

Ottery St Mary Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	113105
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	395379
Inspection dates	14–15 May 2012
Lead inspector	Paul Garvey

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	388
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Nicholas Johnson
Headteacher	Mark Gilronan
Date of previous school inspection	27–28 February 2008
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Age group	4–11
Inspection date(s)	14–15 May 2012
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Introduction

Inspection team

Paul Garvey

Additional inspector

Jeanne Simpson

Additional inspector

Peter Clifton

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 21 lessons and observed 15 teachers teaching for up to 40 minutes on each occasion. Afterwards the inspectors met with teachers to discuss their findings. A number of lessons were also visited for shorter periods to gather other information. Additionally, the inspectors met with pupils, members of staff and the chair of the governing body. The inspectors listened to pupils read and analysed work in pupils' books. The inspectors took account of the responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work and looked at a variety of documentation including the school development plan, records of pupils' progress, policies and school self-evaluation documents. The 175 returned questionnaires from parents and carers were analysed, as well as surveys of pupils and staff.

Information about the school

Ottery St. Mary Primary School is larger than the average primary school. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is below average, as is the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. An above average proportion of pupils join or leave partway through their primary school education. The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress. The proportion of pupils supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average. The headteacher retired recently and the school has an acting headteacher and acting deputy headteacher. There is a pre-school onsite that is not managed by the governing body. The school currently holds the Active mark.

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 that has sustained its forward momentum despite recent changes in leadership. It is not an outstanding school, because of some weaknesses in pupils' writing and in the quality of some of the teaching.
- All groups of pupils achieve well and attainment is above average. Pupils make good progress throughout the school, although their rate of progress in writing at Key Stage 2 is slower than at Key Stage 1.
- Pupils enjoy school. They are kind and courteous towards each other and to adults and they show good attitudes to their learning. Pupils and their parents and carers confirm that whilst some incidents of poorer behaviour occur, they are uncommon and all types of bullying are rare. Safeguarding is strong and relationships between staff and pupils are secure. Thus pupils feel safe in the school.
- Teaching is good, with effective planning to meet the needs of different groups of pupils. However, in some of the teaching at Key Stage 2, a minority of lessons have too great an element of teacher direction. Written feedback does not always identify the next steps in learning and opportunities for pupils to respond are sometimes too limited.
- The school's performance is carefully monitored by senior leaders and the governing body. The good quality of teaching and above-average levels of attainment have been sustained since the last inspection. Recent changes in leadership have not affected rates of progress in the school and the governing body has provided necessary support and good direction throughout these changes. Although good overall, the curriculum has some relatively limited opportunities at Key Stage 2 for extended writing.

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

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in writing at Key Stage 2 by July 2013, by giving pupils more opportunities to produce extended pieces of writing through which they can hone the skills they learn in class.
- By December 2012, increase the proportion of good and outstanding lessons taught by:
 - reducing the amount of teacher input in Key Stage 2 lessons to give pupils more time to build upon their good knowledge and understanding.
 - ensuring that written feedback consistently identifies pupils' next steps for learning.
 - ensuring that pupils are given sufficient opportunity to respond to the teacher's comments to allow pupils to show where they have improved their work and for them to explore what they should do next to achieve their targets.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Pupils usually join the school with skills on entry that are similar to those expected nationally. All groups of pupils leave with attainment that is above average, including those who are disabled and those with special educational needs. The above-average proportion of pupils who join or leave partway through their primary school education also attain well. Progress and achievement across the school are therefore good. However, progress is less rapid in Key Stage 2 in writing.

Pupils have good attitudes to their learning and concentrate well. In a large majority of the lessons seen, behaviour was good and pupils' learning was good as a result. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children make good progress towards their early learning goals, joining Year 1 with skills in literacy and numeracy that are above what would be expected for their age. This good progress continues through Key Stage 1, where pupils attain above-average standards at the end of Year 2, notably in reading. Pupils used a range of skills well to read words and sentences that were challenging for them. In a letters and sounds lesson in Year 1, the teacher dealt sensitively with misconceptions about the sounds of complex groups of letters, using expert subject knowledge. Consequently, pupils made excellent progress towards writing sentences populated with words containing those groups of letters. Good progress in reading continues in Key Stage 2, so pupils leave school with above average reading skills. Good progress also continues in mathematics in Key Stage 2 and pupils move into the next phase of their education with good numeracy skills. In a Year 6 mathematics lesson, good progress resulted from groups of pupils being given sufficient time to explore different ways of solving problems. This engaged them fully as they had sufficient opportunity to make decisions about the best ways for them to learn. However, teaching does not always extend the previous good progress made in writing, because of a lack of opportunity for pupils to produce

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extended pieces of writing in class. This is exacerbated in some lessons when teachers spend too long explaining tasks and giving information, thus reducing the time available for pupils to work independently and with their classmates.

Parents and carers typically express the view that their children are achieving well.

Quality of teaching

Teaching is good in the school and more consistently so in the Early Years Foundation Stage and at Key Stage 1 than at Key Stage 2. Good planning allows all groups of pupils to achieve well and skilled support from other adults enhances the learning of all abilities and groups of pupils. Pupils with English as an additional language and disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, are particularly well supported by teachers and teaching assistants and make good progress as a result. Relationships between pupils and adults are secure and the role models provided by adults contribute greatly to their moral and social education, resulting in good behaviour in and around school. In a Year 2 lesson on problem solving using multiplication, the emotional safety of pupils was paramount. Collective class praise for individuals who had succeeded, especially for those whose circumstances may make them vulnerable, allowed all groups of pupils to feel they could contribute. Good teaching in the Early Years Foundation stage supports the acquisition of reading skills particularly well. Pupils make good progress as a consequence. Parents and carers value the teaching the pupils receive and most of those who returned questionnaires felt that pupils are taught well. One response was typical of the comments of many parents and carers, 'We are extremely happy with the school and its teaching. Our children seem extremely happy here.' Pupils also feel they are taught well.

