

South Tawton Primary School

Tawton Lane, South Zeal, Devon, EX20 2LG

Inspection dates 24–25 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.

- Pupils make good progress and achieve well across the school. By the end of Year 6, they reach standards in reading, writing and mathematics that are above average.
- Teaching is good and makes a strong contribution to pupils' learning. The school provides pupils with an interesting range of subjects, topics and experiences which ensures they enjoy their learning.
- There is very effective support for disadvantaged pupils and those who need extra help to catch up in their learning.
- Learning activities for children in the good Reception class are varied and enthuse children. Children make good progress, particularly in developing their personal and social skills.
- Pupils feel safe in school and know how to keep themselves safe in different situations.
- The behaviour of pupils is good. They are proud of their school and show respect to staff and to each other.
- The headteacher, well supported by governors and other school leaders, has improved pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching. They are taking strong actions to bring about further improvement.
- The governing body shows an increasing understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and governors are playing an active part in its improvement.
- Parents feel confident that their children are wellcared for in school and make good progress.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not yet outstanding and so does not enable all pupils to make the best possible progress.
- The most-able pupils make good progress but, sometimes, find the work too easy. They do not always have tasks which develop their learning and help them to make as much progress as they could.
- The rates of progress that pupils make vary between classes.
- There are not enough opportunities for pupils to learn about the range of cultures that now exist in modern Britain.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed parts of 10 lessons. Four of them were observed jointly with the headteacher or another of the school's leaders. They made several shorter visits to classes and visited an assembly.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' work in their lessons and carried out a detailed scrutiny of their written work. They listened to pupils read and discussed their reading with them.
- Inspectors held meetings with two groups of pupils to hear their views on learning and behaviour in the school. They also spoke informally with pupils at breaks and lunchtimes.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, other staff with leadership responsibilities and two members of the governing body. An inspector spoke with a representative of the local authority over the telephone.
- Inspectors examined a variety of school documentation, including records of current pupils' progress and unpublished examination results for 2014, teachers' planning, self-evaluation and improvement plans, behaviour and attendance logs, the governing body minutes, and records relating to safeguarding and the management of staff performance.
- Inspectors took account of the questionnaires completed by 20 members of staff, 46 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and four letters from parents. They also spoke informally with parents as they brought their children to school.

Inspection team

Sean Thornton, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Wendy Marriott

