

# Dymchurch Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	118565
<b>Local Authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	366514
<b>Inspection dates</b>	13–14 July 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Sheila Browning

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills (HMCI) the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	178
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Peter Marnham
<b>Headteacher</b>	Michele Rowland
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	25 February 2010
<b>School address</b>	New Hall Close Romney Marsh Kent TN29 0LE
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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	13–14 July 2011
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one additional inspector. The inspector observed seven lessons taught by seven teachers. The inspector observed the schools work and looked at a range of documentation, including the schools improvement reports, records of pupils progress in each year group, the schools monitoring records, the school and subject action planning and safeguarding procedures. The inspector met with senior and middle leaders, members of the governing body and strategy group and pupils.

The inspector reviewed many aspects of the schools work. She looked in detail at a number of key areas that were identified by the inspection in February 2010.

How effectively the school has raised attainment and accelerated progress for all groups of pupils.

The quality of teaching and learning and how effectively teachers use assessment information to plan work that meet pupils differing needs.

The impact of subject leaders and members of the governing body on driving forward pupils learning and in promoting improvement.

## Information about the school

Dymchurch is smaller than the average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly average. Most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic heritages is much lower than average, as is the percentage who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average, although in some year groups it is much higher. The school caters for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage in a Reception class. The school has Healthy School status. The on-site childrens centre and nursery, managed independently, were not part of this inspection.

Since the previous inspection there have been some significant staff changes. The previous headteacher, six teaching staff and several teaching assistants left in August 2010. The school roll decreased to one-form entry. In April 2010 an executive headteacher was appointed; in September 2010 she was appointed substantive headteacher. Two new teaching staff were appointed and two key senior posts were filled during the current school year, 2010/11. The roles and responsibilities of senior and middle leaders have been reviewed. More than half of the members of the governing body have been appointed since the previous inspection and the governing body was subsequently restructured. As a result, a new strategy group was formed. Building work has been completed in the Early Years Foundation Stage with the construction of a covered outdoor learning area. Major building works and refurbishment of the school continue. When the school was inspected in February 2010, it was judged to require special measures. Inspectors made monitoring visits in September 2010 and in March 2011 to evaluate the schools progress since the previous inspection.

**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

In accordance with section 13(4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures. The school provides a good standard of education.

In February 2010, when the school was inspected, attainment had been significantly lower than found nationally for some years and pupils were not making enough progress. This is no longer the case. Standards are rising across the school due to the accelerated progress being made by all groups of pupils. Pupils attainment in Years 2 and 6 external assessments has shown a marked upturn to broadly average levels. In all other year groups it is broadly in line with age-related expectations. The new headteacher took immediate action to tackle the culture of low expectation which had led to weak teaching and underachievement in the past. She has established strong senior leaders and built on existing strengths to nurture all staff. Now staff and pupils alike have high expectations, most teaching is good and all groups of pupils achieve well. Restructuring of the staff and governors has led to good self-evaluation procedures which have successfully and rapidly improved progress in the areas identified for improvement in the previous inspection. This confirms a good capacity for further improvement.

Pupils are taught well, are motivated and engaged. However, in a few lessons, learning slows because tasks are not matched closely enough to pupils differing needs, resulting in a few pupils not being sufficiently challenged. Pupils make much better progress over time in reading than in mathematics and writing, where they are still making up for a legacy of gaps in their knowledge, skills and understanding. In the classes where teaching is particularly effective, accurate use of assessment information helps teachers to plan where the learning of pupils at all levels of ability needs to move forward each day. Checks on pupils progress are robust and any underperformance is carefully targeted to ensure all groups of pupils make good progress, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities or speak English as an additional language. Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage has improved considerably. It satisfactorily prepares children for more formal learning in Year 1, but remains a weaker aspect of the school because children are not always stretched in learning their basic skills. Good quality care, advice and support are provided consistently. Much improved relationships with families, who are also now very positive about the schools work, and strong pastoral arrangements and external partnerships mean that pupils are safe and happy at school and attendance is improving. Pupils behaviour has significantly improved and is consistently good, with pupils showing respect and empathy for each other.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils attainment in mathematics and writing by:

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- ensuring pupils have good opportunities to consolidate their basic computation skills, including their multiplication tables
- increasing pupils progress in writing to match their progress in reading
- checking that pupils are always sufficiently challenged
- refining the monitoring skills of subject leaders so that they contribute to ensuring teaching and learning are always consistently good or better.
- Build on the improvements in the Early Years Foundation Stage to improve childrens skills further by:
  - increasing the opportunities for children to develop their early language, literacy and communication skills and number work so that they consistently make good progress
  - ensuring that the learning environment is rich and stimulating.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****2**

