

Draycott and Rodney Stoke Church of England First School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123832
Local Authority	Somerset
Inspection number	359525
Inspection dates	23–24 March 2011
Reporting inspector	Eileen Chadwick

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	3–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	85
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Steven Percival
Headteacher	Catherine Lowe
Date of previous school inspection	26 September 2007
School address	School Lane Draycott Cheddar BS27 3SD
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Ten lessons were visited and six teachers were observed. Inspectors held meetings with pupils, staff with key responsibilities and members of the governing body. Inspectors observed the school's work and evaluated documentation such as policies, the school improvement plan, pupils' work and records of their learning and progress. Inspectors analysed 30 completed questionnaires from parents and carers, 12 from members of staff and 31 completed by pupils in Years 3 and 4.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The progress that children make in the Pre-School and in Reception and the evenness of children's attainment on entry to Year 1. ♦
- Pupils' attainment in Year 4 and the consistency of their progress through Years 1 to 4, especially in writing.
- The consistency of good teaching and learning across the school.
- How effectively leaders at all levels evaluate the quality of the school's work and use this information to plan for future improvements.

Information about the school

The school is a small village first school which serves the villages of Draycott and Rodney Stoke and the surrounding area. Pupils are nearly all of White British heritage. A below-average proportion of the pupils is known to be eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. These pupils mainly have literacy and numeracy difficulties. The school has provided pre-school education since September 2010 and this is located in the Early Years Foundation Stage unit within the main school building. The children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are in either the Nursery, known as the pre-school, or Reception classes. The children in the pre-school are three and four year olds. ♦ A significant proportion of pupils join the school after the Early Years Foundation Stage. Pupils transfer to middle school at the end of Year 4.

A period of building work extended through the summer in 2010 when there were also interruptions to the leadership team because of the long-term absence of a senior leader. The school provides a daily breakfast club for all age groups. The school has gained a Healthy Schools award.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school where the outcomes for pupils are outstanding. The excellent ♦♦ care, support and guidance provided from the time pupils enter to the time they leave, and a stimulating curriculum, promote their love of learning and extremely good behaviour. Pupils' excellent progress in reading throughout the school leads to their high attainment in reading by the time they move on to middle school. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent and they contribute extremely well to the community in which the school plays an important part. Pupils are kept and feel exceptionally safe and gain an excellent understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle. Excellent partnerships with parents and carers support pupils' rising achievement and parents and carers are often delighted with the school. One parent echoed the views of many when saying, 'My child has thrived at Draycott and Rodney Stoke School and I cannot recommend the school more highly.'

Pupils' achievement is good. An extremely effective and outstanding Early Years Foundation Stage enables children to make an excellent start to school. Their progress is good overall in Years 1 to 4 so that, by the end of Year 4, pupils' attainment is high in reading and above average in writing and mathematics. Attainment has risen for pupils in Year 4 in recent years and their attainment represents good progress given their starting points. New arrangements for checking pupils' progress and improving teaching have made a significant impact on accelerating pupils' progress and raising achievement. Pupils make rapid progress in developing research skills in Years 3 and 4 and use the information they have gathered well when writing across the curriculum. However, spelling, punctuation and handwriting weaknesses occasionally mar the quality of their writing. The school acknowledges there is more to do to ensure that writing tasks for Year 3 pupils always build securely on the reading, phonics (letters and sounds) and writing skills they acquired in Year 2.

The very good leadership of the headteacher is central to ensuring that the focus on accelerating progress is always a priority. She has earned the respect of teachers and parents and carers, and been instrumental in promoting an all-round school improvement. The focus on developing and checking teaching has led to much good teaching and learning, although lesson introductions are occasionally too difficult for lower attaining pupils or too easy for more capable pupils. Good self-evaluation arrangements have led to the school having an accurate and honest view of its own performance. Leaders, together with other staff, systematically use the school-wide assessment systems to accurately measure pupils' progress and identify any gaps. Good teamwork by all concerned with the school is a major reason why it is improving so well. Middle leaders make a positive contribution to improving pupils' achievement and the governing body is a real asset through providing strong support and good levels of challenge. There have been

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significant improvements since the last inspection in several key areas, including the smooth setting up of the pre-school, children's progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage, the development of school-wide tracking and evaluation systems as well as more demanding target setting for pupils. This shows the school has a good capacity to continue to improve.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' attainment in writing in Years 3 and 4 by:
 - improving the consistency of good spelling, punctuation and handwriting
 - ensuring the skills acquired in Year 2 are consistently built upon in Year 3.
- Improve the consistency of good teaching and pupils' good learning and progress by July 2011 by:
 - ensuring lesson introductions are not too long and that they consistently meet the needs of all abilities
 - ensuring pupils are always given good opportunities for applying their reading and phonics skills when writing in other subjects.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Pupils really enjoy school and this, combined with excellent relationships, provides a very positive framework for learning. On entry to the Early Years Foundation Stage, children's starting points are broadly at the levels expected for their age. Excellent progress lifts their overall attainment to above average on entry to Year 1. Pupils' learning is consistently good in Years 1, 2 and 4 but the development of pupils' writing skills in Year 3 is not always as systematic as it should be and this prevents pupils' attainment rising more quickly. Later entrants quickly adjust to the school so they do well and extra help enables the small minority who enter with gaps in their knowledge and skills to catch up. Well-focused, individual support ensures that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress.

