

Dolton Church of England Primary School

The Square, Winkleigh, Devon, EX19 8QF

Inspection dates 16–17 July 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Teaching is consistently good and enables all pupils to make rapid progress in their learning.
- Teaching assistants work closely with teachers in the classroom. They also provide high-quality support to individuals or small groups, and this means that no pupil is left behind and each individual is well supported to make good progress in line with his or her peers.
- Pupils are happy and safe at school. They are eager to attend and learn.
- All leaders and managers, including governors, are fully committed and ambitious to see the school continue to improve.
- The close family ethos of the school is very strong and the school sits firmly at the heart of the community it serves.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are exemplary. Behaviour is outstanding. Pupils are confident when learning independently of the teacher and this helps to prepare them well for the next stage of their education.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils are not involved enough in the assessment of their own work so that they can better understand the next steps they need to take to improve it.
- A culture of reading for pleasure has not been developed sufficiently with pupils and their families so that this important life skill is fully shared and understood by all.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed six lessons. Two of these were joint observations with the headteacher.
- The inspector talked to parents and carers at the end of the school day and took account of the five staff questionnaires returned during the inspection. There were insufficient returns to the online Parent View survey to inform the inspection evidence.
- The inspector examined pupils' work across a range of subjects and talked to pupils about their work and their attitudes to school. She listened to pupils read in Year 2 and Year 6 and explored with them their views about reading.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, all staff and members of the governing body. She spoke to a representative of the local authority about their work with the school.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a range of documents, including the school's own data on pupils' progress, planning and monitoring documentation, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Marion Hobbs, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is much smaller than the average-sized primary school, situated in the heart of rural north Devon. It has two mixed-age classes.
- All pupils are of White British heritage.
- The school forms part of the Tarka Federation with a neighbouring primary school. A single governing body oversees the work of the federation, along with an executive headteacher.
- An acting headteacher currently leads the school during the absence of the executive headteacher, who will return to her post in September.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is below the national average. This is additional government funding to support pupils who are eligible for free school meals, looked after children and those from service families. There are currently no looked after children or children of service families in the school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is below the national average but the proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is higher than the national average. These proportions are affected by the very small numbers of pupils on roll.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching to outstanding to increase pupils' achievement further, by ensuring teachers:
 - provide pupils with information that allows them to recognise for themselves what they have to do to produce work at a higher level
 - provide clear 'next step' guidance for all pupils when marking their work, to build on the good assessment practice already in place.
- Develop children's enjoyment in reading a wide range of different texts through working with parents and carers to foster a shared understanding of the importance of reading.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils make strong progress in their learning because of the consistently good teaching they experience. Each child is known individually and their needs are addressed immediately and effectively. As a result, they achieve well.
- All pupils are fully immersed in their learning at all times and work independently as a matter of course. Pupils naturally work independently of the teacher and support each other in mixed-age groups, with real focus in their talk about what and how they are learning.
- Children join the school with skills generally below those typically seen for their age and make good progress in the Reception Year because of the constant one-to-one support they receive from the adults who work with them and the stimulating range of activities provided.
- The school has robust tracking data that, over time, demonstrates that all pupils, including those who are disabled or who have special educational needs, make at least the progress expected in reading, writing and mathematics, and often faster progress than this. This includes those pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium who, as measured by average point scores at the end of Year 6, also make the same good progress as their classmates, to achieve well in English and mathematics
- Attainment at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics is broadly in line with national expectations over time. The school has addressed the teaching of mathematics since the last inspection and data show that standards are rising steadily in this subject to match those in reading and writing. All pupils are able to make good progress in their writing owing to the school's focus on extended writing across a range of subjects.
- Achievement is not yet outstanding because standards of attainment for all groups have yet to be consistently in line with national averages over time.
- The teaching of letters and sounds (phonics) is good. Children in Reception eagerly used the outdoor space to consolidate their understanding of different sounds and enjoyed writing words using these sounds in chalk on the playground.
- Older pupils read clearly and understand appropriate strategies to help them when they encounter new or difficult vocabulary. They do not, however, have a natural enjoyment of exploring reading for themselves and this is an area the school is keen to develop in partnership with parents and carers.
- All pupils develop their social skills well, both through their learning in lessons and in the wide range of after-school activities they enjoy. This means that pupils are prepared as fully as possible for the next stage of their education as keen and confident learners.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching throughout the school is consistently good, with some elements of outstanding practice. Teachers have high expectations and strong subject knowledge, which they use well to plan stimulating lessons across a range of subjects that supports all pupils in making good rates of progress.
- The teaching of English and mathematics is at least good and pupils' progress in these subjects is typically good. This includes disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs and those eligible for support through the pupil premium.
- Questioning is a strength. Teachers and teaching assistants question individual pupils effectively to probe their thinking and understanding, and this supports their good progress over time.
- In both classes, teaching assistants are highly skilled in working alongside the teacher as well as providing interventions to individuals or small groups who need extra support.
- Throughout the school, pupils' work is celebrated in bright, attractive displays. Pupils also present their work to the community by showing it in the local church.

