

Dulverton Primary School

Dulverton Road, London, SE9 3RH

Inspection dates 23–24 January 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Strong leadership from the headteacher and senior leaders has maintained and built on the strengths identified at the previous inspection.
- The school's leaders and governors have ensured that teaching is good and improving. Teachers have high expectations and aim to bring out the best in pupils.
- Most pupils achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics, reaching standards in English and mathematics that are above average.
- Pupils are highly motivated and their attitudes towards learning are often exemplary. This is a major factor in their successful learning. Their behaviour is good and this contributes significantly to a calm and safe environment, where most pupils flourish.
- Pupils benefit from stimulating and varied learning experiences. Teachers plan lessons to link subjects so that pupils are engrossed in their work. Exciting and memorable activities promote pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development well.
- Parents are involved well in the life of the school. The school does all it can to ensure that communication is effective and responsive to parents' needs.
- Governors support and challenge the school in equal measure. They use their experience and knowledge to help maintain the school's strengths and have high aspirations for its further development.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not all pupils make sustained, rapid progress. Pupils with disabilities and special educational needs and those in receipt of the pupil premium funding do not always learn as well as others.
- Teachers' marking does not consistently help pupils to improve their work.
- Boys make less progress in their writing than girls, and do not yet have sufficient opportunities to develop their writing skills in subjects other than English.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, adults do not always fully develop children's skills in linking letters and sounds and when children choose activities.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 24 lessons, or parts of lessons, taught by 18 teachers and coaches.
- Lesson observations were shared with senior leaders. Short lesson observations were made to observe the overall quality of teaching and learning.
- The writing in pupils' books was analysed with a senior leader.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plan, external evaluations of the school's performance by outside consultants, minutes of meetings of the governing body, and records relating to behaviour, attendance, and safeguarding.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read.
- Inspectors met with different groups of pupils, interviewed a sample of staff, and spoke to parents. They also spoke to members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- The views of parents were sought at the start and end of the school day, and through the school's surveys. Inspectors considered the 67 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View). They also considered written comments from 25 staff.

Inspection team

Brian Netto, Lead inspector,

Additional Inspector

Ruth Hill

Additional Inspector

Mark Macauley

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a larger-than-average primary school.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in the care of the local authority, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those from service families, is below average.
- The proportion of pupils with disabilities and special educational needs supported through school action, school action plus or with a statement of special educational need is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school does not use alternative provision.
- The school runs a breakfast and after-school club.
- Since the previous inspection, changes have been made to the structure of the leadership team with the appointment of two assistant headteachers. The Jubilee building has been added to the site. There is also a library which has recently been refurbished.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching from good to outstanding so that all pupils make rapid progress by:
 - ensuring that work is more carefully matched to needs of the pupils, particularly those with disabilities and special educational needs and those entitled to the pupil premium
 - making sure that all pupils are given clear guidance on how to improve their work
 - providing support and guidance and developing further the curriculum to enable boys to apply their writing skills in subjects other than English.
- Improve provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage so that all children make more consistent and rapid progress by:
 - ensuring that adults take every opportunity to develop pupils' skills and understanding, particularly during the activities that children choose for themselves and in sessions about phonics (linking letters and sounds)
 - leaders checking carefully on the quality of provision to ensure that it is focussed more sharply on children reaching the targets of which they are capable.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children have knowledge and skills typical for their age when they join the school. They then reach levels a little above those expected nationally by the time they move into Year 1. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, they learn in a rich and well-resourced environment. They quickly learn to make independent choices. Practical activities help them to persevere in their learning for long periods without interruption. However, their progress is not as consistent or as fast in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Year 1 as in most other year groups.
- Pupils achieve well above national average in reading at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. The strong reading culture has been enhanced by the refurbished library which is used extensively by the pupils. However, the results in the 2012 Year 1 national phonics screening check, which tests pupils' abilities in matching letters and sounds, were no better than average.
- Pupils' attainment in mathematics and English in Years 2 and 6 was above average in 2012. Many pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics across the school. Although boys achieve well, girls achieve better than boys in most areas, particularly writing.
- Pupils' attainment in writing has improved over the last few years. It is now above average at the end of Year 6. Pupils' better progress was illustrated in a Year 2 lesson, where pupils used role play to help them write successfully in the style of a chosen author. Boys have begun to make much better progress in writing. The school has recently introduced more 'boy friendly' topics to enthuse them in writing in different subjects. This has engaged boys better but it is too early for the gap between the attainment of boys and girls to have closed.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make generally the expected levels of progress, although some do better. This is true also for the pupils eligible for the pupil premium. Pupil premium funds enable these pupils to take advantage of all the school can offer, including after-school activities, trips and the early morning club. However, the gap in their attainment when compared with all pupils nationally is not closing as rapidly as it might.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good.. The best lessons are characterised by thorough planning and an approach that enables pupils to know if they are achieving well. There is a very positive climate for learning in most lessons, and pupils generally respond readily to tasks which are engaging and which meet their needs.
- Teachers use questions well to consolidate pupils' learning and probe their understanding. For example, pupils in Year 4 made outstanding progress in a geography lesson in response to the teacher's excellent subject knowledge and well-focused questioning.
- The use of outside sports coaches and music teachers enhances pupils' learning. Pupils in Year 4, for example, made outstanding progress in ball-control skills as a result of the coach's skilful explanations and questioning, and activities well matched to their needs.
- Teachers use a variety of different methods to encourage improvements in writing. Pupils in Year 6, for example, were fully engaged in a lesson on writing in paragraphs. A fast pace and regular checks on their learning ensured that they all made rapid progress in their writing skills. Opportunities to talk about their learning, and challenges which matched their different abilities, also contributed to their success.
- The teaching of calculation skills and problem solving is strong, and promotes effective investigation. Year 5 pupils achieved well as a result of practical activities to help them understand how the grid method makes multiplication easier.
- The teaching of reading is very strong for the most part. Pupils engage well because they find reading fun. Extensive use is made of well-organised resources, such as the interactive whiteboards and the library, to stimulate further interest in reading. Sometimes, however, teachers do not give pupils opportunities to use and apply their new skills for themselves.