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- South Tawton is smaller than an average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the additional funding called the pupil premium is below average. This funding is provided for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are in local authority care.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs on the school roll is average. The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who join or leave the school during the year is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the standard of teaching to outstanding, so that all pupils make rapid progress, by ensuring that:
 - the features of the strongest teaching in the school, relating to pace and questioning, are implemented fully by all teachers
 - the most-able pupils benefit consistently from tasks that make them think deeply and work hard in all their lessons.
- Broaden the range of opportunities for pupils to understand the variety of cultures in modern Britain.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The school's headteacher is committed to improving all aspects of the school. All staff and governors share this ambition for further school improvement.
- Staff with leadership roles have developed their skills so that they can accurately check the progress of pupils in their subject areas. They support other staff when this is needed, so that they are making a good contribution to raising standards.
- The school's evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses is rigorous and very accurate. It informs a good school-improvement plan that has measurable outcomes.
- The management of teaching and learning is good. The school's records of the evaluation of teaching are detailed and lead to a wide range of training which responds to the needs of staff at all stages of their careers.
- The system of teachers' performance management is well organised, rigorous and related fully to the Teachers' Standards. Evidence shows that this system has led to improvements in teaching and achievement. Salary progression occurs only when merited by sustained good performance.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced, offering pupils a wide range of interesting topics and experiences. There are varied opportunities for pupils to develop their reading, writing and mathematics. They extend their learning in areas such as science and humanities and develop their creativity through music and art. The school has introduced the new National Curriculum and is developing a suitable system of assessment. Pupils have many opportunities to engage in a wide variety of activities outside the normal school day, including drama, music and a range of sports.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well, both in the curriculum and through the general life of the school. Pupils take part in visits and residential stays in France and other parts of England, and the cultures of pupils present in the school are celebrated. Assemblies are effective and in many lessons pupils are given opportunities to reflect not only on their own progress but on life and the world around them. However, discussions with pupils showed that they have little awareness of the different cultures present in other parts of modern Britain.
- The primary school sports funding is being used well. Equipment has been bought to upgrade the sporting facilities available for pupils. A wide range of staff have received training in sports coaching, and the variety of after-school sports clubs has increased. As a result, more pupils are taking part in sporting activities, their standards of fitness are improving and the school's sports teams have been successful in many competitions.
- All aspects of safeguarding are fully met.
- The headteacher and the governing body ensure that the school rejects all forms of discrimination, fosters good relationships and promotes equality of opportunity soundly. The emphasis on tolerance and mutual respect prepares pupils well for life in modern society.
- The local authority supports the school by moderating its assessments of pupils' progress at the end of the Reception Year and Year 1. A representative also works with the school, providing advice on raising standards of teaching and achievement.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have effective structures in place for undertaking all their statutory responsibilities and have benefited from a range of appropriate training. They bring to the school a range of skills that is well matched to the school's needs. The governing body is well informed about all aspects of the school's work. Governors have a good grasp of how well the various groups of pupils are progressing and the published data on the school. Discussions show that governors challenge the headteacher and other school leaders, but currently this is not well recorded in the minutes of meetings. Governors are involved in checking the quality of teaching by visiting the school and holding discussions with subject leaders. They also support the school's initiatives for school improvement. Governors understand the importance of improving teachers' performance, and the new systems for doing so. They ensure that finances are managed well, and understand how the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is spent and how it is helping to improve their achievement. Governors make sure the school's arrangements for safeguarding meet all current government requirements.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. In almost all lessons, pupils concentrate well, showing positive attitudes and a readiness to learn. Their cooperation contributes to their progress but, occasionally, when teaching does not engage them, they participate less well.
- Pupils are well equipped for their lessons and settle very quickly to their work. Most books are neat and well kept.
- Pupils understand and support the school's behaviour code, and the system of rewards and sanctions. They report that behaviour is usually good and that any poor behaviour is dealt with quickly and fairly. For example, when younger pupils reported that some older pupils were being unkind to them, the headteacher dealt with this swiftly.
- Pupils usually show courtesy to each other, to all staff and to visitors. On the playground, pupils play well together and show consideration to others.
- Pupils are proud of their school and wear their uniform smartly. Their behaviour in the dining hall, and as they move around the school, is usually calm and orderly.
- Pupils' strong moral and social development enables them to respect others and understand the consequences of their actions. This contributes to their good behaviour.
- The frequency of fixed-rate exclusions is consistently below average.
- A small number of pupils show behavioural problems. They benefit from individual attention and support so that their behaviour improves markedly as they move through the school.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils feel safe in school and the curriculum supports them well in learning how to stay safe. They have a good understanding of e-safety, including how to avoid unsafe websites.
- In this challenging school site, the headteacher and governors have recently reviewed and improved the procedures for pupils moving from one part of the site to the other. This is to ensure the safety of pupils at all times.
- Pupils cannot recall any incidents of racist comments. They report that incidents of bullying, including prejudice-based bullying, are extremely rare and are dealt with swiftly by school staff. They say that most pupils get on well together.
- Pupils' attendance is consistently above average. The school monitors attendance closely and works in partnership with families to raise it even further.
- Almost all parents and carers who responded to the Parent View questionnaire consider that their children are safe and happy at school.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching across the school is typically good. Work seen in pupils' books from the previous school year and evidence gathered throughout the inspection demonstrate that teaching is leading to rising pupil achievement in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Lessons are well planned and start promptly. Teachers show good subject knowledge, have high expectations of their pupils and provide a variety of activities to promote learning.
- Where learning is most effective, tasks are demanding enough for all pupils and all make at least good progress. Teachers use probing questioning to check pupils' understanding before moving to the next part of the lesson and are prepared to adapt their plans when needed.
- Where learning is less effective, these strong features are less well developed and some pupils do not make as much progress as they could. In particular, in some lessons, the work provided for the most-able pupils is too easy for them so that their achievement is limited.
- Relationships between pupils and staff are good so that pupils can give their opinions in confidence when solving problems.
- Pupils needing extra help, such as those with special educational needs, are given well-targeted support by teaching assistants or other adults so that they can catch up with their classmates and make good progress.
- Teachers mark pupils' work frequently and provide detailed advice on the next steps needed as well as praising what they have done well. Pupils value this advice and respond to it promptly, which helps them to improve their work.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils make good progress and achieve well across the school.
- In 2013, the standards reached by pupils at the end of Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics were equal to national averages. The school's records for 2014, which have been checked by the local authority, show that there has been significant improvement in all these three areas of learning and that standards are now above national averages. Since pupils join Year 1 with skills broadly typical for their age, they are now making good progress across Key Stage 1.
- Unpublished results for 2014 also show much improvement in attainment at the end of Year 6. Standards reached in reading, writing and mathematics have risen to above the national figures for 2013. This shows that pupils have also made good progress by the end of Year 6 and are well prepared for secondary school.
- These results show also that pupils make good progress across Key Stage 2 whatever their starting points. The school regularly checks the progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. As a result of good support, these pupils are making progress equal to that of their peers.
- In both key stages, however, the progress that pupils make varies between classes. In some classes, pupils do not make as much progress as in others.
- The progress of the most-able pupils has improved since 2013 so that they make good progress overall. However, some of these pupils do not always achieve as much as they could in their lessons. The school has identified this as a priority for further improvement.
- When pupils join the school during the year, their attainment is assessed and teachers ensure that they too make good progress.
- The results of the national screening check at the end of Year 1 on pupils' application of phonics (the sounds that letters represent) are consistently above average. Pupils use their knowledge of phonics to read and spell unfamiliar words. Standards of reading are high, and most pupils read fluently and understand what they are reading.
- The school makes good use of the additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils. Eligible pupils benefit from additional one-to-one and small-group teaching support when needed on managing behaviour, extra learning resources and funding that ensures they can participate fully in all school activities such as visits and residential trips. The achievement of these pupils varies from year to year because of the small numbers involved and the nature of their needs. In 2013, the attainment of disadvantaged Year 6 pupils was half a year behind their classmates and other pupils nationally in reading and writing, but one year behind their classmates and other pupils nationally in mathematics. However, unpublished results for 2014 show that all disadvantaged pupils made at least expected progress in all three areas of attainment and that the gaps between their attainment and that of other pupils are reducing quickly.

