

Decoy Primary School

Deer Park Road, Newton Abbot, Devon TQ12 1DH

Inspection dates

29–30 November 2016

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher set high expectations for staff and pupils which have led to improved progress and attainment for the school since the previous inspection. Leaders, staff and governors have created a culture where pupils' well-being and educational success go hand in hand.
- Relationships between pupils and teachers are excellent. Pupils have total belief in their teachers to support them and help them to achieve their best.
- Leaders make sure that systems for keeping pupils safe are robust and effective. All pupils say they feel safe. They trust their teachers and know how to get immediate help if needed.
- The roles and impact of middle leaders have yet to be maximised.
- Leadership and teaching in the early years are strong so that children get a flying start to their education. Both in the Nursery and the Reception classes, children have settled in well and are enjoying learning.
- The teaching of letters and the sounds they represent (phonics) is good and underpins the development of early reading and writing.
- Pupils are proud of their school. Their friendly, respectful and welcoming attitudes towards each other and adults reflect the care and respect shown to them by all staff.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are good. Teachers use their strong subject knowledge to promote high achievement in a wide range of subjects. However, marking and feedback do not consistently comply with the school's policy.
- The great majority of pupils make good progress from their different starting points. However, a small proportion in key stage 1 and key stage 2 missed their targets in 2016, particularly in mathematics and writing.
- Pupils' attainment is rising quickly and differences between groups of pupils are diminishing. Leaders, staff and governors are taking clear and determined steps to make sure that all pupils achieve equally well.
- The curriculum makes good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, and social development. However, their cultural development is weaker and this limits their preparedness for modern British society.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to improve teaching to raise pupils' achievement by:
 - ensuring that staff create more opportunities to challenge pupils' understanding in all subjects to achieve greater depth
 - ensuring that all teachers consistently follow the agreed marking policy and sharpen the feedback pupils receive to make sure that they know how to improve their work
 - setting higher expectations for the content and quality of pupils' written work, including handwriting in all subjects.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - strengthening the work of middle leaders (those responsible for particular age groups or subjects) to develop further their skills in monitoring and curriculum development by sharing the expertise that already exists in the school
 - ensuring that the curriculum provides more opportunities for pupils to gain an informed understanding of diverse faiths and cultures to help prepare them for life in Britain today.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Decoy Primary School has greatly improved since the previous inspection. This has been due to the determined drive of the headteacher to raise standards, very ably supported by the deputy headteacher, other leaders and the governing body. Their focus, vision and hard work have eliminated underperformance and ensured a settled and knowledgeable teaching team. As a result, teaching has improved, pupils' progress has accelerated and standards have been raised. The school shows good capacity to continue to improve.
- Since the previous inspection the headteacher identified a range of weaknesses in teaching and assessment. Through extensive staff training and frequent support and monitoring for the work of teachers and teaching assistants, these key issues have been tackled quickly and successfully.
- Senior leaders' ongoing, extensive and highly detailed monitoring has given them an accurate view of the school's performance. The school's robust self-evaluation identifies clearly the areas for improvement and is a reflective process. Checks on the quality of teaching and learning are thorough. Where needed, the follow-up is immediate, sensitive and supportive.
- All staff are valued, and this means that teachers, teaching assistants and lunchtime staff all feel supported and engaged in the improvement of the school. Typical staff comments include, 'We welcome and take on the challenge the headteacher gives us.' and, 'Our training makes a real difference to our work.'
- Subject and other middle leaders provide good support to their colleagues. Since the previous inspection, they have received good training to develop their roles and they make a good contribution to the school's improvement priorities. However, the role of some middle leaders has not yet extended to include monitoring and curriculum development.
- Leaders have regular opportunities to check that agreed strategies to secure improvement are being applied by all the staff. This has led to a growing consistency of approach in classrooms, for example in the drive to improve reading, writing and mathematics. However, the school's marking policy is not yet consistently applied and is a school focus for improvement.
- Senior leaders and the governing body have worked hard to improve the assessment and tracking of pupils' progress. Assessment information is used regularly by senior leaders to talk to teachers about pupils' achievement and to plan opportunities to help pupils catch up if needed. Leaders have built in a number of occasions for teachers to discuss their assessments with each other to bring about a shared understanding of the expected standards. These meetings are extended fortnightly to the teaching assistants. As a result, overall assessment of pupils' work is accurate.
- Staff performance is managed effectively through meetings to discuss pupils' progress, looking at pupils' workbooks and observing teaching. All staff openly discuss their strengths and areas for development with colleagues, creating an environment where everyone is a learner – adults and children alike.
- The leadership and organisation of provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is good. Identification of need is appropriate and resources

