Martin O'Mahony
Date of previous school inspection	12 September 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Mare Lane Beer Seaton EX12 3NB

Age group	5–11
Inspection date	24 September 2008
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Telephone number
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors. They evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

the impact of the school's work to raise standards of writing

the impact of work to raise standards of calculation in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), and of problem solving by older pupils

the quality of the EYFS curriculum, in particular the impact of indoor and outdoor learning environments on the provision.

Evidence was gathered by observing lessons, scrutinising documents and pupils' work, and from discussions with staff and pupils. Other aspects of the school's work were not evaluated in detail but the inspectors found no evidence 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

The school serves a coastal village. Almost all pupils are of White British ethnicity and few speak a language other than English at home. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. Although numbers are small, these pupils have a wide range of needs. Provision is made in one class for children in the EYFS aged four.

The school site is shared by 'Puffins' pre-school, which is not managed by the school governors. This facility also provides care for school pupils both before and after school.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Beer Primary School is outstanding. Parents are universal in their praise of the school: 'My son's lessons are challenging but fun and he and his friends love going to school,' is a typical comment that reflects the views of many. A common theme of parents' comments is to praise the strength of the staff and to stress how the dynamism of the headteacher, appointed in April 2007, has led to further improvement in an already good school. The inspection found that these views are fully justified, and that the school is in an excellent position to carry out more improvements.

The relatively small number of pupils that join the school each year have a wide range of levels of skills and knowledge, which overall are broadly as expected for their age. They make good progress in the EYFS, and by the end of Year 2 attain above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. During Years 3 to 6, all pupils make at least the expected progress and many do better than this, and by the end of Year 6, standards are consistently above average, with many attaining at the higher level in national tests. This is outstanding achievement.

This success is achieved through consistently excellent teaching. All staff, including the headteacher, have an accurate view of each pupil's progress and devise learning programmes that suit the needs of each individual. They set targets for English and mathematics which pupils understand very well, which are used to monitor their progress and are updated regularly through discussion between pupil and teacher. Lessons are exciting and pupils respond with excellent behaviour and great enthusiasm. All pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, make equally good progress because staff go to great lengths, for example, in designing individual programmes to help pupils with particular difficulties such as in writing. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used very well as an aid to learning by both teachers and pupils. Marking is thorough and helpful, showing pupils how to improve their work.

The school has an excellent understanding of its strengths and weaknesses and correctly identified writing and mathematical problem solving as areas for improvement. The positive impact of this work on pupils' progress is clear. Older pupils write at length with great accuracy and a fluent style. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 learn the importance of accuracy in grammar and punctuation and the effect of changes of nuance on the meaning of a phrase. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 chose their own methods to solve a subtraction. All solved the problem correctly and could explain clearly why they had used their chosen method. This work starts in the EYFS where, to quote a parent, 'My four-year-old tells us the correct answers to sums at breakfast!'

The excellent curriculum is planned with pupils' needs in mind and provides them with a wide range of opportunities to participate in additional activities such as sport and drama, and to learn Spanish. Pupils say they would like more opportunities to learn a musical instrument. The EYFS is well resourced but does not have a covered outdoor area. Plans for this are at an advanced stage and the school also plans, rightly, to improve the classroom environment for these children.

The school very successfully uses its Christian ethos to underpin a wider understanding of the world that leads to excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils. They love school, although attendance is adversely affected by term-time holidays. The school has worked hard to improve attendance, which is now above average. It makes great efforts to place itself at the heart of the community and this gives pupils superb opportunities to

contribute, for instance at a forthcoming harvest festival, and makes an excellent overall contribution to community cohesion. Pupils receive outstanding care, and all requirements for keeping them safe are in place. They have an excellent understanding of the need for exercise and a healthy diet, and an outstanding knowledge of how to stay safe in their environment, such as when cycling on the steep hills and narrow lanes in the area.

Leaders and managers set very challenging targets based on the detailed knowledge of each pupil's progress and these are achieved. The small and experienced team of teachers, teaching assistants and administrative staff all make an excellent contribution to the leadership and management of the school. The governing body is experienced and is very effective, both in challenging the school to improve and in supporting its work. There is a culture of continual monitoring in which all staff take part, and suggestions for improvement are welcomed from any quarter, including from parents and pupils, and are considered carefully on their merits. For example, the school council has been influential in improving the school grounds and was involved in the appointment of the present headteacher.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

A notable feature of the school is the work done to ensure children make an enjoyable start to school. There are very close links with the 'Puffins' pre-school on the site, which most children attend. The headteacher and the EYFS teacher visit each child at home before they start school, a commitment much appreciated by parents. Children make good progress in the EYFS, and most enter Year 1 having attained the goals expected of children of their age, with some exceeding these levels. The teaching of phonics and calculation have improved recently so that children are making very good progress in developing reading and mathematical skills. The curriculum is well planned. There are good resources, but the school rightly plans to make the classroom more exciting. There is a good-sized outdoor area, but the lack of cover and its exposed position limit its effectiveness, especially in poor weather. Plans to address this issue and to improve storage facilities are well advanced. Leadership and management of the EYFS are good, not least because of the headteacher's personal involvement in its development, and the excellent knowledge that all staff have of the children and their needs.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the indoor and outdoor environments for EYFS children to provide the best possible stimulation for their learning.

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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?	1
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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

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

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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
The extent to which 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 learners' needs?	1
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?	1

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

08 October 2008

Dear Pupils

Beer C of E Primary School, Seaton EX12 3NB

We very much enjoyed talking to you and seeing your work when we visited your school recently. We especially enjoyed talking to you as we found you confident, friendly and able to express your views very clearly.

We agree with you and your parents that Beer Primary is an excellent school. These are some of the best things about it.

- You make excellent progress and pupils in Year 6 get above average results in tests and assessments in English, mathematics and science, and you also do well in subjects such as PE and ICT.
- Teaching is excellent. You are given challenging work that you find really interesting. Teachers know what you do well and what you find more difficult, and set you targets to help you learn more quickly.
- You have an excellent understanding of how to keep healthy and safe, and your behaviour is also excellent. We were especially impressed with the amount you know about the reasons for exercise and healthy eating.
- You greatly enjoy school, especially all the different activities on offer. There are lots of clubs for you to take part in and you get plenty of opportunities to help people. You especially enjoy all the different sports you can try, but you would like more opportunities to learn musical implements.
- The school has excellent links with 'Puffins' pre-school so children are happy and settled when they start school in Reception.
- The care and guidance the school provides are outstanding. Those of you in Years 4, 5 and 6 know how to use your targets and you get lots of help to show you how to improve, for example from teachers' marking and from the teaching assistants.
- The headteacher and other staff are excellent at leading the school. The headteacher is very popular with you and your parents because he knows you all so well. All the staff are really keen to help you to learn more, whether you find school work quite easy or hard.

We have asked the school to complete the plans to cover part of the Reception outdoor area so it can be used in all weathers, and to make the classroom even more exciting. You can help by telling the staff your ideas as they will always take them seriously.

Yours sincerely

Paul Sadler Lead Inspector