

Dorchester Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	117902
Local authority	Kingston upon Hull city of
Inspection number	379492
Inspection dates	20–21 March 2012
Lead inspector	Rosemary Eaton

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	343
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Helen Walker
Headteacher	Sue Liddle
Date of previous school inspection	11 June 2009
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Introduction

Inspection team

Rosemary Eaton

Susan Twaits

David Matthews

Additional inspector

Additional inspector

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors observed 17 lessons involving 15 teachers or teaching assistants. Short visits were made to a number of other lessons. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, staff and the Chair of the Governing Body. The inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at records of pupils' progress and those relating to behaviour and attendance, safeguarding documents, curriculum planning, and the school's plans for its future improvement. Samples of pupils' written work were scrutinised and a number of pupils read their books to inspectors. The 40 parental questionnaires returned were read and analysed as were those from pupils and staff. The inspectors looked at the online questionnaire (Parent View) but insufficient responses had been made to aid planning the inspection.

Information about the school

This is a larger than the average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is over twice the national average. Most pupils are White British with a very small minority from other ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs is above average. The school meets the current floor standard, whereby the government sets the minimum expectations for attainment and progress. The school holds a number of awards including the Basic Skills Quality Mark, International School's Award and the Eco Mark at bronze level. It has Healthy Schools status. A children's centre adjoins the school. This and the privately managed nursery provision it houses are inspected separately and their inspection reports may be found on the Ofsted website.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key Findings

- This is a good school. Pupils’ best interests are at the heart of all its work. The headteacher and other leaders make sure that the school is always moving forward and improving what it provides for pupils. It is not yet outstanding mainly because there is not enough of the outstanding teaching needed to ensure that pupils’ progress is better than good.
- From the nursery onwards, pupils develop the skills and attitudes they need in order to learn well. By the end of Year 6, most have reached the levels expected for their age. Attainment is weaker in writing than in reading and mathematics.
- Teachers are very consistent in their methods and approaches. Lessons always include a variety of activities, keeping pupils interested and involved. Occasionally, the same work is set for all pupils even though they are working at different levels. This means, for example, that some are not encouraged to push themselves and tackle harder work.
- The school is quiet and calm because pupils know exactly what they should be doing and how they should behave. They are busy and happy learners who feel safe in school. Pupils who need help in order to manage their own behaviour receive the support they need so the learning of others is not interrupted.
- Leaders set high expectations for teachers and pupils and manage performance well. They keep a close eye on all aspects of the school, gaining a very clear view of its strengths and where there is scope for it to perform even better. Leaders and staff work effectively with other schools and a range of agencies to put policies and plans into practice. As a result of good leadership, pupils are prepared well for the next stage in their education.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of teaching that is outstanding, focusing particularly on:
 - ensuring that all groups of pupils are set work that challenges them consistently to work at the highest levels of which they are capable
 - being more explicit about the quantity and quality of work pupils are expected to produce within a certain period of time.
- Raise attainment in writing by:
 - giving pupils more opportunities to write at length without a structure provided by the teacher
 - planning more writing tasks in subjects across the curriculum
 - raising expectations for pupils' handwriting and spelling in independent written work.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Overall, attainment is broadly average. Typically, fewer pupils reach the expected or higher levels in writing than in reading and mathematics. Boys' attainment tends to be weaker than that of girls but the gap between them is narrowing as a result of the school's determined efforts. Attainment in Key Stage 1 is improving. There is clear evidence this year of an increase in the numbers expected to reach Level 3, particularly in reading. Nevertheless, attainment in reading is below average at the end of Year 2. It is broadly average at the end of Year 6.

Parents and carers are justified in their belief that their children make good progress. Across the school progress is more consistent than at the time of the previous inspection. Developments in the provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage have accelerated children's progress from satisfactory to good. By the end of the Reception Year, children have made particularly strong progress in their ability to speak, read and write and in their personal, social and emotional development. Their improved performance in these areas means that children are now better placed to learn in Key Stage 1 and as they move up through the school.

Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress. This is because the provision made for them is matched accurately to the school's analysis of what individuals need to help them learn as effectively as other pupils. Pupils known to be eligible for free school meals make the same good progress as other pupils. The gap between the attainment of these groups is narrower than average.

A particular strength of pupils' learning is their ability to work collaboratively. Adults teach children in the Early Years Foundation Stage to share and take turns. They often start school unable to consider others and have to be dissuaded from grabbing and monopolising toys. Similarly, pupils are able to take part in productive discussions because initially they are guided by staff. Pupils get started quickly on their tasks and concentrate well. Their books show that pupils' work is not always presented carefully. Because older pupils often choose

to print rather than join letters, they find it harder to write at speed. Pupils are taught how to spell and how to check spellings but some books contain too many careless errors.

