

# Dartington Church of England Primary School and Nursery

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number113394Local AuthorityDevonInspection number378697

Inspection dates22–23 November 2011Reporting inspectorDavid Townsend HMI

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

**Type of school** Primary

School category Voluntary controlled

Age range of pupils 3-11
Gender of pupils Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll 331

**Appropriate authority** The governing body

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Age group 3-11

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#### Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors who observed 25 lessons taught by 12 teachers. They held discussions with staff and representatives from the governing body. Inspectors spent time talking to pupils and looking through a sample of their workbooks. They also observed the school's work, and scrutinised key documents relating to safeguarding, health and safety, school improvement, and teachers' planning and assessments of pupils. The inspection team also looked at data and information relating to the progress being made by pupils, their attainment and their attendance. Inspectors took account of responses to questionnaires from pupils, staff and 101 parents and carers.

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

- How well pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who join part-way through their schooling achieve.
- Whether the school is doing enough to ensure that pupils attain well in mathematics.
- The impact of work to promote regular attendance.
- The effectiveness of leaders and managers in monitoring and evaluating the quality of provision and outcomes for pupils.

# Information about the school

This is a larger than average-sized primary school. Most pupils are of White British heritage and the rest are from a wide range of other backgrounds. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly average. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average and has risen significantly since the last inspection. These are predominantly linked to difficulties in communication or behavioural, social or physical needs as well as pupils with moderate learning difficulties and complex needs. There is a high rate of pupil mobility in and out of the school. The school runs a breakfast club for up to 16 pupils each morning. Since the last inspection, the school has moved into new accommodation. It has established an integrated unit for the Early Years Foundation Stage, in which children of Nursery and Reception Year age are educated together.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

# **Main findings**

Dartington Church of England Primary School and Nursery is a welcoming school with a friendly atmosphere. It provides a satisfactory education overall but it has some particular strengths of which it can be proud. These include the effective care, guidance and support given to pupils which help ensure pupils' well-being. Pupils feel safe in school, behave well and lead healthy lives. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and they make a positive contribution to school and local life. Partnerships with families, schools, community groups and external services are good. Parents and carers recognise and appreciate the school's efforts on behalf of their children. As one parent said, 'Dartington has been wonderfully supportive of my child.'

Since the last inspection, attainment has improved and is broadly average for pupils by the end of Year 2 and in English by the end of Year 6. This reflects the fact that pupils' achievement is improving as a result of an increase in good teaching, especially in English. However, although progress in mathematics is securely satisfactory and improving, attainment is currently low. Higher-attaining pupils are not always challenged enough and for others, their understanding of number concepts and fluency with mental calculation skills are less secure.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who join the school part-way through their primary education are making satisfactory progress overall. The additional support programmes in place for pupils with specific learning needs have needed reorganisation to reflect the changing and more complex profile of pupils' needs. The provision typically results in good teaching. However, some initiatives are too new to see their full impact on pupils' achievement. There are effective systems in place to ensure that older pupils new to the school settle quickly in Key Stage 2.

There has been a concerted effort to improve and monitor the quality of teaching. Although there is much that is good, teaching is satisfactory overall. It remains uneven in quality across classes and this, in turn, impacts on overall achievement. In the better lessons, the teachers' questioning, demonstrations and group tasks serve to challenge and support pupils of all abilities. Where teaching quality dips, this is less apparent. Similarly, while some pupils receive good advice on how to improve their work, this is not the case for all. The school recognises that the sharing of effective classroom techniques among staff and the evaluation of how consistently they are being used by all teachers are underdeveloped.

#### 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

The school has a satisfactory capacity to improve further. Leaders and managers have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The school is having some success in improving outcomes. For example, efforts made to combat a previously high rate of pupil absence from school have resulted in significant improvement and average rates of attendance. The headteacher has shown expertise in developing the skills of the leadership team. Secure systems have been put in place to monitor and develop teaching and to track pupils' progress. However, leaders have not identified sharply enough which pupil groups, such as the higher-attainers, are underachieving, so that a focus on their specific learning needs might drive improvement planning.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

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

- Raise attainment and further accelerate pupils' progress in mathematics by ensuring that in lessons:
  - new learning about number concepts is demonstrated well
  - there are frequent opportunities to practise their mental calculation skills
  - those ready to move on in their learning more quickly are helped to do so.
- Deliver lessons that are consistently good or better by ensuring teachers:
  - use assessment information to set high expectations in class and to challenge and support pupils of all abilities
  - regularly provide pupils with good quality written and oral feedback, linked to learning targets, to support pupils in making further improvements.
- Improve the effectiveness of the school's leadership in driving improvement by:
  - promoting further the sharing of best practice, coaching and mentoring to tackle inconsistencies in teaching
  - improving the ways used to check that specific classroom strategies are being successfully adopted across the school
  - using a sharper analysis of trends in achievement for pupil groups, identifying their specific learning needs to set improvement plan priorities and targets.