are of a good standard, ensuring that pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities succeed in their learning and their personal and social development. The systems and procedures are in place for teachers to check the progress of individual pupils and inform leaders when there is a risk of individuals falling behind.

- School leaders use the school's pupil premium grant to maximum effect to ensure that disadvantage is no barrier to participation and achievement. The school provides additional staffing, including a 'pupil premium champion', to support disadvantaged pupils' academic achievement and their personal development. Staff have received training in emotional health and well-being so that they have the skills and knowledge to support those pupils who need it. The impact of this support is reflected in the good progress and achievement of disadvantaged pupils across the school. The progress of pupils supported by this funding is monitored well. The impact of pupil premium funding is evaluated regularly by the headteacher and the governors.
- The primary school sport premium is also used well. Pupils benefit from a high-quality physical education leader and say how much they enjoy sport and find lessons fun. They have also participated successfully in local tournaments. Pupils of all ages recognise the value of physical activity as a part of being healthy. There are also many opportunities for pupils to be involved in a wide range of other sporting activities, both within the school day and after school.
- The school offers a broad and balanced curriculum that engages pupils and contributes to their enjoyment of learning. Physical education and science are strengths and pupils make particularly good progress in these subjects. Reading and writing are woven across the curriculum, especially in the early years. This increasingly strengthens pupils' skills, and adds a depth of richness to their reading and a sense of purpose to their writing.
- The school provides many good opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through different subjects. Pupils have good understanding of their local community and contribute well to this aspect of social development. They have a good understanding of democracy and the rule of law. The school is embedding its vision and values through a recent 'Inspiring Positive Futures initiative'. However, pupils have limited opportunity to gain an understanding of the diversity of the United Kingdom and this restricts the extent to which they are being prepared to take their places in modern British society.
- Leaders and staff give thought and consideration to the quality of the environment in classrooms and corridors, so the school is a very attractive and enjoyable place to learn. High-quality displays on classroom walls celebrate learning across subjects. This extends into the corridors, where some current displays positively celebrate pupils' achievement in writing, for example.
- Parents who spoke to inspectors, or who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, were positive about all areas of the school's work. The vast majority would recommend this school to others.
- The local authority has worked productively with the school since its previous inspection and continues to support it effectively. It has provided good support in reviewing teaching and learning where needed, and development of the subject leaders.

Governance of the school

- The governance of the school has improved significantly since the last inspection.
- Governors know their school well and are now very confident and skilled in asking challenging questions. Their expertise has been used effectively to ensure that it benefits the school.
- The governing body maintains a careful overview of the work of the school. It hears from the headteacher and other leaders regularly about development and improvement. Governors take their responsibilities very seriously. The information given to them by either the headteacher or subject leaders is challenged and debated fully. Governors are fully behind the vision of the headteacher to improve the school and the lives of local families. They keep themselves up to date through training, networking and national information about improving governance. They use their wide-ranging skills to good effect to keep the work of the school under close review.
- Governors keep school finances under careful review and plan ahead with a clear understanding of key strategic challenges facing the school. The governing body makes sure that the pupil premium and the primary sport premium are spent effectively and make a difference to pupils.
- In order to further understand pupils' progress at a strategic level, governors are now receiving regular updates about 'case-study pupils', especially pupil premium pupils. This is helping governors to be more challenging in their questions to leaders.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school does much above and beyond the minimum requirements to make sure that pupils and their families are safe and protected.
- There is a strong culture of vigilance, open relationships between all staff, good training and strong community links. There is a genuine emphasis on listening to the child's voice in decisions made about them.
- Safeguarding is led well by the headteacher and leadership team and is given additional strength through the extensive and excellent work of the 'pupil premium champion' and the special educational needs coordinator. Staff have good knowledge of child protection and broader aspects of safeguarding. Case recording about pupils is excellent. Staff and leaders have a clear understanding of the vulnerabilities of individual children within the local area and use this information very well when making decisions to safeguard pupils.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching in the school is now consistently good and pupils are making much more progress than in the past. For example, following a whole-school focus on improvement, the quality of mathematics teaching is now good. Pupils are encouraged to challenge themselves regularly through the school 'chilli challenge' where each of three levels is 'hotter' than the previous level. They are pushed to think about mathematical concepts in real, meaningful situations. This deepens their thinking and prompts much valuable learning.
- A strength of teaching across the school is precise questioning by teachers and teaching assistants to extend pupils' learning. Teaching assistants are deployed

