

Black Torrington Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113372
Local Authority	Devon
Inspection number	378687
Inspection dates	10–11 October 2011
Reporting inspector	Martin James

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	29
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Karen Wooldridge
Headteacher	Celia Luff
Date of previous school inspection	10 February 2009
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one additional inspector. The inspector visited seven lessons, and a number of shorter visits were also made to classrooms to look at samples of pupils' work. Four members of staff were observed teaching. The inspector spoke to the Chair and another member of the Governing Body, parents and carers, staff and pupils. He observed the school's work and looked at a wide variety of documentation, including teachers' planning, the school improvement plan, monitoring and evaluation sheets, assessment records and safeguarding information. The responses from the staff and pupil questionnaires were analysed, as were the 20 responses from parents and carers.

The inspector reviewed many aspects of the school's work. He looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The extent to which teachers make suitable allowance for the different needs of pupils, especially the more able.
- The provision made for improving attainment in mathematics.
- The extent of the school's development of national and global links to enhance community cohesion.
- The impact of subject leaders and the governing body in improving provision in the school.

Information about the school

Black Torrington Church of England Primary School is very much smaller than the average-sized primary school. All pupils are from a White British background. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is similar to the national average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is similar to the national average. These pupils' needs cover a range including moderate learning difficulties and speech and language disorders. There are no pupils with a statement of special educational needs. The Early Years Foundation Stage consists of Reception-aged children, who are integrated into one class with Year 1 and Year 2 pupils. Older pupils are organised into a mixed Years 3/4/5/6 class. In recognition of its work, the school has received a number of awards, including the Activemark award and Healthy Schools status.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

This is an outstanding school, where pupils achieve exceptionally well. Pupils greatly enjoy school and their behaviour and attitudes are exemplary. They feel extremely safe and adopt exceptionally healthy lifestyles. Pupils contribute very well to the local community. Care, guidance and support and safeguarding are outstanding, with the welfare of its pupils being a high priority for the school. Parents and carers work very closely with the school, for the benefit of their children's learning and, for their part, they are extremely positive about the school. For example, one said, 'I feel my children are privileged to attend such a wonderful school.' Another added simply, 'It's a fantastic school.' During their time in the Early Years Foundation Stage, children achieve very well, and they reach higher than average standards by the time they leave Reception. In Years 1 to 6, pupils continue to make exceptional progress, with the result that at the end of Year 6, attainment is high in all key subjects.

Highly effective teaching and an exceptionally stimulating curriculum are critically important factors in the excellent progress made by all groups of pupils. In class, relationships are strong, teachers make very good use of a variety of resources and strategies to make the lessons interesting and teaching assistants are deployed very well in supporting pupils. In particular, teachers ensure there is considerable challenge in all the work provided, including that given to those who are more able, and they have the highest expectations of their pupils' work. Pupils themselves are most keen to rise to the challenges presented. The curriculum is innovative and exciting and contributes very significantly to the development of both pupils' academic and social skills. It is constantly being adapted to inspire excellence in both learning and enjoyment, and staff are very confident in the way they deliver it. The school has done a great deal to promote community cohesion, both in school and locally. However, it has not done as much to improve pupils' understanding of the cultural diversity to be found further afield, within the United Kingdom and abroad.

The headteacher, other staff and members of the governing body are a dedicated team, highly committed to improving the provision they make for their pupils, especially in helping them to make the best possible progress with their work. Self-evaluation is very successful in pinpointing where improvement is needed and the school has moved on very significantly since the previous inspection. Morale is high, planning illustrates continuing high aspirations, and there is a strong determination to succeed. The improvements that have been made since the last inspection, together with the exceptional quality of the current provision, mean that the school has an outstanding capacity for sustained improvement.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Extend community cohesion further by providing more opportunities for pupils to find out about, and make contact with, people from cultures and backgrounds different from their own, both within the United Kingdom and globally.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Pupils show real enjoyment in their learning, and the work seen in lessons and in pupils' books confirms that their achievement is outstanding. Consequently, their attainment at the end of Year 6 is high. Attainment has improved very significantly since the previous inspection, when it was broadly average. The progress being made by pupils was clearly observed in lessons. In a mathematics lesson on three-dimensional shapes in Key Stage 2, for example, the skilful and thoughtful use of questioning by the teacher allowed pupils to develop a very clear understanding of the concept. This ensured that they then made excellent progress in confidently completing the tasks provided. Pupils' targets were also discussed with them, to ensure that they knew clearly how to raise the standard of their own work. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve very well. In an English lesson observed in Key Stage 1, for instance, the teacher was most careful to include them fully in discussions, so that they knew exactly what was expected of them, thus greatly benefiting their learning. Boys and girls perform equally well. The pupils' outstanding progress from their lower than expected starting points on entry to Reception, together with their full enthusiastic participation in their learning, illustrates that the school is preparing them exceptionally well for their future education and their life at work.

