

The Duchy School Bradninch

Bowley Meadow, Townlands, Exeter, EX5 4RF

Inspection dates 19–20 May 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	This inspection:	Outstanding 1
Leadership and management	Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils	Outstanding	1
Early years provision	Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Attainment in all subjects is well above average for children in early years and pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2.
- The school has improved in recent years and all groups of pupils achieve outstandingly well. The most able pupils, disadvantaged pupils in receipt of pupil premium funding, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs all make rapid and excellent progress.
- Children in early years make outstanding progress in response to high-quality teaching.
- There is outstanding leadership and management. The head of school is supported very well by all staff, who are enthusiastic about driving the school forwards.
- Governors provide outstanding support for the school and challenge the leadership constructively. The Primary Academies Trust also supports the school very well, providing excellent opportunities for staff to improve their professional skills and for pupils to enjoy increased opportunities in activities such as sport.
- The head of school checks the quality of teaching and learning systematically and rigorously, very ably supported by subject and unit leaders.
- Teaching over time has been outstanding. Pupils respond very well to teachers' high expectations.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. They love the school and are excellent ambassadors for it in the wider community.
- Pupils feel very safe and excellently cared for. They enjoy the wide range of activities which the school provides for them outside lessons.
- The school strongly promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. It also gives them a secure understanding of British values in contemporary society.
- The school has an imaginative curriculum, which is very effective in linking various themes and subjects together. Pupils greatly enjoy their lessons.
- There are several subjects which are particular strengths of the school, including art, science and physical education.
- The school, along with other member schools of the Primary Academies Trust, has a strong reputation for its work in supporting other schools on their own paths to improvement.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed pupils' learning in 12 lessons, taught by six teachers. Three of the lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher. Inspectors also visited several shorter sessions, some of which were taught by learning support assistants with small groups of pupils. Inspectors heard pupils read and looked in detail at pupils' work.
- Inspectors held meetings with pupils and staff. They also met the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the Primary Academies Trust.
- The inspection team took account of 37 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. It also looked at the school's own survey of parents' views. Inspectors analysed 21 responses to the staff questionnaire completed during the inspection.
- The inspectors looked at a range of documents, including data on pupils' current progress, minutes of governing body meetings, the school's view of its own effectiveness, and its planning for improvement. Inspectors looked at information relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

John Laver, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Elizabeth Wilson-Chalon

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The Duchy School Bradninch became an academy on 1 September 2013. When its predecessor school, also called the Duchy School Bradninch, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good.
- The school is part of the Primary Academies Trust, comprising eight schools.
- The Duchy School Bradninch is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Almost all pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for pupil premium funding is below average, with very few eligible in Year 6. The pupil premium is additional government funding to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or who are looked after.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- There are six classes. Children in the Reception class attend school full time.
- The school runs a before-school nurture club called 'Little Oaks'.
- The school holds the Devon Inclusion Award (enhanced level) for its work with children with difficulties in English and mathematics.
- The head of school and other staff support some other local schools in improving performance.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further raise teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve in writing by providing more opportunities to write at length and in depth in subjects or topics outside of English lessons.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The head of school has improved the school considerably over the past two years. The staff questionnaires and discussions during the inspection showed how united the staff are in supporting the drive for excellence. This, along with the leadership's accurate evaluation of the school's performance, shows that the school has a strong capacity to maintain its existing strengths and keep improving further.
- The head of school gives valued support to other schools, for example in helping them to plan effectively for further improvement. Other staff also lend their expertise to local schools in order to improve their performance, for example in sport and early years education.
- There is a strong desire within the school for staff to improve and refine their own skills. Staff get excellent opportunities for their own professional development, both from their partner schools in the Primary Academies Trust and from links with other local schools. For example, staff meet with their colleagues, plan collaboratively and create more opportunities for pupils to join with their peers elsewhere who have similar gifts or talents, or to take part in joint events such as sports competitions.
- The Unit leaders share with the head of school the responsibility for rigorously checking the quality of teaching and learning. The leadership has created a strong culture of accountability. The leadership sets targets for staff which relate their pay to pupils' progress and provides support for staff to improve their teaching where appropriate.
- The leadership has used additional funding very effectively. Pupil premium funding is used to create more support, which has resulted in the pupils concerned making outstanding progress. The leadership uses additional sports funding to boost teachers' expertise in teaching physical education and provide more opportunities and resources for pupils. The result has been a high take-up of a range of sports activities and competitive successes against other schools, at local and regional levels.
- The school promotes equal opportunities strongly. The quality of teaching and the curriculum allow pupils of all abilities and backgrounds to make equally strong progress in their work, so that they are all prepared well for their transition to their next school at the age of 11. There is no discrimination, and pupils get on very well with each other and with adults.
- The school meets all safeguarding requirements exceptionally well. All staff get regular training in safeguarding awareness and procedures. Pupils confirm that the school teaches them how to be safe in all situations. The school provides a secure environment.
- The school has rearranged its timetable to meet the needs of the new National Curriculum. Subjects are often taught through topics or themes, which the pupils greatly enjoy, such as 'weather and climate'.
- The school is also developing its assessment system, which is very effective in identifying pupils' progress and where individual pupils need more support or more challenge.
- The school is very outgoing. It has links with a school in Ethiopia. It teaches pupils about different faiths. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on topics such as 'The journey of life and death'. The school strongly promotes art and music.
- The leadership has carefully considered how to promote British values. Older pupils study democracy at various levels, from electing members of their school council to electing members of parliament. Pupils understand why virtues such as tolerance are considered important in British society. The school teaches pupils about the rationale behind various laws. Pupils discussed a 'pupils' charter' for the school, following an assembly on Magna Carta.
- The great majority of parents greatly appreciate what the school provides for their children and the outstanding progress which they make.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance of the school is highly effective. Responsibilities for governance are shared between the Primary Academies Trust and the school's own governors. Governors are fully involved in all aspects of school life. As well as making strategic decisions, they come into school to talk to staff and pupils, check the quality of learning and progress and both organise and attend school events. As a result of their extensive involvement, governors are very knowledgeable about how well pupils are progressing in the school, and in relation to pupils in other schools. They also know the quality of teaching in the school. Governors regularly discuss the leadership's evaluation of the school's performance with the leadership team. Governors are well trained to carry out their responsibilities for safeguarding. They monitor the system for managing staff performance, ensuring the accountability of all staff and that any weaknesses in teaching or school performance are purposefully tackled. Governors not only support the school very well, but ask searching questions of the leadership so that they understand the reasoning behind decisions and how they impact on the school. Governors talk knowledgeably