Quality of teaching

Parents and carers are right to consider teaching to be good. The school has successfully developed teachers' use of questions. In addition to probing pupils' understanding, questioning requires them to put their ideas into words and to reply in sentences, helping to prepare them for writing. In a literacy lesson taught by a teaching assistant, lower-attaining pupils in Years 2 and 3 were given time to think about their answers to a question about their reading book. They then practised saying their sentence to a partner before putting pen to paper. Encouraging pupils to consider others and to work together are examples of teachers' successful efforts to promote spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Teaching assistants make a strong contribution to teaching and learning, for example, by delivering programmes of work to pupils who have special educational needs. Pupils say that marking lets them know how they can improve their work. Their books confirm this although pupils are not consistently expected to follow the advice they are given. Information about pupils' attainment is used to group those of similar ability for lessons in literacy and numeracy. Even so, within these classes pupils are not all attaining at the same level. Teachers do not always take these differences fully into account when planning lessons. Occasionally, for example, higher-attaining pupils are not required to do more challenging work than other pupils.

Planning has developed well in the Early Years Foundation Stage and now provides good opportunities for children to pursue their interests and learn independently. During the inspection, a group of small 'pirates' chatted and played together in their den, developing their language and social skills. In Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils undertake a wide range of writing tasks. Longer pieces of work are often structured by teachers so, for example, pupils write different parts of a story separately. They have fewer opportunities to organise their extended writing independently. Teachers' planning has begun to promote writing more effectively in subjects beyond English. Good examples were seen in Year 6, linked to work on the Victorians. Pupils are often told how long they have to complete a certain task. However, teachers do not always make it clear how much work is to be done or the standards they expect from different groups of pupils.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Understandably, parents and carers and pupils have largely positive views about behaviour and safety in the school. Expectations of pupils' behaviour are very clear and are consistent from class to class. Teachers quickly nip in the bud any tendency to fidget or call out answers, explaining to pupils that this sort of behaviour makes it harder for other pupils to learn well. As a result, unsettled behaviour seldom escalates and disruptions to lessons are unusual. Pupils with identified behavioural difficulties respond very well to the school's approaches and the additional specialist support they receive. Meeting the guidance mentor at the start of each day helps to ensure that these pupils are in a positive frame of mind before they arrive at lessons. There are some striking examples of how the school has turned around the behaviour of individuals, sometimes by identifying and reducing additional barriers such as particular learning difficulties.

Reported incidents of bullying are rare. The school maintains rigorous records of all incidents which show that they are followed up comprehensively. Pupils feel safe in school. They have a clear understanding of potentially unsafe situations beyond school. An incident reported during the inspection showed that pupils are confident to raise concerns and respond in such a way as to stay safe. Attendance has improved and is now broadly average.

Leadership and management

The headteacher leads by example and sets high standards for other leaders and staff to meet. She is the driving force behind the school's success but has built a strong team of senior leaders who carry out their responsibilities most effectively. The school's key values are shared by all staff because any joining it are linked to others with more experience so they are able to learn, for example about agreed approaches to teaching literacy and managing behaviour. This is why teaching is so consistent.

Teaching and learning are monitored systematically and self-evaluation is entirely accurate. The information gathered feeds directly into the school's plans for its future development, which include associated staff training, and to formal targets to manage the performance of teachers and teaching assistants. Approaches such as coaching by peers and observations of their practice make good use of the skills of the most effective teachers. They have helped to improve individual performance and the overall quality of teaching. Middle leaders and members of the governing body are increasingly involved in monitoring the school's work and identifying ways forward. Since the previous inspection there have been measurable improvements, for example in outcomes in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1. Aspects of teaching on which the school has focused attention are now strengths. Its track record and the strength of the leadership team demonstrate without doubt that the school is capable of sustaining good improvement.

The curriculum captures pupils' interests and expands their horizons. It promotes their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, for example through the school's links with others whose pupils are from backgrounds and cultures different to those of its own. The needs of different groups such as those who are gifted and talented or are disabled are met well by the school's response to their particular needs. The provision for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is very well organised. It is characterised by excellent partnerships with a wide range of specialist agencies to help support groups and individuals. This is one aspect of the school's successful efforts to promote equality of opportunity and eliminate discrimination, seen in gaps between different groups closed or narrowing. Additionally, as pupils explain, the after-school and breakfast clubs are provided free of charge so all pupils may benefit from them. The governing body helps to ensure that safeguarding meets requirements, with clear procedures that are applied consistently and effectively.

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	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data 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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

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

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



22 March 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Dorchester Primary School, Hull HU7 6AH

The inspectors want to thank you for being so friendly and helpful when we visited your school. You were all so welcoming and we very much enjoyed our short time with you. Your contribution helped us to decide that Dorchester is a good school. These are some of the reasons why we made this judgement.

- You make good progress in your learning. This is because teaching is good at your school.
- You behave well which means that everyone can get on with their work. The school is a calm and happy place in which to learn.
- You told us that you feel safe and you know just what to do if you have any worries.
- The teachers provide lots of interesting things for you to do such as visits and clubs.
- Your headteacher and the other leaders make sure that the school keeps improving.

The school's leaders want the school to be outstanding. To help them we have suggested two things.

- To make teaching even better, we have asked the school to make sure that the work set is always hard enough for everyone in the class.
- The levels most of you reach in writing are not as high as those in reading and mathematics. We have asked the school to give you more writing to do in other subjects. We also want you to try harder with your handwriting, because this will help you to write faster, and to look more closely at your spellings.

We send each one of you our very best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Rosemary Eaton
Lead inspector

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