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

3

Most pupils enjoy learning and make satisfactory progress. Attainment is rising because pupils' learning and progress are improving securely and quickly. Progress is good in reading and satisfactory in writing and mathematics. Many pupils are showing positive attitudes to learning and are concentrating well in lessons. A

growing number of pupils across the school are making good progress but variation remains, linked to inconsistencies in the teaching, especially in mathematics. Pupils have developed a set of problem-solving strategies but, for some, their understanding of number concepts and relationships, and their mental calculation skills are insecure. This, in turn, affects the quantity and quality of the work some pupils produce and on their confidence levels. The lower attainment in mathematics is also due, in part, because too few pupils manage to attain the higher levels, of which some are undoubtedly capable.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve satisfactorily. A wide range of additional support programmes have been put in place for pupils with moderate learning difficulties and more complex needs. Targeted support is also in place across year groups for pupils who need to catch up on basic skills, such as the 'Every Child Counts' programme. While the teaching in these is typically good, some interventions have not been in place long enough to assess their full impact on pupils' achievement. The high proportion of pupils who join the school part-way through Key Stage 2, in Year 4 and, for some, in Year 6, were found to be progressing at similar rates to all pupils in school.

Pupils behave well in lessons and around school. Those with specific behavioural needs are well supported. Incidents of bullying and racial harassment are rare. Pupils report being very confident in the school's response to any concerns they raise. As a result, pupils feel safe in school and well cared for by staff. They understand the importance of leading a healthy life and act on this knowledge. After-school activities such as 'bike-ability', dance and football that promote physical exercise are popular with boys and girls.

Pupils have a keen sense of citizenship and readily take on responsibilities as play-leaders, librarians and through the 'good neighbour' and enterprise projects. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They have a clear understanding of right and wrong. The school makes good use of the families' different cultural backgrounds and the wider curriculum to promote pupils' understanding of each other's beliefs and perspectives.

Attendance levels are average and much improved. The school has been tireless in promoting the positive benefits of punctual and regular attendance on pupils' learning and well-being with families.

#### These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:  Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3

<sup>&</sup>lt;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

The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

### How effective is the provision?

Although there is variation in the quality of teaching seen across the school, most is at least satisfactory and the proportion of good teaching is increasing. In the lessons seen, pupils have good relationships with each other and with adults. The activities set are engaging and resources are used well to help support pupils with their learning and to stimulate their thinking. In the better lessons, pupils make good progress and are working at levels that challenge them to learn new skills and knowledge. Where teaching is satisfactory or weaker, expectations are not high enough and group tasks are not matched closely enough to the needs of all pupils. Although some pupils receive good advice in class and through the teachers' marking on how to improve their work, the quality of this advice varies across classes.

The curriculum has some good features. It promotes active learning well; for example, through the 'Forest Schools' initiative, which is a particular strength. Pupils are proud of this work on real-life challenges, such as how to harvest herbs and make dough in order to create pizzas. The quality of adult support and specialist facilities, such as a bread oven, fire pit and market garden, lead to safe and memorable learning experiences for pupils. A new, creative curriculum is underway and helps pupils to make links in their learning. There is a good range of extracurricular activities on offer. However, although there are many effective intervention groups set up to support pupils in catching up basic skills in mathematics, the match between planning for the subject in class and pupils' different needs is sometime imprecise.

Arrangements for pastoral care, guidance and support are strong. Good working relationships between the school and external agencies benefit pupils and ensure their wide-ranging needs are being met. For example, the school provides good support for its Traveller families. The significant numbers of vulnerable pupils with social and emotional problems are well supported. For example, through the 'Thrive' programme, their well-being is rigorously targeted and tracked. The breakfast club offers pupils a lively, caring and positive atmosphere and stimulating activities to ensure a positive start to the day.

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

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#### These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account:	
The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

# How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher is ambitious for the school and has ensured that staff, pupils and parents and carers support her drive for raised achievement. She is ably supported by her leadership team. The quality of teaching has been carefully and accurately monitored. Leaders have introduced new teaching strategies, such as teacher-led small group work, to help accelerate pupils' progress. This has helped increase the proportion of good teaching but implementation of these new ideas across classes remains uneven. Not enough has been done to model best practice for all staff and to check how consistently agreed approaches are being implemented. Comprehensive systems are in place to ensure pupils' academic progress is carefully assessed and tracked. Working with staff, leaders have identified the correct priority of improving pupils' basic skills. All forms of discrimination are effectively tackled. Actions taken to improve pupils' reading and writing have already helped them reduce the variation in achievement and so promote better equality of opportunity. However, tracking data on pupils' progress is not yet used well enough to establish improvement plan priorities that focus on the specific learning needs of underachieving pupils.

