



Yeo Valley Primary School

Inspection Report - Amended

Unique Reference Number 113178
Local Authority Devon
Inspection number 289536
Inspection dates 3-4 October 2006
Reporting inspector Anna Sketchley

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Derby Road
School category	Community		Barnstaple
Age range of pupils	3-11		EX32 7HB
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01271 375429
Number on roll (school)	270	Fax number	01271 325214
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Maurice Venner
		Headteacher	Jan Reed
Date of previous school inspection	4 July 2001		

Age group 3-11	Inspection dates 3-4 October 2006	Inspection number 289536
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Amended Report Addendum

Report updated to resolve formatting inconsistency

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Yeo Valley is situated in the centre of Barnstaple in a local community that faces challenging social and economic circumstances. It is a slightly above average-sized primary school. The proportions of pupils with learning difficulties and of those eligible for free school meals are above average. There are a few pupils from ethnic minority groups.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Yeo Valley is a good school. The care it provides for its pupils is an outstanding feature. The pupils' achievement is improving rapidly under the guidance of the headteacher, who has built a committed and hardworking staff team. The school is well placed to improve further and is a place that pupils love coming to. Parents are very supportive of the school, praising it in many respects and speaking of its caring and happy atmosphere. They say of it, 'when the children are in school they are well looked after, safe and above all, happy.' This, together with excellent relationships between adults and pupils, underpins the pupils' good achievement.

When children join the school, many have skills that are well below those expected nationally, especially in speaking and listening. Because of the supportive and vibrant atmosphere the school provides in Nursery and Reception, they settle in quickly, making a good start to formal education. By the end of Year 6, standards are below average in English and mathematics, though reading standards are average. Boys do not do well in writing. Taking into account their very low start, pupils achieve well during their time in school.

Pupils make good progress because teaching is invariably good and sometimes outstanding. Teachers and their learning assistants are kind, patient and understanding. They make learning interesting and manage behaviour very well. Pupils with learning difficulties are particularly well supported. The rich personal and social education programme is a notable strength of the good curriculum and successfully supports pupils' learning. In particular, the opportunities pupils have to take part in residential visits, even from a very early age, help them to develop good attitudes to their tasks in lessons and prepare them well for the future.

Pupils' good personal development and well-being also make a substantial contribution to their good achievement. They are confident and well behaved and try hard to embrace a healthy and active lifestyle. They greatly enjoy coming to school because of the high level of care they experience and the many extra activities that are offered to them. There are supportive but robust procedures for dealing with those pupils who do not come regularly. As a result, attendance is improving, though below average.

The leadership and management of the school are good. Rigorous self-evaluation, combined with drive and purpose, has resulted in higher standards and a clear strategy to improve further. The headteacher has determinedly and successfully tackled previous weaknesses and has worked hard to establish the school as a very real part of the community. This is highly valued by parents and by the many outside agencies that support the school.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing, especially for boys, and in mathematics, by making more opportunities for pupils to use their literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good throughout the school. Despite their very low skills on entry to the school, pupils make good progress throughout Nursery and Reception. By the end of Reception, pupils' standards have risen from very low to below average. Their communication and language skills are less well developed than other areas of learning. In the 2006 national tests, standards in Year 2 were broadly average, showing that pupils continue to achieve well during their infant years. Assessments show a dramatic rise in reading standards, which is due to the very successful initiatives that the school has put in place. However, girls do better than boys, especially in writing. Although in the 2006 tests standards in Year 6 were below average, they have been rising gradually over the last three years. Despite this, there has been a dip in achievement, especially in English, due to a legacy of staffing difficulties throughout the junior years. These difficulties have now been thoroughly eradicated and school data clearly reveal that the current Year 6 pupils are on course to reach average standards in reading by the time they leave. Detailed tracking shows that new initiatives to improve standards in writing and mathematics are having an impact. Pupils make good progress in these areas but there is still a little way to go before standards catch up, and they are currently still below average. Standards in writing, in particular, remain a concern for the school, again especially for some boys.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils of all ages show a genuine respect for each other and all adults in the school, which results from a strong personal, social and health education programme. Though below average, attendance rates are rising, due to the positive approach of both the senior leaders and the governors. Pupils speak highly of their enjoyment of school. The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, with strengths in social and moral development. Pupils have a keen sense of right and wrong. Playtimes are a happy occasion with strategies in place for pupils who find they need support. Pupils use the play equipment responsibly for exercise and revel in the many and varied sports activities and new healthy school meals that are provided for them. They feel safe in the school community, behave well, and know all adults are there to support them. The School Council is regarded by all pupils as being highly effective in representing their views and makes a significant contribution to the school community. Pupils are well prepared for their future lives through the school's emphasis on their social development and attitudes, but basic skills in literacy and numeracy need to improve further.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good, and reflects the school's focus on raising standards in literacy and numeracy. Some of the teaching is outstanding. Throughout the school, teachers promote warm relationships and manage pupils' behaviour very effectively. They are well organised and plan the work effectively for the different abilities of pupils within their classes. They know their pupils well and use the good ratio of experienced teaching assistants very effectively. Almost all lessons focus strongly on speaking and listening opportunities. Teachers make pupils' work challenging, interesting and enjoyable. These factors contribute to pupils' positive response, their good progress and their enjoyment in learning. The school has already seen the successful outcomes of its initiatives for raising standards in reading and is now applying the same model for improving writing and mathematics. The good assessment procedures in English and mathematics enable teachers to track pupils' progress well. Though used very effectively in a Year 3 mathematics lesson, interactive whiteboards are not yet used as well as they could be across the school to promote learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school offers a good curriculum with a wide range of learning opportunities. It rightly places a high emphasis on further developing the pupils' literacy and numeracy skills by purposely pursuing ways these can be linked to other subjects to deepen pupils' understanding by using and applying them. This is especially important for writing in order to make it enjoyable, relevant and accessible for boys. Music is a strength of the curriculum and many pupils are involved in instrumental lessons, choir and regular performances to both parents and the local community. As well as very successful residential visits, pupils benefit from an extensive range of clubs, which enriches their physical and social development. The excellent library, computer suite and central resources for all subjects are expertly organised by the librarian and enhance all areas of the curriculum. Pupils with learning difficulties are particularly well catered for because activities are very successfully adjusted to meet their needs and extra help in lessons is both well focused and intensive.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support for pupils are exemplary and are a further reason why the pupils, many of whom experience considerably challenging circumstances out of school, are achieving well. Extensive use is made of many external agencies and these are very complimentary about the openness of the school and its willingness to involve them. The pupils feel safe at school and all necessary measures regarding child protection

