

Dobwalls Community Primary School

Dobwalls, Liskeard, Cornwall, PL14 4LU

Inspection dates 18–19 September 2014

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Leaders and governors have ensured that the school has maintained a good standard of education since its previous inspection and is improving.
- Leaders undertake regular and effective monitoring of how well pupils achieve and the quality of teaching.
- The school provides a well-balanced curriculum. It promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.
- Pupils typically behave well in lessons and around the school. They report that they feel safe and that they enjoy school life. They take pride in their school.
- Teaching is consistently good. Teachers routinely plan lessons which interest pupils and promote positive attitudes to learning.
- All groups of pupils achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics. Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 are at least in line with national rates, and often higher.
- Disadvantaged pupils supported through additional funding achieve as well as all pupils nationally.
- Effective early years provision enables children to get off to a good start during their Reception year. They are well prepared to begin the National Curriculum in Key Stage 1.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- By the end of Year 1, the teaching of phonics (letters and sounds) is not consistently as effective as it might be.
- In a minority of cases, not all pupils receive work which gives them the right level of challenge.
- Those leaders who are new to their post do not all have the necessary experience and/or expertise to ensure that the school continues to improve rapidly.
- There is not enough information for parents about the curriculum on the school's website.

Information about this inspection

- During the inspection, 14 part-lessons were observed and inspectors listened to Key Stage 1 pupils reading. Meetings were held with senior leaders, including the executive headteacher, middle leaders, members of the governing body, including the Chair, and two groups of pupils. In addition, telephone conversations took place with local authority officers responsible for school improvement.
- Inspectors looked at planning and self-evaluation documentation, assessment information and examples of pupils' work, and a range of policy documents.
- The views of 25 parents who responded to Parent View were taken into consideration. In addition, the views of the 10 staff who responded to the inspection questionnaire were analysed.

