

North Tawton Community Primary School

Exeter Street, North Tawton, EX20 2HB

Inspection dates 8–9 October 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	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.

- The headteacher and the leadership team provide determined and effective leadership. This has led to significant improvements since the last inspection, particularly in teaching and pupils' achievement.
- Pupils make good progress because teaching is typically good and some is outstanding. Teachers plan challenging work to interest and engage the pupils so they enjoy learning and achieve well.
- The school plans a wide range of subjects and learning experiences to challenge most pupils. This makes a positive contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The school is welcoming and pupils enjoy the work they do. This is reflected in their good behaviour and attitudes towards each other and their learning.
- Pupils feel safe, are happy and are proud of their school. Their attendance has risen significantly and is now above average.
- Children make good progress from their starting points in the Reception class. They benefit from the highly effective partnership arrangements with the Pre-School in the Foundation Stage Unit that continues to be a strength of the school. This ensures the children have a very good start in their education.
- Disadvantaged pupils and those who are disabled or have special educational needs achieve as well as, and sometimes better than, other pupils.
- Governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They have successfully challenged leaders and teachers to improve. They have supported the school very well through a period of rapid change.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The quality of teaching is not yet outstanding. In a few lessons, pupils do not make as much progress as they could.
- Occasionally, pupils, especially the most able, are not moved on to harder work quickly enough in lessons. This limits their progress slightly.
- Teachers do not always make sure that pupils make improvements to their work following teacher feedback and marking.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching in seven lessons, undertaken jointly with the headteacher. He also observed small-group teaching of phonics (linking letters and sounds) and listened to some pupils read.
- The inspector looked at pupils' work in their books and spoke to others about their work and other aspects of school. He observed pupils at playtime and attended an assembly.
- He held meetings with the headteacher and members of staff. They discussed pupils' progress in literacy and numeracy and the progress of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs.
- The inspector examined a range of school documentation including records of the quality of teaching, the school's information on pupils' progress, the sport funding action plan, the school improvement plan and records of behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- A meeting was held with four governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body. The inspector also spoke with an advisor from the local authority.
- The views of parents were taken into consideration, including the 70 who responded to the online questionnaire, Parent View. The views of several parents, gained at the start of the school day, were also taken into account.
- The opinions of staff were also considered using the 12 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

