

Drake Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	113292
Local authority	Plymouth
Inspection number	395558
Inspection dates	11–12 July 2012
Lead inspector	Ronald Hall

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	224
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Janice Carr
Headteacher	Joe Roberts
Date of previous school inspection	27 February 2008
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Introduction

Inspection team

Ronald Hall

Additional inspector

Lindsay Gabriel

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors spent over eight hours observing teaching and visited 18 lessons taught by eight teachers. In addition, inspectors held discussions with pupils, members of the governing body and talked to senior leaders. Inspectors heard pupils read in both Year 1 and Year 6. The team observed the school's work, and looked at information about pupils' attainment and progress, the school improvement plan, school policies and teachers' planning. Questionnaires from 55 parents and carers and those from pupils and members of staff were analysed.

Information about the school

The majority of pupils in this average-sized primary school are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. There is Early Years Foundation Stage provision for children in the Reception class. The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress. The school has a number of nationally accredited awards and has gained Healthy Schools status.

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	1
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- Drake Primary is a good school which has created a highly positive ethos and ensured improved attainment and good progress over time. It is not yet an outstanding school because teaching is not strong enough to raise attainment consistently above average, particularly in writing.
- Teaching is consistently good with an increasing proportion of outstanding teaching. Strengths include teachers' questioning and the verbal feedback they provide to pupils. However, written feedback is not always as strong and opportunities are sometimes missed to move pupils on. In group work, pupils eagerly share ideas and collaborate exceptionally well. Pupils' independent learning, self-evaluation and attitudes to learning are exceptional. Pupils' extended writing skills are improving but they are not given sufficient opportunities to create quality pieces of work.
- School data demonstrate that pupils' attainment is above average in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6. Pupils' speaking and listening skills, especially their vocabulary, are well advanced. Pupils' reading skills are above average due to good-quality teaching of word and letter sounds. However, pupils' standards in writing are not as strong as they are in reading and mathematics. All pupils stated they felt valued and all make good progress from their differing starting points.
- Good links with a school in China and schools locally strongly promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils feel safe and their behaviour and attitudes to learning are exceptionally positive. Pupils clearly enjoy coming to school as shown in their above average attendance. There are excellent relationships between home and school.
- The headteacher and senior leaders, along with the governing body, have a clear and shared vision for improvement. Teaching has rapidly improved across the whole school as a result of effective performance management. These

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features reflect good leadership and management and a determined commitment to whole-school improvement. Recent staff changes have broadened and enriched the curriculum leading to marked improvements in standards.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards in writing by ensuring that all teachers maximise the opportunities for pupils to engage in sustained and purposeful writing and ensuring consistency of approach across the school.
- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching by ensuring that the marking policy is fully embedded and consistently provides pupils with quality, focused feedback which assists them to move forward in their learning.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Pupils' achievement is good. The overwhelming majority of parents and carers who returned the questionnaire agree. Pupils say that they thoroughly enjoy learning. As one pupil commented, 'We love it here; learning is so much fun.' Children entering Reception have below age-expected levels of skills and knowledge and make good progress. The great majority leave Reception having met or exceeded their early learning goals. The teaching of letter sounds and how to link letters and sounds is good. When pupils leave Year 2 they are applying these skills and knowledge well to their reading and their attainment is above average. Pupils break down difficult words and blend the sounds together to overcome difficulties. A Year 1 reader said, 'I have been reading a long time because I can build up words.' By Year 6 pupils use intonation and expression when reading and take notice of punctuation. Attainment in reading by the time pupils leave the school in Year 6 is also above average.

Pupils make good progress in both English and mathematics. Although standards in writing are improving, pupils are not consistently provided with opportunities to write extensively and so attainment is only broadly average. However, in some classes cross-curricular writing is excellent. Year 5 pupils demonstrated enthusiasm and a mature approach to work when asked to research a historical artefact. These pupils showed resilience, independence and excellent collaboration skills, in order to write an article on their research. There are no significant variations in achievement between any groups. More-able pupils, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs all make good progress in lessons because of good teaching and, where appropriate, the additional individual support they receive from staff.

Quality of teaching

Teaching seen during the inspection was of a good quality or better and this is

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indicative of teaching over time. Inspectors' findings confirm the positive views of teaching that are held by the overwhelming majority of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire. Teachers' high expectations of behaviour foster secure relationships and also effectively promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The pupils say that they enjoy working together. This was evident in an outstanding Year 6 literacy/information and communication technology lesson. Pupils not only created a very well-produced recipe book but also clearly loved the challenge of working out how much they could sell it for and the profit margins involved.

Teachers generally question pupils well and probe them for understanding. This, when linked to the collaborative opportunities, helps to support the pupils' speaking and listening skills well. In a successful Year 2 lesson, for example, pupils were learning to manipulate numbers and solve problems. Pupils communicated with each other throughout, discussing methods and debating how each would work.