- Assessment across all subjects is thorough and regular. Teachers comment helpfully on pupils' work, but they do not always provide enough guidance on the next steps in learning. There are insufficient opportunities for pupils themselves to engage in a dialogue with their teacher about their learning and what they need to do to improve it further.
- Homework is set regularly and often involves pupils in researching wider aspects of topics they are learning about in class. The school is currently reviewing the homework policy as it looks towards teaching the new national curriculum and is consulting with parents and carers about how they can best support their children in learning at home.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- All pupils show exemplary attitudes to learning at all times.
- Parents, carers, staff and pupils are unreservedly positive about all aspects of behaviour and safety at the school, as well as all that the school provides for its pupils. The school is at the heart of the local community and generations have attended here.
- Pupils manage their behaviour outside lessons to an exceptionally high standard. They play together happily in a range of games, and older pupils are proud to be 'buddies' to look after younger children.
- The school has no recorded incidents of any kind relating to different forms of bullying over time, as it is not an issue for this school. Pupils understand about the different forms of bullying, and they show a good awareness of how bullying may occur, including cyber-bullying.
- The highly inclusive family ethos of the school permeates all that the pupils experience. A drumming workshop, for example, saw the whole school exploring, enjoying and sharing together their understanding of music and rhythm.
- The school promotes equal opportunities in all its work and pupils have a good understanding of fairness and respect for others.
- All pupils feel safe and well cared for. They understand clearly what may be an unsafe situation and how to keep themselves and others safe, including in relation to e-safety.
- Pupils are eager to come to school and learn. Attendance for all pupils and groups of pupils is above average.

The leadership and management are good

- All leaders and managers, including governors, are ambitious for continuing improvement for the school as part of the Tarka Federation.
- Teaching is good and is monitored and evaluated robustly by both the headteacher and members of the governing body. Performance management and the professional training needs of staff are linked closely to pupils' outcomes and the school improvement plan.
- The school knows itself well and is accurate in its self-evaluation. Actions to drive improvement are planned strategically across the federation, allowing teachers and teaching assistants in both schools to share and develop best practice together.
- Policies are relevant to pupils' needs and these ensure that at least good progress is made, particularly in literacy, and that pupils have equality of opportunity and are not discriminated against.
- The local authority works effectively with the school to monitor and evaluate teaching, learning and the outcomes for all pupils. It is confident that the school is providing a good service to the community it serves.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced and, wherever possible, creates opportunities for pupils to learn outdoors. An example of this was a recent whole-school walk through local woodland to find objects and experience different terrain. Pupils are also encouraged to learn about other faiths and cultures, and the school has links with schools in different countries, including India.
- The close local community ensures that links with parents and carers are strong and supportive

to achieve positive benefits for pupils. Governors are readily available to listen to any concerns raised and act appropriately in response. External partners work well with the school to provide support for vulnerable, or potentially vulnerable, families.

■ The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet statutory requirements.

■ **The governance of the school:**

– Governors are committed to providing the best possible education for all pupils. Their strategic vision is used effectively across the federation to challenge and support all that the school does, including the performance management of the headteacher and other teachers. They ensure that pay progression for teachers relates closely to the quality of their teaching. Governors are skilled in using data to question the school closely about the performance of different cohorts and groups of pupils, including those eligible for the pupil premium. They regularly visit classes and work closely with the school in a wide range of activities. They use training provided by the local authority effectively to ensure that they are well briefed in their roles and are able to carry out their duties to a high standard. They manage the school finances efficiently, including the spending of the pupil premium to provide one-to-one and small group support.

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	113450
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	405470

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	34
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alison Atton
Headteacher	Rachel Brennan
Date of previous school inspection	6–7 July 2011
Telephone number	01805 804315
Fax number	01805 804677
Email address	admin@dolton-primary.devon.sch.uk

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