are fully in place and working very well. The high level of pastoral care and support given to pupils by all adults involved at the school contributes substantially to the pupils' sense of well-being and their enjoyment of learning. All pupils receive very good academic guidance through both group and individual targets that are focused on helping them to improve their work. These targets are highly visible in class and well known by pupils. They benefit greatly from talks they have with their teachers every six weeks to review both literacy and numeracy targets and set new ones. Education plans with achievable steps for all pupils with learning difficulties and extra support in lessons from highly trained teaching assistants are notable features of outstanding provision.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher's open and inspirational leadership has been the cornerstone of the school's very good improvement since the last inspection. She has skilfully guided the school through a period of changes in staffing, assessment and approaches to pupils' learning. The senior management team has a clear focus on raising standards, while at the same time maintaining the school's ethos of outstanding care and support for the pupils. This is a very effective team whose hard work provides a good quality of education that is improving still further all the time. The improvements in achievement, standards, teaching and learning are testimony to the ways in which the senior leaders and managers have expertly motivated teachers, pupils, parents and governors to work together to move the school forward. For example, the recent focus on improving pupils' reading has shown a marked rise in standards throughout the school.

Monitoring and evaluation are rigorous and have enabled past underachievement to be approached with a thoroughness and determination to improve. Pupils, parents and governors make good contributions to school self-evaluation. Continuous monitoring of every aspect of the school's work by both staff and governors means that there is good awareness of the impact of what is being done so that leaders and managers know exactly what needs to be done to improve. The successful method for raising reading standards is being used skilfully to bring about a similar improvement in writing and mathematics. The last 18 months have shown that the school's capacity to improve is good. Weaknesses in the provision for young children identified at the last inspection have been put right and the Foundation Stage is now a strength of the school. Governors have received help and support and now play their part well in influencing the school's development. Parents are exceptionally supportive. As one parent succinctly put it, 'there has been huge improvement'.

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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

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 behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	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	3

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

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.

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	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	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

Thank you very much for the friendly welcome you gave us when we visited your school. We really enjoyed spending time with you and talking to you. These are some of the things we liked most.

- You enjoy coming to school and behave well.
- Teachers and other adults make lessons interesting for you and you try hard with your learning.
- We thought your residential visits were especially important.
- You are very well cared for and feel happy and safe in school.
- We were impressed with the way you take part in all the clubs and special events, especially looking after the elderly in the community.

Everyone works hard to make Yeo Valley a very special school. Your parents told us how good the school is and we agree with them, but there is something that can be done to make it even better.

- We have asked your teachers to help you to improve the standards of your writing and mathematics, especially the boys'!

Please keep working hard in lessons.