effectively. They are knowledgeable and skilled and make a good contribution to the learning of the pupils they work with.

- Teamwork between staff is also strong and a high proportion of staff commented very positively to inspectors about this aspect of their work.
- The support provided in lessons for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is clearly targeted and of good quality. Additional support is planned well, resulting in these pupils making good progress in most lessons.
- Staff have high expectations of pupils' learning and behaviour. The vast majority of pupils rise to these expectations by working hard and behaving well. Pupils enjoy their learning and say that they particularly like 'reading and writing stories'. However, where the teaching challenge is not at the appropriate level, pupils' attention wanders and this can result in some low-level disruption.
- Staff and leaders know pupils well. Assessments are accurate and detailed, and make good use of insights from parents, teachers and teaching assistants. Staff usually make good use of this information to match teaching to pupils' needs.
- Teachers praise pupils for what they have done well and generally offer guidance to help them improve their work further, in line with the school's assessment policy. However, this is not applied consistently. For example, teachers do not always check that pupils respond to their comments, especially in English, or use periodic 'deep' marking to provide precise feedback about how to improve their work.
- Pupils' books show that staff are now making extensive use of opportunities to develop pupils' writing skills across subjects. However, there is insufficient focus on the quality of handwriting, which is variable and is not of the same high quality as that seen in the school presentation.
- Teaching is increasingly meeting the needs of the most able pupils. Staff and leaders are checking and reviewing these pupils' learning closely to inform the planning of work that makes them think more deeply about what they are learning.
- However, staff are not adapting tasks quickly enough when pupils learn more rapidly than expected. This results in some pupils not being challenged enough to reach greater depths in their learning. Leaders' monitoring of teaching has recognised this as an issue and they have increased staff training so that there is more careful planning of which questions may stretch pupils' abilities.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- On entering school in either the Nursery or Reception Year, children quickly become self-confident and assured. They know that staff listen to them carefully and say that they do not mind making occasional mistakes in their work and this helps them to learn.
- Staff promote pupils' physical and emotional well-being very well and are alert to any concerns that any pupils may have. Pupils explained how they could approach any member of staff if they were worried about anything.
- Pupils also told inspectors how there is very little bullying and name-calling from their peers, because 'everyone cares for each other'. On the rare occasions when bullying

does occur, they know that any member of staff will deal with the issues fairly and quickly as 'this school does not tolerate bullying'.