Lesson observations, the evaluation of pupils' tracking information and of their work showed their learning is usually good. Practical activities are often used successfully to prepare pupils for academic work, such as writing. This was seen when, after designing and making African masks, pupils in Years 1 and 2 wrote instructions to tell others how to create masks. Pupils of all abilities learned well because of the strong build up of their key reading and writing skills before they were set to work on their writing tasks. The teachers' skilled use of ability groupings promoted good levels of challenge for higher-attaining Year 1 pupils as they worked alongside Year 2 pupils. Throughout the school, pupils make good progress in information and communication technology skills, applying computer skills to literacy and numeracy tasks.

Pupils are articulate and develop confidence. They are responsible and very mature in the way they share ideas and explore problems in small teams. Support from the local church and strong links with the community help to promote the school's family atmosphere and pupils' excellent spiritual, moral and social development. Pupils develop a love of nature and, through historical projects centred around themes, such as 'The Axebridge Hiring Fair' develop a sense of wonder in local history. The thriving school council is an excellent

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vehicle for enabling pupils to contribute to school decision making. They are keen to show how much they enjoy their responsibilities, for example as playtime buddies or when creating opportunities for raising funds for their classes and charities at home and abroad. Good links with two inner-city schools and 'Focus Weeks', such as on Africa, provide regular opportunities for pupils to learn about different cultures. Pupils enjoy the very wide range of activities to help them to keep and stay fit and this is reflected in their national award. Their good attendance and the extent to which they build up and apply their basic skills prepare them well for the future.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
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	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

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

How effective is the provision?

Pupils learn in a very attractive, well-resourced and carefully organised environment.

◆◆ Teachers manage their pupils very well and make most lessons stimulating and interesting by using information and communication technology well to enthuse and motivate them. Lessons often ensure pupils learn through listening, watching and practising as well as by exploring ideas and solving problems in small groups. Teachers generally use their assessment of pupils' progress well to meet their different learning needs. Occasionally, lesson introductions are overlong, which prevents pupils taking a more active part. In the few instances where teaching was only satisfactory, it was because learning tasks were not fully adjusted to meet pupils' needs, including for the consolidation and teaching of key phonics and writing skills in written tasks in cross-

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curricular work. Much is done to encourage pupils to consider how well they have worked and whether they have met their targets. Teaching assistants play an invaluable role in supporting those with special educational needs and/or disabilities in class and when pupils are taken out for specialist support.

The good curriculum is enriched by a rich array of activities, including in music, art, design and technology and sport. Pupils are very enthusiastic about the many opportunities they have to take part in music, drama and sporting activities. Carefully chosen visitors and visits enliven pupils' learning, including during 'Focus Weeks', for example on Africa. Pupils were given excellent opportunities to create sounds of the African bush using instruments and voices when presenting, 'Here Comes the Buffalo'. Strong partnerships with other schools in the Cheddar Valley Learning Partnership widen pupils' learning and enable them to experience working alongside pupils of the same age from other schools. The school has made good strides in developing links between subjects and there is a strong focus on the basic skills. However, the build up of writing skills is patchy in Year 3.

Each pupil is known and valued and exceptionally good partnerships with parents and carers contribute to pupils' excellent feelings of personal safety and security as well as to their good learning. The impact is seen in pupils' excellent personal development and high attainment in reading. Induction and transition arrangements are excellent and these enable pre-school and reception children and later entrants to the school to settle very quickly. The breakfast club provides a very caring and happy start to the school day.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Strong leaders and managers have maintained the good quality of education and high quality of care identified at the previous inspection and have secured important improvements. The headteacher has communicated her clear vision to staff very well. The school has recovered from some turbulence at senior level which extended over a term. Senior leaders work closely together to maintain, improve and check provision. There are clear systems for managing the school and staff are empowered to play a full part in raising achievement. This is important in this small school where staff have many responsibilities. Members of the governing body play a full part in the life of the school and closely monitor each action point for improvement. Members of the governing body are organised well and are increasingly effective in challenging the school about achievement matters. They have ensured that building extension work has been managed successfully, including extensions to the Early Years Foundation Stage unit so that it provides suitable accommodation for the Nursery. Parents and carers are exceptionally

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well informed about their children's achievement and well-being and how they can help their children to achieve of their best.