Work is well planned to meet the differing learning needs of the pupils. Verbal feedback by both teachers and support staff is excellent. However, marking is inconsistent and so teachers sometimes miss opportunities to move pupils on in their learning even quicker.

Teachers and teaching assistants are consistently successful in motivating pupils. The teaching of reading is good because it is structured well and taught systematically with tasks made increasingly more challenging as the pupils get older. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are taught well and one-to-one support is given when necessary. There is particularly good provision for those pupils who have social or emotional difficulties or whose circumstances make them vulnerable. The good-quality nurture groups, for example, help to boost these pupils' confidence and social skills.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Parents, carers and pupils consider both behaviour and safety to be good. Inspection evidence shows that over time both the behaviour and safety of pupils are exceptional. Pupils' very high expectations of their own and others' behaviour mean that the pupils consider very minor incidents a matter of concern. They struggle to provide examples of more serious incidents. Pupils demonstrate exemplary behaviour when they are active in lessons. Typically, there is a real buzz of purposeful talk and movement around the classrooms. Pupils do not need to be told what is expected. For example, when starting to watch a scientific presentation, pupils sat quietly and ensured they could see without being asked and with no fuss. Behaviour such as this does not always result in outstanding learning because written feedback does not consistently provide pupils with the guidance they need to move on.

Pupils respond very well to the responsibilities they are given. Year 6 pupils play an active part in keeping the school safe by carrying out a formal risk assessment of railway safety and other aspects of the school environment. Pupils say the

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headteacher and all staff keep them completely safe at school. They very much appreciate the headteacher's efforts to involve them in making the school a safer place by asking for their ideas and opinions and listening to the school council.

Parents, carers and pupils report that bullying is extremely rare, and that they receive a prompt response to any concerns raised. Pupils are well informed about how to protect themselves from different forms of bullying. For example, the school recently had a week where cyber-bullying was a major area of focus. Pupils confidently explain that the school website has a protection system and they know what they can and should not look at. They show great disapproval of any homophobic bullying, stating that 'We are all the same but different.' Pupils feel that the ethos of the school is what makes them all feel so happy. Attendance is above average.

Leadership and management

The very determined headteacher has driven and achieved significant improvements since the last inspection, demonstrating the school's clear capacity to improve further. The ethos for improvement is based around positive learning values coupled with an emphasis on improving teaching. Pupils tell of attendance and behaviour having improved. The Early Years Foundation Stage external area has been well developed and provision is now of high quality. This vision for improvement has been effectively shared with adults. Rigorous monitoring of learning through lesson observations and work scrutiny has improved the quality of teaching. More accountability has been introduced. For example, progress meetings challenge teachers to review the achievement of pupils and take quick action to support any pupil falling behind. These meetings also make a good contribution to ensuring equality of opportunity for all pupils.

The effective distribution of management responsibilities has brought improvement. Accurate self-evaluation by the subject coordinators has resulted in new schemes of work which emphasise using real-life situations to enthuse pupils. In English, more focus to guided reading sessions has resulted in improving reading levels.

As a consequence of effective monitoring systems and self-evaluation processes, relevant development priorities are identified. These are linked effectively to performance management targets and in-service training. The local cluster of schools has made a good contribution to teachers' professional development.

The governing body, through regular visits and reports, has built a good knowledge of the school. Governors talk both formally and informally to pupils and teachers when visiting, to ascertain their views. As a result of their monitoring they are able to ask searching questions of the school on matters such as standards. Their close monitoring of the child protection register and their commitment to safe recruitment and the overseeing of safeguarding training enable them to make a good and secure contribution to pupils' safety.

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The curriculum has been well developed so that it manifestly meets the pupils' basic skill needs. Additionally, the topics successfully motivate pupils and give opportunities for them to develop a good range of skills, including reinforcing their literacy and numeracy skills. For example, when learning about food chains pupils tackled a wide range of aspects and moral issues. Such topics make a significant contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

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.



17 July 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Drake Primary School, Keyham, Plymouth PL2 2EN

I am writing to thank you all for making us so welcome when we came to your school recently. We did enjoy our visit. Yours is a good school, and we agree with what you told us and said in your questionnaires, that it is a really fun and happy place to learn. Here are some of the things we found about your school.

- The school looks after you extremely well and you all make good progress in your learning.
- You all make a good start in the Reception class.
- Your behaviour is outstanding and you get along with each other and feel very safe in school. We were particularly impressed by your self-evaluation and the way in which you discussed your work.
- You take an active part in keeping your school and each other safe.
- You find lessons interesting and really enjoy school as shown by your improved attendance.
- The headteacher and staff have successfully continued to improve your school.

Even in good schools, there are some things that could be better. We have asked the teachers to consistently provide you with written feedback which enables you to understand how to improve your work. We have also asked your teachers to make sure that you have greater opportunities to create extended pieces of writing across the whole curriculum.

You can help by continuing to be very positive in your learning.

Yours sincerely

Ronald Hall
Lead inspector

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