Pupils good enjoyment of all aspects of school life is an important factor in their good achievement. As one pupil commented, They are making us work harder but we are enjoying it. For example in a Year 6 lesson, pupils enjoyed learning about algebraic formulas and shared their responses enthusiastically. Year 2 English pupils enjoyed using adjectives to describe mythical creatures, and linked this to previous work on Greek myths. Year 5 successfully recorded their emotions after their drama helped them to extend their vocabulary. Children enter Reception with skills and knowledge below that normally expected, especially in communication, social development and number. They leave in Year 6 with broadly average attainment. Attainment is rising fast because pupils, including those with more specific learning difficulties, the more able and those from ethnic minority heritages, are making better progress than before. Gaps between boys and girls achievement are narrowing, but pupils progress rates vary between reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils books show that the pupils try really hard, but some are still hampered by gaps in their knowledge, understanding and confidence to use basic computation skills and their multiplication tables accurately. Their written work shows better use of punctuation, spelling and vocabulary, but such skills are not consistently applied in their written work.

Pupils personal development is a strength. Behaviour has improved significantly and makes a strong contribution to good learning. The schools healthy award reflects pupils good knowledge of healthy lifestyles, participation in house, sporting activities and breakfast club. Pupils feel valued and want to contribute to their school and local community. As school councillors and in business assemblies, they share their views and were instrumental in organising a careers day, when they invited professionals to talk about their work, fund raise, and took part in the local Chari Vari festival and British Legions 90th birthday celebrations. They show a good understanding of safety, and of different communities. A European themed day led to researching facts and making and tasting foods from France, Greece, Poland, Spain and Switzerland as well as dancing. Pupils are proud buddies and care about their much-improved learning environment. They especially like the new books, large play equipment, technology and the automatic doors. They are becoming better prepared for their future, as one pupil said, The special help is making a real difference. However, their average skills in numeracy and literacy mean that their economic well-being is satisfactory.

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*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
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
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

<sup>1</sup> 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?

Significant improvements in teaching have led to more active participation of pupils in lessons. Teachers use of questioning, technology and improved resources has contributed to pupils accelerated progress. Frequent monitoring of teaching and learning quality, well-focused school-based training and good support from the local authority have strengthened teaching. A few inconsistencies remain in terms of ensuring all pupils are sufficiently challenged. Marking is usually of good quality. Pupils like to assess each others work, know their targets and how to improve further. Robust assessment procedures and pupil progress meetings mean that the resulting information is used well to identify and tackle any who are lagging behind. The schools major focus on reading has meant that the majority of pupils have become confident readers and can now more readily access the curriculum, and understand problem-solving questions, for example in mathematics.

The curriculum is much improved. The main focus has rightly been on lifting pupils basic literacy and numeracy skills and this has been achieved through a range of interesting themes. Year 1 has explored pirates and smugglers, while Year 2 researched rainforests and creatures. The large rainforest collage with sound effects, made by the art club, is a superb piece of work. In Book Week, Year 3 explored stories from Afghanistan and made their own books. Year 4 enjoyed making large-scale Iron Man models, studied and hatched butterflies. The curriculum is being reviewed to make it even more creative and to

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ensure every child is challenged. Breakfast club, use of the wobbly woodsite trail, arts, sports and Spanish clubs are popular. Visitors, special events and the schools Wicked production enrich the curriculum further. The school provides a nurturing learning environment where pupils with additional needs are well supported by staff and the use of external expertise. Pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable are well integrated and clearly-targeted support has led to significant improvement in their attitudes, behaviour, self-esteem and achievement. Good transition arrangements prepare pupils well for their move to secondary education.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

## How effective are leadership and management?

High expectations and a shared drive for improvement are behind the schools rapid progress. Since the previous inspection the school has crossed, not one but, two levels of Ofsted grade criteria in many aspects of its work. Key has been the skilful leadership and rigorous self-challenge of the headteacher, ably supported by the local authority, staff, governors and the pupils. Restructuring of senior and middle leaders, including changes to the governing body, has resulted in clarity and delegation of roles, and accountability. The governing body now has considerable expertise within its number and robustly challenges school performance. The governor strategy group is leading the enthusiasm for change and the members make key decisions and challenge leaders. As one governor commented, This is a much, much more positive placeso much is going on and parents are behind us. Monitoring of teaching quality is securely and correctly rooted in determining how much progress pupils make. Subject leaders though are not yet as robust as senior leaders in monitoring and evaluating teaching. The improved financial arrangements have strengthened the schools finances and external partnerships and have enabled the refurbishment programme and resources to be increased.

