

Ditcheat Primary School

Ditcheat, Shepton Mallet, Somerset, BA4 6RB

Inspection dates

2–3 December 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.

- The headteacher has high expectations of what pupils can achieve and is well respected in the school. She has developed a close team of staff with a shared ambition for excellence.
- The teaching of reading is particularly effective. Attainment at the end of Year 6 in reading is well above average and this represents rapid progress for some pupils.
- Staff go 'the extra mile' to remove any barriers to learning. Sign language and visual communication strategies are a part of everyday practice. Pupils with special educational needs make speedy progress, particularly in reading.
- The curriculum provides frequent opportunities for pupils to develop independence and decision-making skills.
- Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They settle quickly into school because of the good links the teacher makes with the pre-school and parents.
- Pupils' computing skills are well developed. Pupils confidently use technology to develop their skills in English and in mathematics.
- School leaders have developed outstanding procedures for keeping pupils safe.
- Behaviour in the school is good. It is a friendly and inclusive place to learn. Pupils treat adults and each other with courtesy and respect.
- Governors ask challenging questions of leaders and this contributes to the continued improvements to the quality of teaching and learning.
- Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers do not communicate consistently high expectations of the presentation of pupils' work.
- Teachers' marking does not always provide pupils with clear guidance about how to improve their work. Consequently, not all pupils make rapid progress, particularly in writing.
- The most able mathematicians do not always make better than expected progress to reach the highest levels of attainment.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching in all classes. She carried out joint observations with the headteacher of 10 part lessons and one assembly.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, teachers and six members of the governing body. Telephone calls took place with a local authority representative and a National Leader of Education who has been supporting the school.
- The inspector took account of discussions with a small group of parents, the views of 18 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, the school's own questionnaire to parents and nine responses to the staff questionnaire.
- The inspector scrutinised a range of documentation, including information on the school's website, published assessment data and the school's own performance data, a summary of the school's self-evaluation, improvement plans, safeguarding policies and documents relating to the management of teachers' performance.
- The inspector listened to two pupils read and talked to them about their learning, as well as reviewing the work in books of pupils across the school.