John Cavill, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- North Tawton is a smaller than average-sized primary school.
- Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds and speak English as their first language.
- Children in the Reception Year are taught in the Partnership Foundation Stage Unit that also accommodates the local Pre-School.
- Pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 are taught in four mixed year classes: Years 1 and 2; Years 2 and 3; Years 3 and 4; and Years 5 and 6.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average.
- The proportion of those who are supported by school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs is average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is average. This additional funding supports disadvantaged pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals or are looked after by the local authority.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- About half of the teachers are new to the school since the last inspection.
- The school is a member of the Dartmoor Cooperative Learning Trust. This is a group of local schools who meet to share expertise and training.
- The Pre-School is not managed by the governing body and therefore was not inspected as part of this inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and raise the achievement of pupils further by ensuring that teachers:
 - move pupils, especially the most able, on to harder work more swiftly when they demonstrate that they know what they are doing, enabling their faster progress
 - make sure that pupils can regularly make amendments and improvements to their work following feedback from teachers and other adults.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and senior leaders have taken decisive and effective action to improve the school. The areas for improvement identified at the last inspection have been tackled successfully. This has resulted in improvements in teaching and pupils' achievement.
- Leaders and governors have an accurate understanding of the school, recognising both its strengths and weaknesses. Their determination to improve standards and the learning for all pupils is shared by all staff. Staff and parents responding to inspection questionnaires are highly positive. Staff are proud to work at North Tawton and morale is high. Almost all parents would recommend this school to other families.
- Following the last inspection, leaders identified the urgent need to improve the quality of teaching and achievement. The school quickly put into place effective training initially using expertise from the local authority and more recently through the Dartmoor Cooperative Learning Trust. As a result, the quality of teaching has significantly improved.
- Procedures to manage teachers' performance have been improved. Teachers are fully accountable for the progress made by their pupils. Goals are set for individual teachers and progress against these is checked closely by leaders. As a result, rates of progress for most pupils are improving quickly.
- Middle leaders are knowledgeable about individual pupils' progress. They discuss pupils' progress termly and produce class-based Raising Attainment Plans. This provides teachers with a clear focus on pupils who are at risk of falling behind. Pupils' work in books are scrutinised regularly to check if standards are continuing to improve. The school's capacity for further improvement is strong.
- Pupils benefit from a wide range of well-planned, interesting opportunities to develop their literacy and mathematical skills across a range of subjects. Pupils enjoy a range of trips and activities that broaden their understanding of the world. Assemblies that allow pupils to fully participate with the topic provide them with time to reflect together. This is having a positive effect on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are eager to represent the school and take on roles of captains and members of the school council. This is preparing them well for life in modern Britain.
- The primary sport fund has been used effectively to give more opportunities to participate in sport and to develop teachers' expertise. Increasing numbers of pupils are involved in after-school sports clubs. The school has recruited a play leader for lunchtimes to increase participation in active exercise during the day and all pupils have regular physical education sessions to develop their skills.
- Disadvantaged pupils achieve well and make good progress. This is because the additional funding has been used effectively. For example, eligible pupils in Years 5 and 6 were provided with weekly small group sessions on problem solving. As a result, the school was successful in more than halving the attainment gap in mathematics by the end of Year 6 in 2014.
- The staff do not tolerate discrimination of any kind, ensuring that all pupils have equal opportunities to participate in the full curriculum. Almost all parents believe the school is led and managed well.
- The local authority provided the school with increased levels of support following the last inspection. The support provided now is only 'light touch' as the school has improved, and is now good.
- Safeguarding procedures meet current requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is well led and organised. Governors are determined to ensure the school continues to improve.
 - Governors are fully involved in the life of the school and visit it regularly. They have received training in understanding data and safeguarding. Governors fully support the headteacher's drive to continually improve the quality of teaching. Governors have a clear idea on how well pupils are achieving when compared to pupils nationally and are able to analyse the progress of groups of pupils, especially those who are eligible for additional funding. They know the achievement of these pupils is good.
 - There have been some changes of personnel within the governing body and governors have undertaken a successful restructure of their committees to reflect the changing needs of their work. They understand the impact of teaching on pupils' achievement and are involved in making decisions about teachers' pay and in ensuring that teachers' pay is aligned to their performance. They are fully involved in school self-evaluation and setting the school action plan for improvement.
 - Governors are knowledgeable about how additional funding is being spent and they check carefully that it is making a positive difference to pupils' progress. They ensure statutory requirements relating to safeguarding are fully in place.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good. This was seen during the inspection both in lessons and around the school. Parents, pupils and school records show that this is typically the case.
- Pupils are keen to take part in a range of activities and demonstrate consistently positive attitudes to their learning. They cooperate well with staff and each other. Many spoke with great pride about their school to inspectors. They enjoy school, feel well cared for and safe.
- Playtimes and lunchtimes are happy and sociable occasions. Pupils are carefully supervised and play together sensibly. They say that name-calling and inappropriate language is unusual. They get on well together regardless of background.
- Behaviour records show that there are few incidences of poor behaviour. When asked about their views of behaviour, pupils knew that they had a responsibility to behave considerately at all times. They understood the school behaviour policy and said that all teachers used this very well. Parents were able to recognise the significant improvements in behaviour at the school. Almost all said that behaviour is good.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe and all agreed that they feel safe at school. Pupils move around the school with care. They know how to keep safe on the internet and about online bullying. A recent visit from NSPCC helped pupils to understand how to recognise and react correctly to any prejudice-based bullying.
- Pupils of all ages are clear that bullying is rare and this is confirmed by school records. Pupils have complete confidence in their teachers that any incidents will be dealt with quickly. They understand that bullying can take different forms. The school's focus on appropriate behaviours, such as appropriate levels of noise in lessons, has a positive contribution to the typically good behaviour observed during the inspection.
- Leaders have taken firm and effective action to improve attendance. As a result, attendance has risen and is now above the national average. The school rigorously follows up absence and there are no pupils at the school with persistently high levels of absence. Children arrive on time in the morning, smartly dressed in school uniform. This helps foster a real sense of pride in the school. The school takes part in a wide range of activities in the local area and local schools' community where its reputation is good.
- Most parents who responded to Parent View or spoke to the inspector agreed that behaviour and safety are good and that bullying is managed well by leaders.
- Pupils are eager to learn in lessons and accept the challenges they are given. However, on occasion the work is not fully challenging all pupils, especially the most able. Sometimes they lose concentration and do not make the progress they should. Consequently, behaviour and safety are not yet outstanding.