Safeguarding procedures are securely founded on good practice. Staff are well trained in child protection procedures and the school acted promptly to tackle some parental concerns about site security. The school ensures that all groups of pupils have an equal opportunity to succeed, pupils get on well together and the school promotes tolerance and appreciation of cultural diversity. This inclusion means that there are effective procedures in place to tackle any discrimination. Community cohesion is very strong in the local community, as seen in its good work to engage parents and carers and to promote unity in the local community. Work in reaching out to other communities much further from the school, although planned for, is limited. This means the schools promotion of community cohesion is satisfactory rather than good.

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*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## **Early Years Foundation Stage**

Children join with skills and understanding well below levels expected for their age. They make satisfactory progress in their learning by the time they move to Year 1. The school has developed good links with the on-site childrens centre and nursery which have resulted in closer partnerships with families, children and external services. Smooth transition arrangements, including the sharing of the new outside learning environment, ensure children are settled. All adults work well together and have a good focus on childrens welfare. Leaders have identified the gaps in the childrens personal and social development, early writing and number skills. Senior leaders are tackling these, although many children still struggle to improve these particular skills quickly enough. While considerable improvements are evident in the environment, organisation and recording of childrens progress, the learning environment is not yet stimulating and rich enough to inspire a real excitement for learning and so motivate the childrens interests and enthusiasm. Planning is improving and learning is balanced between teacher-led and child-chosen activities. Adults interact with children well and encourage them to extend their ideas, for example when making a book there was lots of talk about what the title, contents page and illustrations might look like. Children enjoyed hunting for, and digging up, a treasure chest and singing and dancing to a pirate song. Outside, children developed measuring and estimating skills as they counted the number of bricks and the different cars that travelled past on a sloping track. Children had clearly enjoyed sports day as they organised sack races and obstacle courses. The good relationships between adults and children contribute to the calm organised atmosphere and ensure that learning is appropriate. Children are happy, safe and are well looked after and enjoy learning. Their health is promoted well through good attention to their welfare needs.



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*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

## Views of parents and carers

As there was no Ofsted questionnaire for this inspection, the inspector took account of parents and carers responses to the schools most recent survey which asked their views about the following.

What has gone well this year?

What would I like the school to do next year?

Any other comments?

Almost all of those who responded expressed very positive views about the improvements in their childrens progress, involvement in and enjoyment of school, behaviour, the quality of teaching and much improved communications, about their childrens progress and school developments. Two comments typified many, A dramatic improvement in all areas. I am so happy with my childs progress. Greater involvement of children, sense of belonging and children are more confident. These positive views are reflected in the findings of this inspection.

## **Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire**

Parental questionnaires are not normally distributed for inspections conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005, unless inspectors have specific reasons to request that the school does so.

## 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	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 31 December 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



15 July 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Dymchurch Primary School, Dymchurch TN 29 OEL**

Thank you for welcoming me when I visited your school. Your school has made good progress over the last year and no longer needs extra help. This is because your headteacher and the other leaders, teachers, governors and you have worked very effectively to improve the school, so much so that it is now a good school. Here are some of the things I found.

You are making much faster progress than a year ago and have made up a lot of lost ground, especially in reading.

You told me how much behaviour has improved, how well you are cared for and that you feel safe.

You know how to keep healthy and take a full part in the life of the school and in the local community.

You learn well in most lessons because teachers try to make learning fun.

You always try to do your best, even when you are having difficulties.

All of the people who are responsible for making the school better do a really good job because they keep checks on how well they are doing and keep looking for ways to improve the school and your experiences.

To help the school improve further, I have asked the school to do the following.

Help you to do even better in your mathematics and writing by:

asking the teachers to give you more help and guidance to improve your mathematics and writing skills

helping teachers with extra responsibilities to check that teaching is always good or better.

Giving those children in Early Years Foundation Stage more exciting classrooms and more help in developing their early language and number skills.

You can help too by continuing to work hard, learning your multiplication tables and practising your writing skills even more.

Yours sincerely

Sheila Browning

Lead inspector

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