Inspection team

Tracy Hannon, Lead inspector

Seconded Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Ditcheat Primary School is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- A new headteacher has been appointed since the previous inspection. Pupils are taught in mixed-age classes.
- All pupils come from White British backgrounds and speak English as a first language.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium funding is below the national average. This is additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible free school meals and looked after children.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is below the national average.
- Early years provision in the Reception class is full time.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching from good to outstanding by:
 - ensuring that marking always tells pupils how to improve their work and gives time for them to respond to the teacher's written comments, particularly in writing
 - raising the level of challenge for more able mathematicians
 - ensuring all teachers have high expectations when teaching writing skills
 - making certain that all teachers insist on the highest standard of pupils' presentation of work in books.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has created a culture which promotes a strong sense of social and moral responsibility and teamwork amongst pupils. Her work has improved the quality of teaching and made a notable improvement to the achievement of pupils in the school. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about how well the school is led and managed.
- The headteacher's passion for equality of opportunity is carefully woven throughout the work of the school. Teachers are creative in providing a range of activities to meet the differing needs of all pupils. As a result, pupils from all starting points are motivated, they make good progress and develop effective communication and leadership skills. Roles, such as taxi monitor and play leaders, are taken very seriously by the pupils. The taxi monitor told the inspector how he enjoys his role and how he helps younger pupils to keep safe by ensuring their seatbelts are securely fixed.
- Senior and middle leaders make good use of their pupil progress analysis and use this to support improvements in the quality of teaching. For example, the literacy leader carries out an in-depth analysis of how well pupils are achieving in reading. He then provides training for staff and makes regular checks on progress. This work has been extremely effective in raising standards in reading. A similar approach is underway to tackle underperformance in writing.
- The school has a broad curriculum with a strong focus on developing skills in English and mathematics. The curriculum is complemented by regular theme days and focus weeks, where pupils undertake projects about other cultures and the community. For example, Spanish days and visits from Zambian exchange students foster good relations and enhance pupils' understanding of other cultures. The curriculum prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain.
- Parents are appreciative of the school's work to involve them in their child's learning. The school holds regular 'Inspire' sessions where parents work alongside their child in lessons. These are extremely well attended by parents.
- Pupils' personal development is underpinned by a strong emphasis on social, moral, spiritual and cultural education. Pupils regularly participate in whole school fundraising events. This inspires pupils to take their learning into the community. For example, a pupil gave his pocket money to a homeless person after learning about deprivation.
- Leaders ensure that safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements and act swiftly to ensure that children and their families receive support when needed. The school works closely with external agencies, and records show that the headteacher will leave no stone unturned in finding support for families in need.
- Leaders effectively use additional government funding to provide support for disadvantaged pupils. As a result, disadvantaged pupils achieve well and make good progress.
- Additional funding to improve participation in sport has been used well. As a result, there has been a 50% increase in the proportion of pupils who engage in sporting activity at school. The funding has also been used to employ specialist coaches to work alongside school staff to increase teaching expertise.
- The local authority has provided good support for the school. It funded the support of a National Leader in Education (NLE) when the headteacher was newly appointed to the school. The NLE is supporting the school in tackling the underperformance of a small group of boys in writing.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have also been proactive in engaging the support of well-respected specialists in education to support improvements in teaching. For example, a specialist in English provided training for the teaching of reading, which resulted in above average attainment for pupils at the end of Year 6. Governors are systematic and thorough in their checking up on the effectiveness of expenditure of school funds and the impact on pupil progress. They challenge the headteacher about how well disadvantaged pupils are making progress and how their provision can be made more effective. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and show a great commitment to the headteacher's vision for a truly inclusive school. Governors have established clear links between teachers' performance and pay decisions. Termly reviews of school improvement priorities have been effective in driving improvement. Governors apply rigour to their recruitment processes.

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

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are polite and courteous and speak of their love of the school. They are keen to learn and show positive attitudes to their work. There are occasional lapses of concentration for a small minority of pupils in those lessons where the work set is sometimes too easy.
- Pupils' conduct around the school is often exemplary. Pupils are very clear about how they are a 'big family' and that they 'all help each other'. For example, older children take good care of younger pupils. Parents enthuse about the nurturing atmosphere in the school.
- Pupils say that bullying is rare. They are confident that adults will support them in finding solutions if they fall out with their friends. Behaviour records show that staff are extremely thorough in following up incidents of poor behaviour and, as a result, there are few incidents.
- Behaviour is not yet outstanding because not all teachers have the highest expectations of behaviour. As a result, not all pupils take the utmost pride in presenting their work to the very highest standard.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding.
- Pupils of all ages are able to speak about how to keep themselves and others safe. Internet safety has a high profile in the school. Parents appreciate the work that the school does in supporting their knowledge of keeping their children safe online. Pupils have presented information to the wider community about internet safety, at local coffee mornings.
- Leaders and governors are tenacious in their determination to keep pupils safe from harm. Governors regularly carry out thorough health and safety checks on the school building and safeguarding documentation.
- Attendance levels are consistently above the national average for all groups of pupils. Pupils say how they do not like to be away from school because they 'miss too much fun'.