Governors are playing an increasing role in the school's development. They work well together and are increasingly holding the school to account for its performance. They have taken responsibility for improving their understanding of performance data and are working to make greater use of this knowledge as the school addresses its immediate priorities for improvement. They discharge their statutory responsibilities diligently. Robust procedures for safeguarding meet statutory requirements and underpin the school's very caring approach.

The school promotes community cohesion well. It reaches out to other communities locally, nationally and internationally while nurturing among pupils a strong sense of the cultural diversity that exists within school now, as its population changes. Partnership with parents and carers is good. Many volunteer or take up regular placements to help support learning in school. Good quality information about school events and the progress of their children is made available to families. Strong links are in place with community groups to enrich the curriculum and with external services to support pupils with specific needs. The school has close ties with Bidwell Brook, the neighbouring special school. Pupils with more complex needs benefit from

access to specialist provision, such as hydrotherapy, and pupils from both schools enjoy participating in the 'good neighbours' programme.

#### These are the grades for leadership and management

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

# **Early Years Foundation Stage**

Children are making satisfactory progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and are working at the levels expected for their age. This year, children are making quicker progress across each area of learning because the quality of provision continues to improve. Inspectors saw good examples of language development, such as a story-sharing session in which adults encouraged children to answer each other's questions. Opportunities to develop language skills when children are engaged in exploratory play are also generally taken well by a skilled teaching team.

The quality of teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Children are settling well into routines within the newly established integrated unit. Nurseryaged and Reception Year children happily learn together. They enjoy a range of stimulating activities, indoors and outside, that promote investigative play. There is a balance of adult- and child-led learning and a timetable which takes account of the respective needs of the range of children's ages. However, occasionally, the pace of learning slows in sessions led by the teacher, such as in one session seen to help more able children identify their letters and sounds. Children are not given enough time to practise the sounds being taught and individuals are not targeted for particular support.

The curriculum on offer is broad and balanced. Resources and activities set out for child-led exploration are generally selected with reference to children's known interests and learning needs. Key workers check the response of individual children

to new experiences in a planned way and these assessments are used to inform future planning. Strong links are in place with parents and carers, who feel included in their children's education. The Early Years Foundation Stage is being efficiently led and the present coordinator has clear ideas about how the unit can be developed and improved.

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

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3	
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

A very large majority of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire are positive about their child's experience at school. Many parents and carers wrote to thank the school for helping their children settle in and applaud the good level of pastoral care, the teaching and leadership of the headteacher. Praise is offered about the quality of the after-school clubs, particularly the Forest School activities. A few parents and carers expressed concern that their children needed to be challenged further, particularly in mathematics. Inspectors pursued this issue and found that expectations of what pupils can achieve in this subject are not yet high enough. Nevertheless, the inspection team found evidence of an improving picture.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Dartington Church of England Primary School and Nursery 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 inspection team received completed 101 questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 331 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	65	64	34	34	2	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	59	58	34	34	7	7	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	42	42	49	49	8	8	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	47	47	43	43	7	7	2	2
The teaching is good at this school	57	56	39	39	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	58	57	31	31	10	10	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	48	48	46	46	5	5	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)	46	46	37	37	6	6	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	48	48	34	34	11	11	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	42	42	45	45	8	8	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	44	44	44	44	6	6	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	55	54	38	38	3	3	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	60	59	39	39	2	2	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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)				
Type of school	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.

the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and Attainment:

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.

the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, Leadership and management:

> 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: 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.

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.

the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and Progress:

> 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.

24 November 2011

**Dear Pupils** 



# Inspection of Dartington Church of England Primary School and Nursery, Dartington, TQ9 6JD

Thank you for welcoming us into your school and classrooms when we visited your school. It is clear you go to a very friendly and welcoming school. It provides you with a satisfactory education and it has some good features, which you enjoy.

These are the main things that we found out about your school.

- Children starting in Nursery and Reception settle quickly and adapt well to school routines.
- You enjoy school, feel safe and adopt healthy lifestyles.
- The care you receive from the adult team is particularly good, including for those of you who need extra support.
- You behave well and enjoy working and playing together.
- You enjoy the many opportunities you get to learn through practical activities, especially the outdoors learning through 'Forest Schools', which you particularly like.
- The school enjoys good partnerships with your families, other schools, local community groups and outside agencies that help support your learning.

We have asked the school to do three things to improve the quality of education that you receive.

- We have asked your teachers to help you make quicker progress with your mathematics learning by ensuring you fully understand new ideas and can recall number facts more quickly and confidently.
- We have asked that a little more is expected of you all, especially for those of you ready to move on more quickly in your learning.
- We have asked school leaders to focus their improvement plans on addressing your particular learning needs.

I hope you will do all you can to play your part in helping your teachers with these goals.

Yours sincerely

David Townsend Her Majesty's Inspector

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