about the positive impact of initiatives such as pupil premium funding and primary sports funding on pupils' progress and opportunities in school. The Trust organises events both for staff training and for pupils across all the schools in the Trust. Therefore governors play a significant role in the strategic direction of the school, supporting the school and maintaining and further building on the very high standards already achieved.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Attendance is above average and pupils love coming to school. They behave excellently in lessons and around the school.
- Pupils want to learn and told inspectors how much they enjoy all aspects of school life, including lessons and the out-of-class activities. They say that incidents which might get in the way of learning are extremely few and far between and are quickly resolved, because the pupils themselves expect to work and play in a very harmonious atmosphere.
- Pupils respond very positively to the chance to take on responsibility. The school council functions very effectively, managing its own budget and working to bring about improvements in the school. Inspectors also saw older pupils helping younger children, for example at break times.
- There is a very high take-up of activities put on by the school, and the school ensures that they are open to all pupils, whatever their background. Pupils enjoy not only the clubs but the visits and the chance to do things for the community, such as entertaining senior citizens at Christmas.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Parents and pupils are unanimous in insisting that the school is a very safe environment.
- School records confirm that there are very few untoward incidents in the school. There have been no exclusions for some time, and no significant incidents of bullying. Pupils are taught about different types of bullying and how they should respond. Pupils themselves insist that bullying is not an issue and they know how to keep themselves safe.
- The school gives appropriate attention to reinforcing messages about safety in class, in assemblies, through inviting visitors to the school and by communicating information to parents, for example about safe use of the internet.
- The Nurture group operates before the school starts. Several pupils attend this group daily, and it provides them with breakfast and a calm and constructive start to the school day. It is part of the excellent care and support for pupils, and has helped to win the school the Devon Inclusion award.
- The school works very effectively to make new pupils very welcome in the school and also ensures that all pupils move confidently to their future schools. For example, the early years leader maintains close contacts with local nurseries and pre-schools so that children in Reception feel safe and confident when they first join the school.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- The quality of teaching is outstanding, because in recent years it has never been less than consistently good and is often better, as demonstrated by the high standards and excellent progress made in all year groups throughout the school. The strengths in teaching are evident from the school's records of achievement, from pupils' results, from their work, and from conversations with pupils and staff. Most parents also believe that teaching is a strength of the school.
- Teachers have high expectations of all pupils, and they respond very well to this. Teachers are also very well supported by learning support assistants, who assist teachers very competently in class as well as supporting some pupils individually or in small groups outside lessons. This has enabled several disadvantaged pupils, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs to make outstanding progress, particularly in acquiring literacy and numeracy skills.
- Teachers make sure that other groups of pupils also achieve very well. For example, they help the most able pupils to make outstanding progress by emphasising the importance of pupils thinking for themselves and questioning what they are told or what they read. The results of this are seen in some of the excellent science work, which shows a high level of investigative skills.
- Teachers teach mathematics and reading very effectively. Staff have benefited from excellent training

opportunities from within the Trust and other local schools, gaining the necessary confidence and techniques to cater for all groups of pupils.