Inspection team

Ken Bush, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Marian Marks

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Dobwalls Community Primary School is smaller than most primary schools.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is close to the national average.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium (additional funding for specific disadvantaged groups, including those known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority) is below the national average. This represents about one in five pupils in the school.
- Almost all pupils are of White British heritage.
- The school meets the government's floor targets, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school is part of a cooperative trust with three other primary schools and the local secondary school. The nursery adjacent to the school is managed separately and was not part of this inspection.
- Since the previous inspection, there have been extensive changes both to teaching staff and with regard to leadership responsibilities. Several current leaders are relatively new in post; the temporary assistant headteacher has been in post since September 2013.
- The school is led by an executive headteacher, who also has headship responsibility for another local school. This arrangement was in place during the whole of the previous academic year and is set to continue for the duration of the current one. The governing body is currently considering leadership options beyond 2014/15.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching in order to raise achievement by ensuring that:
 - phonics is consistently well taught so that by the end of Year 1, all pupils have a secure grasp of all the key early reading skills
 - all pupils are given the right level of challenge in their work
 - all leaders are given the necessary training to develop the expertise to sustain further rapid improvements across the school.
- Ensure that parents are provided with more information about the curriculum on the school's website, including how pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Despite the significant changes in leadership responsibilities since the previous inspection, all aspects of the school's work are now good, including early years provision. This was previously judged to be satisfactory. Consequently, under the current leadership of a highly effective executive headteacher, standards have at least been maintained, with the potential for further improvement enhanced.
 - Planning to achieve further improvement is clear and well focused and based upon the evidence drawn from secure monitoring and evaluation, involving all staff and the governing body. Through their responses to the inspection questionnaire, staff indicate that morale is high.
 - The monitoring of teaching and pupils' work, including marking, is well coordinated and thorough. Continuing professional development is given a high priority and is clearly linked to teachers' professional targets. In the past year, significant improvements have been made to staff's understanding of information about pupils' achievement and their ability to use it in their planning of lessons.
 - In addition to the executive headteacher, other leaders who comprise the relatively inexperienced leadership team make a growing contribution to improving teaching and pupils' achievement. However, most of these leaders are new in post and lack the necessary experience and/or expertise to sustain further rapid improvement.
 - The curriculum contributes well to pupils' good and improving achievement. Leaders and governors have approached the task of introducing the new National Curriculum in a systematic fashion involving all staff. They have ensured that the basic skills of literacy and numeracy are well coordinated across a range of subjects and that there are increased opportunities to explore subjects in greater depth, such as in history. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is given a strong focus in a range of subjects, as well as through assemblies.
 - The school makes excellent use of its primary sports funding. This has been used to ensure that a greater range of sports are on offer as part of the curriculum, including 'Sport for All' on Friday afternoons. In addition, participation rates in out-of-hours clubs have increased significantly with the purchase of new equipment and an extended range of activities. This includes a number where competition against other schools is now possible.
 - Links with parents are strong. Responses to Parent View illustrate that most are satisfied with the education being provided for their children. Examples of new-style reports seen by inspectors indicate that parents get timely and good-quality feedback on how well pupils are progressing. However, parents do not get enough information on the school website about the details of the curriculum, including how spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is taught and promoted.
 - The local authority provides useful 'light-touch' support to the school through termly meetings.
- **The governance of the school:**
- The governing body has faced some significant challenges since the previous inspection, including being unable to recruit a substantive new headteacher. However, the appointment of the current temporary executive headteacher has provided stability and a high level of expertise. The partnerships supported through the cooperative trust have promoted the sharing of good practice effectively. The governing body is also keenly aware of the importance of establishing long-term, sustainable plans for the future leadership of the school at the earliest opportunity.
 - Governors know and understand the work of the school well. They are aware of how well pupils achieve over time and how this compares with all schools nationally. They have a sound, broad appreciation of the quality of teaching and are ensuring that this is well aligned with how well teachers are paid.
 - The governing body ensures that the school's financial resources are well used. It has ensured that the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils and the sports premium has had a clear impact on raising standards and, in the case of the former, closing gaps. The governing body is centrally involved in the construction and monitoring of the school improvement plan. Through this and other methods, the school is suitably held to account for its performance.
 - Governors discharge their statutory duties well. Equality of opportunity is vigorously fostered and discrimination of any kind tackled. They are aware of their duty to promote respect for people of all faiths, cultures and lifestyles and to help to prepare children for life in modern Britain. All current safeguarding requirements are met.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. This was seen during the inspection both in lessons and around the school. Pupils are generally keen to take part in a range of activities and demonstrate consistently positive attitudes to their learning. They cooperate well with staff and with each other.
- Only rarely do pupils become distracted. This is almost exclusively when they are not fully stretched in their learning. No disruptive behaviour was seen during the inspection and pupils report that it rarely occurs. Records show that there have been no exclusions from school in the recent past. Inspectors are, therefore, confident that the positive impression formed is typical of what generally occurs.
- Leaders and governors are keen that pupils have ample opportunities to develop and demonstrate their leadership qualities. Well-established procedures are in place for Year 6 pupils to 'buddy' younger pupils.
- Pupils have a very clear understanding of the importance of tolerance and respect for people who are different from themselves. Useful links are in place with a primary school in the nearby urban centre of Plymouth to enhance pupils' understanding of racial, religious and cultural diversity.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. The pupils spoken to remarked that bullying incidents are infrequent. They also expressed confidence that staff manage any rare instances well. Pupils are knowledgeable about different forms of bullying, including those related to social media and text messaging.
- Most parents and all staff who responded to the inspection questionnaire consider that pupils behave well and are kept safe in school.
- Attendance is broadly average and improving. The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent is very low and well below the national average. Robust arrangements are in place to ensure that any absences which have not been immediately notified by parents are speedily followed up.