Pupils clearly like school very much, and this is reflected in their outstanding behaviour, above average attendance and very prompt punctuality every morning. They get on very well together, they are courteous to adults and they move around the school in a quiet, orderly manner. Pupils have very sensible attitudes to their work and they take a great pride in what they produce. They have a strong sense of safety, illustrated well by one pupil who commented, 'The CCTV cameras help to keep out any strangers.' Pupils eat healthy meals and they benefit from the very good range of physical activities provided, including swimming. Pupils are particularly enthusiastic about 'take ten'. They say they are pleased with their role in helping the school gain its Activemark award. Pupils' cultural awareness is not quite as strong as their excellent spiritual, moral and social development. Pupils are very keen to take on the many responsibilities that the school offers them. For example, the school council takes its role very seriously and members are proud of their involvement with the promotion of healthy eating. Pupils are also very involved in the wider village community, for instance through participation in a wide variety of functions in both the church and the chapel, welcoming residents into school and working closely with the parish council in the development of local amenities. Local people, for their part, speak very highly of the pupils' input into village life.

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These are then grades for pupils’ outcomes

Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attainment ¹	1
The quality of pupils’ learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils’ behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Teachers organise their classrooms very well and they create a most interesting and welcoming learning environment for the pupils. Classes are very well managed and relationships are excellent. As a result, pupils are keen to learn and ready to work hard. One pupil reported that, ‘Teachers make lessons fun.’ Explanations are clear and reflect teachers’ exceptional subject knowledge. Teaching assistants are very well deployed to promote learning, especially that of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. This ensures they are able to join in all class activities and make rapid progress. Teachers’ ongoing assessment of pupils’ work is a particular strength, resulting in pupils’ clear understanding about how to improve. Their involvement as learners in self-assessment is exemplary. Planning is very good, providing tasks well matched to pupils’ varying interests and competences and demonstrating high expectations of them all. Pupils therefore progress exceptionally well in their academic work and become responsible, mature young people.

The school provides a rich, exciting and well-structured curriculum, where links between subjects are used particularly well to stimulate pupils’ interest and enhance their learning. Discussions with younger pupils, for instance, suggest that the topic on ‘toys and leisure’ is a special favourite. The provision of extended opportunities for pupils to undertake practical and problem-solving activities in mathematics, has very successfully addressed previous minor weaknesses in that subject. Pupils also benefit from the exceptional learning experiences provided in the school’s own grounds and the surrounding area. Opportunities are routinely provided for pupils to

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

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develop their independent learning skills. Pupils speak enthusiastically about this, as well as the excellent range of outings and after-school clubs that enhance the curriculum. The curriculum also strongly supports pupils’ personal development, such as in their understanding and adoption of healthy lifestyles. In this way, it has contributed significantly to the school gaining Healthy Schools status. The exceptional care, guidance and support provided for pupils contribute very well to both their enjoyment and their learning. Parents and carers say they much appreciate the pastoral care of their children. Pupils are very well known to staff and they give their welfare a high priority. Pupils are keen to point out that they also enjoy looking after each other and keeping each other safe. Pupils are regularly reminded about the need to take care, for instance when using computers. The transitions from home to school and on to secondary school are smooth and efficient. Staff have worked rigorously and successfully to ensure pupils’ good attendance and punctuality.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	1
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	1
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils’ needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher, supported very well by other staff members, has been extremely effective in creating a very successful and caring school with a strong ambition to improve. There are excellent arrangements to oversee the quality of teaching and learning, which in turn have helped to ensure high standards and outstanding progress. Exceptional care is taken to ensure that no form of discrimination is tolerated and that equal opportunities are promoted very effectively. Safeguarding procedures are consistently and rigorously applied to ensure that all pupils are very well protected, and the school has excellent practices in place. For instance, the identity of all visitors to the school is most carefully checked and confirmed. Community cohesion is promoted well in the school. There are excellent community links, both in school and locally. However, in its own evaluation, the school recognises that while contacts have been established with a school in Burnley, overall links beyond the local community are not so well advanced.