Where the teaching is outstanding, progress is swift. In a Year 3 lesson, a cleverly planned sequence of pupil activities involving shapes led a pupil to cry out: 'I've got it!' when exploring Euler's formula to connect angles, vertices and faces in 3-dimensional shapes. Excellent one-to-one support for a pupil with special educational needs and well-targeted support for all abilities allowed all pupils to make rapid progress towards a challenging goal. When the pace drops in lessons, it is often because the teacher talks to the pupils for longer than is necessary. As a result, children become less engaged as they are expected to be passive learners for too long.

Writing opportunities in both English books and in topic work showed a good level of skills, but opportunities to practise and hone those skills at Key Stage 2, by constructing longer pieces of work, are too limited. Work scrutiny showed some lack of consistency in written feedback between the teachers in different classes. Marking is supportive, but pupils are not always shown what the next steps in their learning should be. In addition there are not enough opportunities for pupils to engage in dialogue with their teachers to enable them to show where they have improved their work or to explore what they should do next to achieve their targets.

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Behaviour and safety of pupils

Behaviour is good. Parents and carers who returned questionnaires referred to some behaviour incidents that have occurred in lessons over time and pupils cited lunchtimes as times when fall-outs can occur. However, pupils and their parents and carers said that incidents are generally minor and staff act quickly to mend friendships. Therefore, any poorer behaviour seldom impacts upon learning. Pupils readily take on a variety of roles. Year 6 pupils act as sports leaders to lead play in the playground and pupils join the 'green team' to promote environmental awareness. Pupils also act as friendship buddies to resolve conflicts for younger pupils who may need help during break and lunchtime. Pupils thus contribute well to both the strong moral ethos and the secure social mores that permeate the school. Year 2 pupils were observed returning from a visit to play different sports at the nearby secondary school and saying how much they had enjoyed it. Active playtimes and good sports partnership work with other schools have contributed to the school being awarded the Activemark.

Pupils say how safe they feel in school and how this helps them to enjoy their learning. A very large majority of their parents and carers agree that the school keeps pupils safe. Pupils were quick to say how much they understand about different forms of bullying and that bullying incidents more serious than name-calling are rare. As a result, the attendance of all groups of pupils is above average and they are punctual to school and to their lessons.

Leadership and management

The good quality of leadership and management has been sustained during a period of change. The governing body has provided good advice and support to senior leaders. They have also found effective, if necessarily temporary, solutions to ensure continuity in senior leadership. The result has been that changes in staffing, especially in Year 6, have not adversely affected pupils' progress. Morale amongst staff is high and they say they feel supported through good quality professional development opportunities. Parents and carers mostly agree and there were only a few comments received which said that the recent senior leadership changes, or changes to classroom teachers, had resulted in a negative impact on their child.

Leaders at all levels provide good leadership and the school is well managed throughout. Improvement since the last inspection has resulted in more pupil involvement in school improvement through an active school council. The curriculum has also been enhanced through the introduction of good cross-curricular topic work, allowing pupils to develop more awareness of different cultural backgrounds in Britain. The monitoring of teaching has been effective in sustaining its quality overall and the good progress of pupils over time, indicating strengths in the school's potential to improve further. However, senior leaders acknowledge that improvement has been relatively slow in the small proportion of teaching that is satisfactory. All groups of pupils make good progress, however, and discrimination is not tolerated, thus equal opportunities are good for all. The fact that all groups reach

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above average attainment levels demonstrates strongly the school's effectiveness in promoting equal opportunities. The safety of the pupils has a high priority for the school and it is underpinned by robust and effective safeguarding measures. All staff and governors are fully trained in safeguarding procedures.

The curriculum is broad and balanced. It meets pupils' needs well overall, although opportunities at Key Stage 2 for extended writing across the curriculum are too limited. The curriculum promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. For example, detailed topic work about the reduction of rainforests, and pupils' excellent Aboriginal style artwork make a good contribution to pupils' personal development. Pupils said how much they value the many clubs and societies in which they can meet friends from other years socially; the gardening club, using the school allotment, is a popular choice.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	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 to 31 December 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.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
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.
Floor standards	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
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.



16 May 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Ottery St Mary Primary School, Ottery St Mary EX11 1HY

Thank you so much for making the inspectors feel welcome when we visited your school recently. You told us many of the good things about your school, and thank you to those who completed questionnaires. I was very impressed by how much you enjoy taking part in lessons and by your friendliness to each other and to the adults, who give you good care. Yours is a good school which is led well. You experience good teaching. The school gives you good moral and social education, and that is why you get on so well with each other. You told us about some fall-outs between children, but you also said how well your teachers and other adults help to mend friendships. We were especially impressed by the number of responsibilities you take on, joining the green team and being sports leaders. You said that you feel very safe and inspectors agree that the school keeps you safe. We enjoyed listening to some of you read and we saw that you are making good progress in your reading. All groups of pupils achieve above average results by the time they leave the school.

The headteacher and staff are keen to make the school even better. To help them to do this, we have asked the teachers to do four things.

- Give you more opportunities to write longer pieces of work at Key Stage 2, so you practise your writing skills fully.
- Allow you more time in class to work on your own and with each other.
- Tell you, through the marking of your books, how you can achieve the next steps in your learning.
- Encourage you to respond to your teachers' marking.

You can all help by talking to your teachers about how you can improve your work and continuing to behave well and attend school regularly.

Yours sincerely

Paul Garvey
Lead inspector

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