- Leaders and teachers help pupils stay safe, including from all forms of bullying. They tell pupils, in an age-appropriate way, about a wide range of potential risks to their safety, including from strangers, roads and when on the internet. Pupils demonstrated that they understood the risks to their safety when using technology, for example.
- Pupils have many opportunities to take on responsibilities at school and carry out any tasks they are given in a mature manner. This includes, for example, Year 6 buddies to the Reception children, school councillors and Year 5 and 6 'peer mediators'. They are very proud to contribute to the running of the school and to represent it in local and sporting events.
- The extensive opportunities for taking part in sport activities help pupils to understand how and why they should keep themselves healthy.
- Pupils who need additional support are cared for extremely well. Any actions taken are well documented and the school maintains very strong links with a range of outside agencies such as social care.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils conduct themselves well as they move around the school. At lunchtime, pupils socialise with one another, chatting happily over their lunch, or go outside to play together amicably.
- Pupils behave well in lessons, though sometimes a few lose focus or become easily distracted. They know and abide by rules and understand the consequences of not following them.
- Staff manage effectively the sometimes challenging behaviour displayed by a small number of pupils. Pupils with behavioural needs are given the right support and help to improve their behaviour over time.
- Pupils are very keen to come to school to learn. Attendance is above the national average. No group of pupils has low attendance and the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent is very small and reducing. The headteacher makes the need for high attendance clear and does not authorise term-time holidays. Leaders provide support for the very small number of families who do not ensure that their children attend regularly.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils' achievement by the end of Year 6 has been rising steadily and evidence suggests that this will continue in 2017 after a dip in the results of the 2016 cohort. In 2015, pupils made strong progress to attain standards in reading and mathematics that were significantly above the national average, while writing was broadly in line with the national average. Consequently, they were well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Results in 2016, for which tests were based on the new national curriculum, were lower than expected in all subjects, and most noticeably in mathematics and writing. Overall results of pupils' attainment were also affected by the larger than normal proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities in this cohort.

- School leaders have diligently analysed the progress information from these results and realised that the disappointing progress was attributable to some inconsistent teaching of this cohort over time across the key stage, especially in relation to learning behaviours. They recognised that pupils' skills in arithmetic and calculation were strong but that all but the most able pupils struggled when challenged to put their mathematical knowledge to the test by tackling problems.
- Evidence in mathematics books across the school shows that challenge, through the 'chilli challenge', is now a regular feature of mathematics lessons and pupils' skills and confidence in this area are rapidly improving. Evidence of pupils' writing shows improvement across the school.
- In key stage 1 there has also been an overall trend of improvement over time. Historically, the majority of pupils have entered key stage 1 with average skills and knowledge, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics. They typically reach standards in line with the national average by the time they leave Year 2. In 2015 a dip in performance is linked by the school to specific staffing difficulties. Current school information suggests that the pupils in key stage 1 are on track to achieve above the level of 2016.
- Pupils' standards in phonics have risen since the last inspection. The proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics check has continued to rise since the last inspection. The school's current data shows that the pupils are on track to achieve even higher results in this year. This reflects a concerted and highly focused effort in the early years and across the school to improve pupils' knowledge of phonics.
- Improvements in phonics are having a positive impact on pupils' reading. By the time they reach Year 2, pupils read with confidence and understanding. This includes boys and disadvantaged pupils, who are making more rapid progress than in the past. Pupils in key stage 1 are enthusiastic about literature because of the attention given by staff to reading and the use of stories to teach a range of subjects. In key stage 2, pupils are happy to read a range of texts and are able to talk animatedly about favourite authors, such as Jill Murphy, J.R.R Tolkien and Rick Reardon, and books such as 'Aesop's Fables'.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress towards their individual targets. Assessment data is well used to identify the areas in which pupils would benefit from additional support. This is highly effective and ensures that pupils succeed in their learning.
- Disadvantaged pupils are making good progress in key stages 1 and 2. The small numbers of most-able disadvantaged pupils across the school achieve well and make at least good progress from their starting points and in some cases better progress than their peers and nationally.
- There is little difference between the progress of boys and girls.
- Outcomes for the most able pupils are much stronger now than at the time of the previous inspection. In mathematics, a productive link with the local authority has helped the most able pupils to receive support. High expectations are reflected in the quality of pupils' current mathematics work.
- Pupils apply their writing and mathematics skills well in other subjects. For example, in science, pupils record findings systematically in tables, investigating issues such as force using a variety of skills, and writing about how vehicles move.