- Most of the time, teachers teach writing very effectively, particularly in their literacy lessons. Just occasionally there is not the same high expectation of what pupils could achieve when writing in other lessons, for example when writing up work on topics. Then progress is not as rapid as in most other lessons.
- Teachers mark pupils' work very well, and usually give pupils time to respond to their comments so that they learn effectively from their errors or omissions.
- Staff are increasingly confident in using data on pupils' progress to plan effectively for the next steps in learning. Staff welcome the accountability they have for progress, because they want pupils to succeed well. Pupils appreciate this, as was seen when they told the inspectors how much they enjoyed lessons and liked their teachers.

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- The excellent progress which children make in Reception is continued throughout the rest of the school, with pupils consistently attaining well above the national average and being very well prepared for their next school at the age of 11.
- The high, well-above-average standards were very evident in the most recent national tests, in 2014. The high attainment was also evident in earlier results, and has not only been sustained but further improved upon. Pupils currently in the school are on track to attain at well-above-average levels.
- All groups of pupils make outstanding progress. This is because almost all pupils make at least expected progress, and most make better than expected, or much better than expected, progress in all subjects and in all age groups.
- There has been consistently outstanding achievement in reading. Pupils read often and widely, and with high levels of fluency, accuracy and confidence.
- Achievement in mathematics is outstanding. Pupils have developed considerable skill in problem-solving in mathematics. In the past, there were fewer boys than girls achieving the highest levels in mathematics, but this trend has been reversed.
- Achievement in writing is outstanding. This is not evident in every piece of work done by pupils in their topic work, but for most of the time, significant numbers of pupils write using a wide range of language and in a wide range of different styles. Pupils write imaginative stories, record their visits outside school and create some very effective reflective work, including poetry.
- There is outstanding achievement in several other subjects, including physical education, art and science, partly because the pupils are taught by very knowledgeable and skilled specialists.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make excellent progress. The school provides high quality support for these pupils both inside and outside the classroom. The school's success is evident in the way that several of these pupils cease to need the support as they move up through the school.
- The numbers of disadvantaged pupils in receipt of pupil premium funding in the various classes are too small to make a meaningful comparison of their achievement as a group with other pupils. However, the few individuals concerned benefit from very good resources and staff support. They make the same outstanding progress as other pupils in the school, and make more rapid progress than pupils elsewhere.
- The most able pupils make outstanding progress. Nearly all of them make much better than expected progress throughout the school, and they attain the higher Level 3 at Key Stage 1 and Levels 5 or 6 at Key Stage 2.

The early years provision

is outstanding

- Children usually join the school with levels of skill and personal development in line with those typically expected for their age, although sometimes weaker in communication and language skills. Whilst in Reception, boys and girls of all abilities make outstanding progress in all areas. Many leave Reception with knowledge, skills and levels of personal and social development well above those typical for their age. Consequently they are very well prepared for their move into Year 1.
- Staff teach children in early years exceptionally well. The teacher and support staff work excellently as a team. Children respond very quickly to the high expectations. They rapidly learn how to move without fuss between activities, listen to the teacher and each other, and play and work constructively and very

safely together. Staff teach the children to be helpful and supportive towards each other.

- Inspectors saw children making excellent progress in phonics sessions (learning letters and the sounds they make). They also learn to add, subtract and even multiply numbers. An inspector saw children confidently handling different 3-D shapes and talking accurately to each other about their qualities. The teaching makes learning fun, but at the same time it is very purposeful. Children enjoy challenging tasks, even when they work on their own away from staff.
- Children's work shows excellent development in early writing skills. Standards in speaking are also high, with children confidently explaining to the inspector what they were doing and the reasoning behind it.
- Children make excellent progress in developing personal and social skills, so they collaborate and help each other in a calm atmosphere. Behaviour is outstanding, with the children's enthusiasm well directed towards purposeful work and play.
- There is excellent leadership of early years. The leader uses her extensive knowledge and experience to assist early years teachers in other schools to develop their expertise. In her own school, she regularly and thoroughly assesses children's attainment and progress, and the results are recorded well and used to good effect when planning further activities. Learning journals show clearly the excellent progress which children make. Staff use both the outdoor and indoor spaces well for a range of activities. Staff encourage parents to support their children's learning. Parents are very appreciative of the provision for their children in early years.

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	140078
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	450375

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	170
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Phil Chambers
Head of School	Claire Baillie
Executive Headteacher	Helen Nicholls
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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