The quality of teaching is good

- The school's relentless focus on improving the quality of teaching has resulted in teaching that is now typically good, with some that is outstanding. This is having a direct impact on raising standards and the good progress seen across the school. Almost all parents agree that this is the case.
- Leaders provide good support and guidance on how teachers can improve. As a result, teachers have high expectations for pupils' good achievement and behaviour. Good teaching is enabling pupils to make good progress, developing their knowledge and skills in a wide range of subjects.
- Teachers work hard and plan exciting work to inspire pupils. Pupils in the Years 2/3 class had a surprise visit from a 'Ninja' who came into their lesson and stole their cake. This captured their imagination so much that they all were eager to write up the incident. Consequently, they made swift progress.
- Teachers make sure work given to pupils is set at the correct level. This ensures that they are able to make good progress and achieve well. Teaching assistants provide effective support for pupils, especially those who are disabled and those who have special educational needs.
- Teachers check on pupils' progress regularly and adapt the work when necessary to speed up the learning. However, teaching is not yet outstanding because sometimes teachers do not move pupils, especially the most able, on to harder work quickly enough when they understand what they are doing.
- Teachers place a great emphasis on improving the standards in reading, writing and mathematics. This has resulted in improved progress being made across the school. The work that pupils have completed in their books is very well presented demonstrating their good attitudes and pride towards their learning. Almost all parents and all pupils agree that teaching is good and pupils say that they enjoy school.
- Pupils' work is regularly and accurately marked. Teachers provide written comments to help pupils

improve their work that are welcomed by the pupils. However, sometimes the written comments are not clear enough about what the pupil needs to do in order to improve, and often not written concisely. Some teachers do not always make sure that pupils follow up this advice by applying it and showing their teachers that they have understood. This sometimes limits pupils' progress.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Standards of attainment and rates of progress in reading, writing and mathematics have increased since the last inspection and are now good. Leaders rigorously check how well every pupil is doing. They act swiftly to put actions in place to tackle any underachievement.
- Almost all pupils make the progress that would normally be expected of them in reading, writing and mathematics. Since the last inspection the proportion of pupils who make better progress across Key Stage 2 has been either similar to, or above, the national average. There was a slight dip in the number of Year 6 pupils making more than expected progress in reading and mathematics in 2014. This was due to some weaker teaching in the past. The current Year 6 pupils are predicted to reverse this dip, being on track at the end of Year 5.
- Teachers place a strong emphasis on developing literacy and numeracy skills across the school. This ensures that pupils' basic skills develop well. Some training for the teaching of phonics has been provided for teachers and teaching assistants, as only average proportions of pupils have been successful in the check at the end of Year 1. As a result, pupils currently in Reception and Key Stage 1 are receiving improved phonics teaching and early indications are that more pupils will be successful this year.
- Standards reached at the end of Key Stage 1 have improved significantly since the last inspection and are now above average. Good teaching and support for pupils ensure that an increasing proportion of pupils are reaching the higher levels of attainment, especially in reading. Pupils report that they enjoy reading and are able to read aloud with confidence.
- Pupils who are eligible for additional funding are making good progress. In the 2013 tests, Year 6 pupils in this group made better progress in reading, writing and mathematics than their classmates and other pupils nationally. The school was successful in closing the gap in attainment in English in 2013 from approximately one year to less than six months. This was mirrored in 2014 in mathematics. Inspection evidence indicates that this group achieves as well as others in most year groups of pupils currently at the school and all gaps are closing rapidly.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs across the school make good progress from their starting points. Teaching assistants support these pupils well and ensure they are included in all activities.
- Good teaching is supporting the most able to achieve well. However, in a few lessons, teachers do not challenge these pupils sufficiently by moving them on to harder work when they demonstrate their understanding. They do not then make the rapid progress they are capable of.

The early years provision is good

- Strong leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage ensures that this area remains a strength of the school. Effective partnership working with the Pre-School within the Foundation Stage Unit is having a strong impact on providing children with a good start to school.
- When children join the Reception Year, most of them arrive with skills and understanding that are typically similar to what would normally be expected for their age. However, this varies from year to year and some children arrive with skills below what would normally be expected. Effective transition from the Pre-School ensures that children arrive settled and able to make quick progress.
- All pupils make at least good progress in the Reception Year from their starting points thanks to the good teaching they receive. Above average attainment with increasing numbers of children attaining a good level of development ensures that, when they leave, the children are well prepared to start Key Stage 1.
- Good routines agreed across the Foundation Stage Unit ensure that children understand what is expected of them from an early age. The learning environment is well planned and exciting. Children access a wide range of activities. They choose activities which interest them and they cooperate extremely well together. This enables children to develop their language, communication and social skills at a fast rate. Children of all ages in the unit get on well together demonstrating their good behaviour and attitudes towards school.

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	113259
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	448989

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	137
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ruth Dugdale
Headteacher	Nick D'Agorne
Date of previous school inspection	5–6 December 2012
Telephone number	01837 82284
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