The quality of teaching is good

- The teaching of reading is a strength of the school. Pupils of all ages and abilities speak of their love of reading. Leaders have invested wisely in the training of staff to teach reading. The school's recent work to develop reading journals has been successful in broadening pupils' reading experiences. As a result, the majority of pupils across the school are on track to achieve above national average attainment in reading.
- All teaching staff use sign language to reinforce their instructions. There are many visual prompts in the classroom which support pupils' understanding and aid their learning.
- Highly skilled support staff provide effective additional support for pupils with special educational needs. The success of support programmes is closely checked to ensure that progress is at least good. High staff to pupil ratios ensure that all pupils get the attention they need. One pupil told the inspector, 'I love being in a small school because I get so much attention.'
- The teaching of computing is a strength of the school. Pupils confidently use tablets and laptops in lessons. Computer programming is taught across the school and by the time pupils are in Year 2 they are able to write a simple programme using sound and images which involves two characters telling a 'knock-knock' joke. Pupils in the mixed Years 3 and 4 class used knowledge from their instruction writing activity to create a Morpho character using tablets. They successfully programmed the Morpho to share a message.
- The teaching of writing, although improved since the previous inspection, is not as strong as reading. Marking and feedback to pupils do not always provide pupils with precise enough information on how to improve. Teachers do not always allow sufficient time for pupils to respond to their written comments. Consequently, pupils do not always learn from their mistakes or make improvements to their writing.
- Good use is made of technology to reinforce key concepts in mathematics. For example, in the mixed Years 5 and 6 class, pupils use computer programs to explore properties' shapes. Occasionally, the work set in mathematics does not challenge the mathematical thinking of more able pupils. Teachers sometimes ask pupils to practise calculations that they have already mastered and this slows pupils' progress.
- The homework that teachers set supports the pupils' learning in class. Half-termly project-based homework activities are popular. Such activities enable pupils to make their own decisions and work independently. Pupils in the mixed Years 5 and 6 class recently learnt about carnival across the world. Some pupils produced models of carnival floats and costumes, whilst others drew plans of electrical

circuits or wrote about the history of carnival.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Attainment at the end of Years 2 and 6 is consistently above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The gap in achievement between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally is closing. By the end of Year 6 the gap between disadvantaged pupils and others nationally has reduced to three terms in writing, two terms in reading and one in mathematics. Although the gap between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally is largest in writing, this is the area where disadvantaged pupils made most progress in 2014. The good progress in writing for disadvantaged pupils was the result of specific support and good use of pupil premium funding.
- The few pupils with special educational needs make good progress in reading and mathematics. The school has a good record of supporting pupils with dyslexic tendencies to make outstanding progress.
- Reading is given high priority. Pupils say they love reading and talk passionately about books they have read. The majority of pupils confidently use their phonic knowledge to read unfamiliar words. A greater proportion of pupils in Year 2 and Year 6, compared to those nationally, reach the higher levels in reading. In 2014, a similar proportion to that found nationally achieved the expected standard in phonics (letters and the sounds they make) in the Year 1 screening checks.
- The pupils' artwork is of a very high quality, particularly observational drawings.
- By the end of Year 6, the most able pupils made better than expected progress in reading and writing, but not in mathematics. A greater proportion of the most able pupils achieved at the higher levels than those nationally.

The early years provision

is good

- Pupils join the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and knowledge typical for their age.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage leader has been effective in developing close links with pre-schools and parents to ensure that children have a smooth transition into school. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about their partnership with the school and welcome the many opportunities to share 'Wow' moments, which capture their child's achievements.
- The teacher and teaching assistants know the children well. Relationships are strong and children enjoy coming to school.
- Children's behaviour is good. The children move around the classroom and outside areas safely. Well-established routines for tidying up and taking care of equipment ensure that both indoor and outdoor spaces provide safe areas for the children to explore and learn.
- When pupils are working with the teaching staff, they quickly become engrossed in the activities. Teachers' skilled interaction with children, careful questioning and good modelling of vocabulary ensure that pupils make good progress.
- Teachers regularly observe children to check their understanding. However, teachers do not always use these observations to provide sufficiently challenging and exciting activities, especially when children are learning independently.
- By the time children leave Reception, a higher proportion than nationally has achieved a good level of development. Children enter Year 1 ready for the next stage in their education, achieving particularly well in number and communication and literacy.

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	123642
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	444081

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	80
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Becky Nurse
Headteacher	Amanda Seager
Date of previous school inspection	19–20 May 2010
Telephone number	01749 860329
Fax number	01749 860687
Email address	office@ditcheat.somerset.sch.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2014