The early years provision is good

- The leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are good. Staff are well trained and enthusiastic, and communicate well with parents. They act as good role models in promoting spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, such as in encouraging imagination in the children's role play. The provision is checked regularly to make sure children's safety and well-being are assured. Areas for further improvement have been identified correctly and are being addressed.
- In the Reception class, children's behaviour and their attitudes to learning are good. They play extremely well together and engage well with adults. All children make very good progress in developing their personal and social skills. Even in the early stages of the year children are happy to accept responsibility for tidying up and organising resources. Parents are confident that their children are safe and secure in this part of the school.
- Teaching is good. There is a good balance of outdoor and indoor play, and children have opportunities to explore for themselves as well as participating enthusiastically in adult-led activities. Teachers and assistants assess children's skills frequently and adapt their planning to meet their needs and interests. Early reading skills are taught well.
- Most children join the Reception class with knowledge and skills that are typical for their age. Some children, however, join with knowledge and skills above those expected. At the end of Reception, the proportion of pupils who achieve a good level of development is consistently above the national level. Not enough of the more-able children, however, have been helped to exceed age-related expectations by the

time they enter Year 1. The progress of children currently on roll shows that this is being addressed so that all groups of children, including those who are disadvantaged, are now making good progress. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are quickly identified and activities are organised to ensure that their needs are met.

What Inspection Judgement Means

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	113263
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	448443

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	190
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Keith Stevens
Headteacher	Heather Poustie
Date of previous school inspection	14–15 October 2009
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