Teachers' say words correctly to help pupils know and understand them. However, some teaching of phonics for younger pupils requires improvement.

- There is some inconsistency in the quality of teaching. For example, work set by staff is not always as well matched to the needs of some pupils as it is to others. This leads, for example, to the slower progress for some pupils with special educational needs, or who are entitled to pupil premium funding. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, despite many strengths in the teaching, adults do not always make the most of opportunities to develop children's skills and understanding when children are engaged in activities they have chosen for themselves. Pupils' work is marked regularly. Written and verbal feedback from staff often provides pupils with detailed advice on how well they are doing and the next steps in their learning. However, this is not yet fully consistent across the school.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' behaviour is good. Their enthusiasm for learning contributes significantly to their many successes. As one pupil commented, 'Dulverton is brilliant because we all respect each other, learn lots every day and take one more step towards better education.'
- Pupils are well cared for by the school. Those eligible for the pupil premium are financially supported to attend after school clubs. The breakfast and after-school clubs offer a wide choice of activities within a warm and caring environment and, as a result, the pupils involved flourish.
- Pupils are sensitive to different types of bullying. Year 6 pupils, for example, debated the advantages of young people having a mobile phone. They were well aware also of the risks. Pupils know about cyber bullying and how to avoid this. Year 6 prefects and others are always around to help younger pupils. As one pupil said, 'Everyone gets a turn to be a playground friend.'
- 'Dulverton is a safe and happy environment,' was a typical comment from a pupil highlighting the positive atmosphere in the school. Pupils are fully aware of how to keep themselves safe. As a result, they say they are well looked after.
- A small minority of parents have concerns about behaviour and the way that bullying is dealt with in the school.
- Pupils enjoy going to school and this is reflected in their attendance which has been well above average in recent years.

The leadership and management are good

- The school has maintained and built on its strengths since the previous inspection. Senior staff lead by example. The construction of a new building and the refurbishment of other areas have created an inspiring and stimulating learning environment.
- Robust systems are in place to check how well the school is doing. Accurate tracking of how well pupils achieve has helped the school to identify key priorities correctly. The school's determination to close the gap in achievement between boys and girls shows its firm commitment to equality of opportunity and to the removal of any barriers to learning.
- The leader of the Early Years Foundation Stage has assessed accurately that some further improvement is needed.
- Staff performance is measured against the school's priorities. Only when specific objectives are met, or exceeded, are staff financially rewarded. Morale is high as staff benefit from access to high-quality training and support.
- The rich and engaging subjects and topics of the curriculum, many of which are linked, make a good contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are given many opportunities to think and reflect. For example, Year 5 pupils thought about how respecting different points of view helps to resolve problems. Children at Key Stage 1 and in Reception reflected on the ramifications of falling out with others through an animated story.

- Relationships with parents have been strengthened considerably since the last inspection. Communication has improved and governors play a strong role in linking parents to the school, for example through the parents' forum which meets regularly with senior leaders. A few parents raised some concerns, but the large majority whose views were made known to inspectors were very positive about all aspects of school life.
- The local authority has evaluated the school correctly. It rightly treats Dulverton as a 'light touch' school and has provided appropriate, useful, support in view of this assessment.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has been instrumental in bringing about, and supporting, the improvements to the school since the last inspection. Leadership is now better shared across the school as a result of key staff appointments. Governors bring a thorough knowledge of financial matters to their work. This is evident in their acute understanding of the positive impact derived from the new building. They have noted the difference made to eligible pupils' well-being, although not as obviously academic outcomes, through the pupil premium. They have access to high quality training of which they have taken full advantage. The induction of new governors is helpfully undertaken by experienced colleagues. Governors correctly oversee the management of staff performance, which has shown improving outcomes for most pupils. They ensure that statutory obligations are met, including those related to safeguarding and the safe recruitment of staff.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	101434
Local authority	Bexley
Inspection number	402850

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	439
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Liz Blaylock
Headteacher	Sue Stringman
Date of previous school inspection	30 January 2008
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