Subject leaders demonstrate a very secure understanding of their various subjects, and they have contributed very effectively to the improvements now being seen. The governing body keenly supports the school and its members are regular visitors. They are closely involved in drawing up the budget and the school’s improvement plan, and they contribute significantly to the school’s self-evaluation processes. They are presently working to extend their understanding of the school’s overall provision

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so that they might even more effectively and confidently hold the school to account for its performance. Outside partners are used very successfully to support pupils when a need is identified. Links with parents and carers are strong, and they support the school very well in the overall provision that is made for their children.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school’s engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

When children start school, their knowledge and skills are usually below those expected nationally, especially in relation to communication, language and literacy, although, because of the small numbers present, they vary from year to year. Through the year, they achieve exceptionally well and, by the end, standards are above average. The children are very happy in school, they enjoy themselves and they particularly value the company of the older pupils in the class, from whom they learn a great deal. Their behaviour is excellent. The staff work hard to create a friendly and caring learning environment, and the children also benefit from the strong links that are established with both the parents and carers and the pre-schools. Adults provide the children with a good balance between teacher-led activities and chances for them to choose for themselves. They have high expectations and take every opportunity to help the children develop their various skills. Teaching is outstanding. In one lesson observed, on different sounds, the interesting activities provided by the teacher ensured that the children tackled their work with much enthusiasm, applying great concentration to their tasks. This helped them to make very good progress. The children show exceptional social skills in sharing and taking turns with others. Staff know the children very well, and the frequent observations and assessments of their work result in new tasks that are both well suited to their particular needs and provide very good levels of challenge. The extremely well-planned curriculum is enhanced by a good range of resources,

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with the outdoor area being used very effectively in all aspects of the curriculum. This is a significant improvement since the previous inspection. Excellent, well-informed leadership successfully ensures exceptional provision for the children, and staff members ably complement each other in supporting them. Great care is taken to guarantee that all children are equally involved, and that safety and safeguarding are given a high priority.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

There was a high response to the questionnaire sent to parents and carers seeking their views about the school. All are overwhelmingly positive about the school's provision, both in terms of the care the school takes of their children and the progress it helps them make. Comments such as, 'We are very happy with all aspects of the school' and 'The school has a strong, effective leader, very high standards and has transformed my children's learning' confirm their view. No concerns were raised.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Black Torrington CE Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspector received 20 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 29 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	20	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	18	90	2	10	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	15	75	4	20	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	15	75	4	20	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	17	85	3	15	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	16	80	4	20	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	18	90	2	10	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	18	90	1	5	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	18	90	2	10	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	16	80	1	5	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	15	75	4	20	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	18	90	2	10	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	18	90	2	10	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



12 October 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Black Torrington CE Primary School, Beaworthy EX21 5PU

Thank you for making me so welcome when I came to visit your school. I enjoyed my visit and it was a pleasure talking to you. I especially liked joining you in assembly, and it was good coming to some of your lessons. Thank you for filling in the forms about your views of the school; it was most helpful. I am writing to tell you what I found out about your school. You will be pleased to know that you are in an outstanding school, where you are making excellent progress with your work.

These are some of the strengths of the school.

- Children in Reception make an excellent start in the school.
- Teaching is outstanding, and teachers provide you with lessons which you really enjoy.
- Your behaviour and your attitudes to your work are excellent.
- The staff know you very well and take very good care of you. As a result, you feel very safe.
- Your parents and carers are very pleased with the school.

This is the one thing the school has been asked to improve:

- give you greater opportunities to become more aware of, and to contact, people from different communities and cultures in both the United Kingdom and around the world.

You can help too, by listening very carefully when your teachers are telling you about people from these different places.

I wish you all well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Martin James
Lead inspector

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