

Decoy Primary School

Deer Park Road, Newton Abbot, Devon, TQ12 1DH

Inspection dates 12–13 November 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- School leaders do not focus sufficiently on the impact planning and actions will have on improving pupils' progress as they move through the school.
- Governors have yet to fully address inconsistencies in pupils' achievement to ensure the school's previously strong performance is returned.
- Leaders have identified key aspects to improve the quality of teaching and consequently, pupils' achievement is now starting to improve. However, this has not improved enough to be good.
- Marking and feedback in pupils' books do not always help them understand how they can improve their work.
- The achievement of pupils is not as strong as in the past and this is especially so in their writing.
- The teaching of writing does not sufficiently enable pupils to make good progress as they move through the school and this hinders their overall achievement.
- Pupils supported through the additional funding do not make consistently strong progress to ensure gaps in their attainment are closing quickly enough.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils' behaviour is good and they enjoy talking about their learning.
- The school's work to keep pupils' safe is good. Pupils say that they feel safe during their time in school.
- This is an inclusive and welcoming school community. Relationships with parents are particularly strong.
- Children enjoy a rich variety of experiences in the early years provision enabling them to make good progress. This is especially so during their Reception year where effective teaching promotes their basic literacy and numeracy skills.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 20 lessons, of which six were jointly seen with both the headteacher and deputy headteacher. Inspectors also listened to pupils read and looked extensively at pupils' work.
- Inspectors met with pupils and talked with them about their work. Meetings took place with governors and subject leaders. A telephone conversation took place with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors reviewed documentation including safeguarding, how the performance of staff is managed, behaviour and safety, attendance and checks on pupils' attainment and progress.
- Inspectors took account of 90 responses from parents to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and 23 returned staff questionnaires. An inspector also talked to parents informally during the inspection.

Inspection team

Howard Jones, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Sean Millar

Additional Inspector

Linda Rafferty

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Decoy is much larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage there are two separate daily sessions in the Nursery and two full-time classes in Reception.
- When compared with national figures, the proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is average.
- The proportion of pupils receiving support from the pupil premium funding is below average. This is additional government funding to support those pupils in the school who are known to be eligible for free school meals or those who are in care.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better in order to raise pupils' achievement by:
 - identifying and sharing the most effective approaches for teaching writing across the school so that pupils make the best possible progress in their literacy skills
 - ensuring that teachers' written guidance in their marking makes clear to pupils how they can improve their work.
- Strengthen leaders' roles in checking the school's performance so that their actions have a greater impact on pupils' achievement by:
 - sharpening targets in the school's plans for improvement so that actions can be checked for their impact on pupils' achievement
 - having a stronger focus on how well teachers promote pupils' progress when checking teaching across the school
 - making sure that pupils supported through the additional funding experience a consistently positive difference in their learning
 - strengthening the role of governors so they hold leaders to account for the school's performance more effectively.

An external review of governance should be undertaken to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management

require improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement are not good enough. As a result, the school's previously strong performance has not been maintained.
- School plans do not sufficiently show how and when school actions will bring improvements in pupils' progress in key subjects. As a result, actions of school leaders do not effectively focus on how these will impact on improving the progress made by pupils as they move through the school.
- Teaching is not consistently good even though the headteacher has tackled some weak teaching successfully. Checks on the quality of teaching do not focus enough on how pupils' progress is being promoted. As a result, there are weaknesses in pupils' achievement, especially in writing.
- Subject leaders' efforts to improve the quality of provision in their subjects do not have enough effect. Therefore, while some pupils make better progress, progress is slower for others. Pupils' progress is stronger in mathematics and a large proportion do well in their use of English grammar.
- Gaps in attainment are not closing quickly enough for pupils eligible for additional funding. This is because the range of approaches introduced do not have a consistently strong impact on their progress.
- Provision for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs enables them to share equally in the range of activities the school provides. Pupils with additional needs make progress similar to their peers.
- Leaders recognise the need to refocus their priorities. Recently the local authority has alerted the school of its declining performance and has effectively identified key aspects for improvement and begun to work with leaders to address these.
- There are established routines to review teachers' targets and pay and career progression. Planned training opportunities for teachers serve to develop their classroom practice.
- This is an inclusive school where positive relationships are clearly evident and discrimination is not tolerated. The headteacher very successfully promotes the good care, equality of opportunity and well-being of pupils. All staff share these values. Pupils who find being in school difficult engage in a range of activities and parents are complimentary about how well the school looks after their child.
- The provision for sport is very well developed. The extra primary sports funding is enhancing teachers' capacity through the deployment of sports coaches. Pupils' physical well-being is advanced through an extensive range of activities which include competitive sports such as cricket and badminton.
- Subjects are designed and taught in ways to develop pupils' literacy skills through topic themes although approaches for teaching writing across the school are less effective. Mathematics is covered as a discrete subject and pupils say they enjoy opportunities to engage in investigative tasks. Pupils are taught Spanish.
- A range of opportunities serves to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. Because of the school's emphasis on its values, pupils have a strong sense of fairness and right and wrong which serves to reinforce their understanding of being British and prepares them well for life in modern Britain. Pupils participate in philosophy sessions and explore questions together.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet requirements. These are effective and include background checks of adults working with pupils and risk assessments covering aspects of school life, such as educational visits.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have not addressed inconsistencies in pupils' achievement well enough to ensure the school's previously strong performance is maintained. They know about data on the school's performance. However, their challenge of school leaders has not been sufficiently robust to secure improvements in key areas, such as ensuring the additional funding is effectively closing gaps in eligible pupils' attainment. Governors undertake a range of training but this has yet to lead to the school's performance reflecting that of similar schools nationally. There are established routines for the management of the headteacher's performance and that of teachers' pay and progression against their targets. Governors know about the quality of teaching in the school and where the headteacher has addressed underperformance. Governors are active within school and make visits to subject areas. They ensure discrimination is not tolerated and promote the well-being of pupils, especially in the use of the primary sports funding. There is effective management of the school's budget so that resources are deployed to support pupils' learning within the new curriculum. Governors are overseeing changes in the way checks are made on how well pupils are learning.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are eager to talk about their learning and share their ideas together so they can become more successful in their work. Older pupils are articulate and enthused about the books they read. Children in Reception listen carefully and become absorbed in their 'busy' activities.
- Movement in and outside the school is orderly and pupils get on well together during lunchtime in the school dining hall. Older pupils take on responsibilities at break times to help younger pupils and act as 'play buddies'.
- Pupils say that they value the support and care their teachers provide. Pupils enjoy warm and positive relationships with adults and between each other. Pupils have a clear understanding of how to respond to their teachers during lessons. Behaviour is no better than good because these expectations have yet to have a stronger impact on pupils' progress.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils spoken to are emphatic that they feel safe within school at all times. They say adults respond quickly should they have any concerns. They have a secure understanding of how to keep themselves safe using the internet because of the school's work in this area.
- This is an inclusive school and pupils are adamant that all forms of bullying, including cyber-bullying, are rare. Pupils are very accepting of differences so that discrimination is not tolerated in any form. School records show this is typically so over time.
- Pupils clearly enjoy coming to school and say their teachers support them well. Their attendance is above average. Parents agree with their children as seen in their positive response to the online questionnaire.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because it does not ensure that pupils make fast enough progress as they move through the school.
- Pupils do not always receive helpful feedback on their learning. Written guidance does not sufficiently help pupils understand how to improve their work and move to the next level. Examples of more effective practice have yet to become routine.
- Teaching of writing does not sufficiently enable pupils to make good progress as they move through the school. As a result, the quality and standard of writing are variable and this hinders pupils' overall achievement.
- The range of approaches in place to support pupils eligible for additional funding are not closing gaps between their attainment and other pupils quickly enough. While support promotes their well-being it does not always bring about consistently strong progress in all aspects of their learning.
- Planning enables teachers and other adults to work effectively together during lessons. Consequently, the learning of pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs is not hindered and most make at least comparable progress to other pupils.
- Pupils' progress is stronger and reinforces good learning where teachers use questioning effectively. For example, in one Year 5 literacy session, discussion generated by the teacher was used to adjust tasks so that pupils made strong gains in their learning. As a result, pupils were enabled to use appropriate techniques to write effective play scripts.
- In reading, teachers set high expectations to help pupils develop their phonic knowledge and skills (linking letter and sounds) in both Reception and Year 1. Themes such as 'super heroes' are effectively used as a vehicle to encourage resilience and to appropriately challenge and develop fluency and good understanding in basic literacy skills. Older pupils enjoy reading a range of books by different authors.
- Pupils' engagement in their learning is strong as they talk about their work, for example when developing systems to explore the use of geometric shapes during mathematical investigations.
- Pupils' use of subject vocabulary and skills are particularly well extended in their Spanish language sessions.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils do not make sufficiently strong progress in their writing as they move through the school and this hinders their overall achievement at the end of Key Stage 2. As a result, by the end of Year 6, pupils' achievement in national tests is not good enough.

- Pupils' attainment by the end of Year 2 was broadly average in last summer's national assessments. This was not as strong as in previous years and pupils' attainment in writing is comparatively weaker.
- From their starting points the gap in attainment between disadvantaged pupils supported through the additional funding and other pupils nationally is not closing quickly enough. Compared to other pupils at the school, eligible pupils were behind by eight months in reading, seven months in writing and two months in mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2014. Compared with all other pupils nationally, disadvantaged pupils at the school were ten months behind in reading and writing and five months behind in mathematics.
- The progress made by disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is similar to that of their peers. Pupils who have specifically targeted support for their learning needs make better progress.
- The performance of pupils in the phonics check (linking letters and sounds) for six-year-olds is comparable to that found nationally although reduced on the previous year. The provision for pupils' phonics work has strengthened and school evidence shows pupils are competent readers and enjoy reading books from a range of authors.
- The overall attainment of the most able pupils is comparable to similar groups nationally. From their starting points, a number are especially successful at the higher level in mathematics.

The early years provision

is good

- Leadership in the early years provision is good because children go on to make good progress.
- Children's behaviour and provision for their safety are good. Adults are careful to ensure movement around the setting is calm and purposeful. Children get on well together both during learning sessions and outside at break times.
- Children enjoy a range of activities which promote their breadth of learning. Opportunities for imaginative play effectively serve to enhance basic skills. For example, children in the Nursery use water to explore their ideas together and their creativity is stimulated through their art work.
- The teaching in Reception is especially strong and children make sustained gains in developing their basic skills during this year. Teachers and adults skilfully use a range of resources to absorb children in their work so they become increasingly resilient and make good progress. Questioning is used effectively to deepen children's understanding.
- Checks on children's development are routine. The wide range of evidence of their recorded work helps parents to see how their child is developing. Children develop their phonics skills accurately and their social awareness is enhanced as they explore their ideas about 'fabulous friends'.
- Most children enter the Nursery with skill levels below those that are typical for their age. The majority of children join the school at the beginning of their Reception year and enter with a similar level of skills. By the time children begin Year 1 most reach at least the level of development that would be expected for their age.

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	113209
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	449385

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	459
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mark Ruston
Headteacher	Gill O'Neill
Date of previous school inspection	29 November 2007
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