The quality of teaching is good

- Consistently good teaching across the school enables most pupils to achieve well. Effective learning is underpinned by careful planning. Teachers are typically proficient in deciding what knowledge, understanding and skills pupils should learn in each lesson or sequence of lessons.
- Teaching is good for all groups of pupils and for all subjects. Teachers set high standards and routinely expect each pupil to produce well-presented work of good quality and of sufficient quantity. Tidy classrooms with stimulating displays encourage pupils successfully to take a pride in their work.
- Teachers' marking consistently helps pupils to improve their work; this was evident in the detailed scrutiny undertaken by inspectors.
- In a few lessons, the level of challenge is not adjusted precisely enough to stretch pupils of all abilities. When this occurs, the pace of learning reduces; for some pupils, the work is too easy, and for others, too difficult.
- Leaders have put a strong emphasis on ensuring that all teachers and support staff have the necessary subject knowledge to teach mathematics effectively, especially for the most able pupils. During the inspection, evidence was seen of Year 5 and Year 6 pupils using and applying with growing confidence their knowledge of different methods of multiplication.
- The teaching of reading and writing are strengths of the school, especially in Key Stage 2. In a highly effective Year 4 lesson seen during the inspection, pupils demonstrated a very wide repertoire of technical skills when writing stories. They were confident in using and discussing different adjectives, comparatives and superlatives. They also worked with great enthusiasm in developing distinctive features of different fictional characters.
- The teaching of early reading skills in phonics is not consistently strong. In a phonics session seen in Reception during the inspection, for example, the links between the sound and the letters which make it were not made explicit enough, even though children could tell that two words containing those sounds rhymed by using pictures. This did not help all the children to move forward rapidly in their understanding.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils achieve well by the time they leave at the end of Year 6. Most reach levels of attainment in both English and mathematics which are at least in line with those of all pupils nationally, and, in several instances, significantly better. After a slight dip in 2013, the results in the provisional 2014 end of Key Stage 2 tests improved strongly.
- Standards in reading in Key Stage 2 are especially high. This reflects the school's strong commitment to promoting the importance of reading for pleasure and to ensuring that pupils can understand the wide range of texts they encounter in different subjects.
- For all groups of pupils, rates of progress in writing and in mathematics are increasing and are coming close to matching those in reading. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs achieve at a broadly similar rate to their peers. Although there are minor variations when comparing one year to the next, the progress made by boys is not significantly different over time to that made by girls.
- The most able pupils achieve well in most cases. In the 2014 tests, the proportion of pupils gaining the higher Level 5 was well above the national average in reading and in mathematics. In the case of the latter, two pupils gained the highest available Level 6, demonstrating the school's rising expectations for this group.
- The relatively small proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are supported through additional funding achieve especially well. In the 2013 tests, Year 6 pupils in this group attained better than all pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics; their achievement was also above that of other pupils in the school in all three subjects. Inspection evidence indicates that this group achieve as well as others in most year groups of pupils currently in the school. Where any gaps exist, they are closing rapidly.
- By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils achieve well compared to other pupils nationally. However, scores in the phonics screening check in Year 1 for each of the past two years have been below the national average. This indicates that not all pupils have gained a secure enough grasp of all of the early reading skills, even though most clearly catch up quickly as they progress through the school. In other respects, children in the early years provision get off to a good start and quickly acquire the necessary skills to be successful learners once they begin Key Stage 1.

The early years provision is good

- From starting points which are broadly in line with age-related expectations, children typically make good progress. Consequently, the great majority reach a good level of development and most are ready for Key Stage 1 by the end of the Reception Year. This includes those disadvantaged children who are supported through additional funding.
- The end of Reception Year profiles for 2013 and 2014 show that achievement is consistent across all areas of learning. However, the below-average outcomes in the Year 1 phonics screening checks indicate that all of the early reading skills are not secure for all children by the end of Reception.
- The school has made significant improvements since the previous inspection in ensuring that assessments of children upon entry to Reception are much more accurate and take into account a wider range of evidence. This includes that derived from nurseries and from parents, as well as first-hand observations made by Reception staff.
- Teaching is typically good in most respects. It provides children with a wide range of opportunities both indoors and outside to develop their skills, deepen their understanding and stimulate their curiosity about their immediate surroundings and the world beyond.
- Most children settle quickly into Reception and form good relationships with their classmates and staff. Children's attitudes to learning are positive. They are comfortable in their environment and feel safe.
- Parents spoken to by inspectors were universally happy with what the school provides for their children. They affirm that they are regularly updated on their children's progress and are actively encouraged to contribute to their learning and development at home.
- Leaders have a clear strategic plan in place to ensure that the Reception class continues to improve. Monitoring is regular, accurate and more robust than at the time of the previous inspection. Ensuring the safety of the children is given a very high priority and meets all requirements.

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	111957
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	443943

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	164
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Bernadette Yeatman
Headteacher	Anne Carter
Date of previous school inspection	4–5 March 2010
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