Early years provision

Outstanding

- Leaders have ensured that outcomes for children in the early years have remained consistently above age-related expectations. From their varying starting points, children make rapid progress in both the Nursery and Reception classes. By the time they leave the early years, the proportion of children attaining a good level of development is higher than the national average. Therefore, children's achievement is excellent and children are well prepared for the next stage in their education.
- Parents who spoke to inspectors were very pleased with the provision in the early years.
- The early years provision is very well led and managed. Children's progress is carefully tracked and additional support is provided or changes are made to the curriculum where necessary. For example, this year the early years leader has adjusted the curriculum to encourage boys and their writing.
- Adults working in the early years are effective and knowledgeable because of the training and support they receive from their highly skilled leader.
- The leader successfully directs Nursery and Reception staff to ensure they are consistent in their approach and planning. She addresses the training requirements of both the staff and learning assistants. The early years leader has also worked with Year 1 staff to make the transition to key stage 1 easier.
- The rich and varied curriculum engages children's imaginations and curiosity. Children have fun when they are learning and make excellent progress as a result. For example, children were totally absorbed as 'detectives' trying to find a 'lost ring'. Children were reading clues and talking between themselves about what each clue meant, then moving to the next one. When they discovered the ring the adult then encouraged them to read the congratulatory note using their skills in phonics.
- Phonics is well taught. Children make rapid progress in the early years because of the high-quality teaching that they receive and the wide range of opportunities they have to apply their phonic knowledge during other learning activities.
- Teachers take every possible opportunity to develop children's key skills of reading, writing and numbers. Talking about topics is encouraged at all times. Teachers and teaching assistants ask questions which help children to speak in sentences and to understand that stories have a beginning, middle and end. They give children plenty of opportunities to practise reading and writing words.
- Adults set high expectations for children's behaviour and children respond exceptionally well. Children listen intently in class. They have forged positive relationships with the older pupils, who they see as role models. Children in the Reception Year are 'buddied' with pupils in Year 6. As the children are used to working within the same class, they are very well prepared for Year 1 and the transfer is seamless.
- Adults provide a highly caring and supportive environment which very effectively promotes children's safety, welfare and social skills. Children are happy and get on well with each other.
- All adults working in the Nursery and Reception classes contribute to assessments. Teachers use these assessments to plan appropriately for the next steps children need to take in their learning. Children's learning journals show that they have completed a wide range of different activities covering all seven areas of learning and have already

made good progress. These are not just for parents, but are also displayed to celebrate children's success. Parents are also encouraged to contribute to assessment in the early years based on home activities, putting 'successes' into a box, together with the teacher's recordings. In a daily draw, two 'successes' are selected so that every step in a child's early development is recognised.

School details

Unique reference number	113209
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	10019951

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	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	456
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Masheder
Headteacher	Mrs Gill O'Neill
Telephone number	01626 353 282
Website	www.decoyschool.co.uk
Email address	goneill@decoyschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	12–13 November 2014

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- Decoy is much larger than the average primary school.
- The vast majority of pupils come from a White British background.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported through the pupil premium is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the average.
- The proportion of pupils supported with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is above the average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

- Children in the early years foundation stage attend two separate sessions in Nursery and two full-time classes in the Reception Year. The school names these as the Foundation Unit.
- The school runs breakfast and after-school clubs.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors carried out 15 observations including two 'learning walks'. These included eight observations jointly carried out with the headteacher or deputy headteacher.
- The inspectors also made a number of short visits to lessons to check the quality of provision and its impact.
- The inspectors heard individual pupils read and discussed their individual reading preferences with them.
- They carried out a detailed scrutiny of the work in pupils' books across a range of subjects.
- Pupils' behaviour both inside and outside the classroom was observed.
- The inspectors held meetings with the chair of the governing body and seven other governors, school leaders, staff and groups of pupils.
- The lead inspector spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors also talked with a number of parents and carers as they brought children into school.
- The inspectors viewed a range of documents, including information on pupils' achievement, the school's data on current and recent progress and attainment, and the school's self-evaluation report. They also looked at the school's improvement plan, documents relating to safeguarding, and records of behaviour and attendance.
- The inspectors took account of the 73 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, 35 responses to the inspection questionnaire for staff and 61 responses to the pupils' questionnaire. The lead inspector also read 40 written parental comments. The school's website was also scrutinised.

Inspection team

Terry Mortimer, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Lindsay Gabriel	Ofsted Inspector
Aisha Waziri	Ofsted Inspector

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