Safeguarding arrangements are given the highest priority and are firmly established in policies, working practices and the ethos of the school. There are extremely well-managed systems for child protection, health and safety across the school. This is affirmed by the high degree of endorsement from parents and carers in the questionnaires returned and pupils' unequivocal view that they feel safe. The school is vigilant in tackling discrimination and promotes equality of opportunity well. It recognises that further work is required to develop the consistency of provision for writing in Years 3 and 4. ♦ Provision for community cohesion is good and is ♦ developing well at all levels. The school celebrates the diversity of its community and has strong links at a national level. Work is now rightly being established to make further links at an international level.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
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	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
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	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

The Pre-School has been quickly established so that children in this unit and Reception are given a flying start. Staff are well trained and qualified and they cater extremely well for children's individual learning needs. Children are very happy and make excellent progress in their learning and development. There is a high emphasis on care and safeguarding, which are outstanding. An outstanding partnership is quickly formed with parents and carers of the Pre-School and Reception children and a warm welcome from staff helps children to quickly settle. As one parent commented, 'The Early Years Foundation Stage unit is fantastic'.

Children's skills on entry are broadly at the level expected. The quality of provision is outstanding throughout Pre-School and Reception and, by the end of Reception, children's

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attainment is above that expected, including in communication, language and literacy and problem solving, reasoning and numeracy. From the start, there is a very strong focus on developing children's curiosity, observation, speaking and thinking skills through practical enquiry. A very well-selected range of toys, equipment and play resources awaken children's interests when they are engaged in independent play or during focused group activities both indoors and outside. In both Pre-School and Reception, staff strike a good balance of more formal, adult-led activities and those activities children select for themselves. In the Pre-School, vibrant singing and rhyme activities and high-quality teaching by adults fully engage children's interest in early reading and counting. Children have many excellent practical experiences, including through play, to develop their awareness of letters, sounds and numbers.

In Reception, literacy and numeracy teaching is excellent and is gradually more structured as children progress through the year. The build up of children's phonics, reading and writing skills is rigorous within each lesson and over time. Innovative, exciting activities make learning fun and engage children's interests in learning to read. These include active, practical tasks outdoors and excellent opportunities for children to learn from each other.

There is a very good array of role-play activities; for example, 'The Flower Shop' provides excellent opportunities for children to develop their imagination, and independent learning skills and early literacy and numeracy skills. Leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is excellent with close and very effective teamwork between all staff. Assessment is very thorough and carefully analysed to check the impact of provision on children's individual progress as well as to match activities to their learning needs. Children in the breakfast club are very well cared for. They have very worthwhile activities and enjoy healthy breakfasts.

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

The very large majority of parents or carers who returned the questionnaires or who spoke to the inspection team were overwhelmingly positive about the school and its impact on their children's learning and well-being. They feel their children are kept very safe and their children really enjoy school and make good progress. Additional comments included appreciation for the many improvements made by the headteacher, staff and governing body over the past few years. Some parents and carers of pupils who were later entrants wrote to say how very pleased they are with the way in which their children had settled and were progressing. Their views reflect inspection findings. However, a very

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small minority expressed concern about how Year 3 pupils were to be grouped when in Year 4 next year. School leaders and the governing body are currently making decisions about class organisations for the coming year and will keep parents and carers up to date as soon as these are finalised.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

The inspection team received 30 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 85 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	23	77	6	20	1	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	22	73	8	27	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	19	63	9	30	2	7	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	19	63	10	33	1	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	20	67	10	33	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	19	63	9	30	2	7	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	21	70	9	30	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	60	11	37	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	17	57	10	33	2	7	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	19	63	10	33	1	3	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	17	57	11	37	2	7	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	18	60	11	37	1	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	22	73	8	27	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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 2009 to 31 August 2010 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 2009/10 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.



25 March 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Draycott and Rodney Stoke Church of England First School,
Draycott BS27 3SD**

Thank you for making us welcome when we visited your school recently. We really enjoyed finding out about the interesting things you do. This letter is to tell you what we found on our inspection.

First, you need to know your school is a good one. Here are some of the many things your school does well.

- Those of you in the Early Years Foundation Stage make an excellent start.
- You make good progress in Years 1 to 4 and your attainment is high in reading and above average in writing and mathematics by the end of Year 4. ♦
- You make your school a special place because you are good learners, are friendly, work hard and behave extremely well.
- You have many exciting learning opportunities including in information and communication technology, music, art, design and technology and sport, as well as for after-school clubs. ♦
- Your teachers are good at making your lessons interesting.
- Staff take very good care of you and you told us how extremely safe you feel.
- Your headteacher leads you all very well and all the staff and governors think very carefully about what is best for you.

This is what we are asking your school to do to improve even further.

- Help you to improve your spelling, punctuation and handwriting in Years 3 and 4.
- Help your teachers to always plan activities for you that build on what you already know.

We hope you will continue to enjoy school and carry on working hard in all you do. ♦ Well done for doing so much for the community. Please keep this up! ♦

Yours sincerely

Eileen Chadwick

Lead inspector

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