



# Dartington Church of England Primary School

Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 113394  
**LEA** Devon  
**Inspection number** 279160  
**Inspection dates** 12 July 2006 to 13 July 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Geoff Burgess AI

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Shinners Bridge
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled		Dartington
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11		Totnes, Devon TQ9 6JD
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01803 862357
<b>Number on roll</b>	326	<b>Fax number</b>	01803 866872
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mrs Mary Stidston
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	12 June 2000	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs A Tempest

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is a large school in a unique mix of buildings serving the village of Dartington. A stream bisects the main site which is a ten minute walk from the Reception and Nursery unit. Most pupils come from outside the catchment area by choice, mainly from the nearby town of Totnes. Around 10% of pupils come from a range of minority ethnic groups with a small number speaking English as a second language. Eleven pupils are designated traveller learners. The number of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is below average. An average number of pupils are entitled to free school meals. Pupil mobility is similar to most schools but levels of absence are much higher than usual.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Inspectors agree with the school's own evaluation that Dartington Church of England Primary is a good school with many strengths, which gives good value for money. Teaching is good overall but stronger in the main school than in the Nursery and Reception classes, as is the curriculum and the use of assessment. Satisfactory overall provision in the Foundation Stage means that progress, although satisfactory, is not as good as in the rest of the school. Boys and girls of all abilities make good progress in Years 1 to 6 so that standards are above average when pupils leave school. Pupils are very articulate but their handwriting skills are poor. The curriculum in these years is good with strengths in the arts. Pupils who find learning difficult or have disabilities are well supported and they make good progress.

The school has a very caring ethos and encourages self-esteem, individuality and mutual respect. Pupils think their school is 'fantastic' and are very confident, enthusiastic and well behaved. However, these positive attitudes are not reflected in attendance which, despite the school's best efforts, continues to be below average. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding.

Leadership and management are good. Consultations with pupils and parents are very good and the school's work with other schools and agencies is outstanding. The whole school community is involved in the process of deciding priorities for improvement. Governors and staff share in the process of working on aspects which fall below the school's high standards. Well evaluated and documented improvements in pupils' standards as a result of these actions show that the school has the capacity to improve even further.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Make it possible for children in the Foundation Stage classes to make the same good progress as older pupils by planning more closely together and making better use of assessment.
- Help pupils to write more fluently and present their work better by improving handwriting skills.
- Build on improvements to levels of attendance.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Overall achievement is good with pupils attaining above and sometimes well above national average standards by the time they leave, having started school with average standards. Children make satisfactory progress in the Nursery and Reception classes and, in the past, this sound progress had continued into Years 1 and 2. However, poor national assessment results in 2005 prompted the school to make this area a priority and as a result all first-hand evidence indicates that pupils are now making good progress in Years 1 and 2.

The progress made by pupils in Years 3 to 6 improved from below average in 2003 to above average in 2005 and school records and pupils' work indicate that this improvement has been sustained through 2006. This helped the school to meet challenging targets in these two years. Standards in reading and writing were not quite as good as those in mathematics and science but this is another area where the school's efforts to sort out the problem have been successful. Currently, work is above average in English, Maths and Science. Pupils are eloquent and confident in their speech. However, the fluency and presentation of written work is inhibited by poor handwriting. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are well supported to ensure that they do well. The school is successful in ensuring that its 10% of pupils from minority ethnic groups make equally good progress.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Working closely with the local authority, the school's attendance action plan has helped to improve attendance levels but they remain below the national average. This is despite the fact that pupils really enjoy coming to school because of the wide range of exciting activities available for them and are extremely keen to learn and take part. Many are confident, independent young people, very willing to have their say. A recent initiative to enable pupils to analyse the way in which they learn is having a very positive impact on their personal development.

Behaviour is very good and pupils feel safe in school. They talk enthusiastically about strategies such as 'listening friends', 'buddy systems' and 'circle of friends' designed to support them in their personal development. They benefit greatly from working regularly with pupils from the neighbouring special school. Pupils feel their views are listened to and acted upon through the school council.

A healthy lifestyle is encouraged and pupils are involved in initiatives such as an Eco Award and travel plans. They enjoy plenty of physical activities and make good use of equipment available for them at lunchtimes. Pupils make good progress in their economic well-being through good attainment of basic skills and taking lead roles in school and local community activities.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching and learning are good, especially in the main school where actions to strengthen teaching in Years 1 and 2 have had a positive impact on raising achievement. A recent focus on developing strategies for managing pupils' behaviour more consistently has been very successful and classroom management is now good. The school has identified the need to make teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage

its next priority. Although it is satisfactory, it is not as challenging or well planned as in the main school. Rigorous assessment procedures used in Years 1 to 6 to identify strengths and weaknesses in learning ensure that pupils receive an inclusive education. Work is well marked and pupils know what they need to do to improve their work. This is also acknowledged as an area for development in the Foundation Stage.

Pupils appreciate the opportunities they have to discuss their learning preferences and know that these will be reflected in the teaching strategies teachers will use. Links between subjects are used well when appropriate and the use of information and communication technology (ICT) in other subjects is good. For example, in a Year 1 and 2 class ICT programs are used well to assess pupils' knowledge of multiplication. Teachers benefit from close links with the local secondary and special schools including shared specialist teaching and opportunities to work in the other schools. This good professional development supports teaching and learning well. Very effective teaching assistants are very well deployed. They rightly have a high profile in the school especially in supporting pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The school provides a good range of interesting and stimulating activities for its pupils with a good range of extra-curricular activities. Activities provided for children in the Foundation Stage cover all areas of learning adequately. However, approaches to learning are not consistent across the Nursery and Reception classes. The school's focus on literacy has had a positive impact on raising attainment. Pupils have lots of opportunities to express themselves through creative arts and music, which several pupils say is the reason why they particularly like coming to Dartington School. Special weeks enhance curriculum provision well. For instance, pupils enjoyed working with visiting artists during a recent arts week. The school makes good use of the local environment with several initiatives to promote care of the environment. Visits to places of interest and residential visits, linked to topics, support the curriculum well. An extremely well planned programme of activities supports pupils transferring to secondary school.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The school's good care, guidance and support of its pupils contribute to the good progress they make and to their obvious enjoyment of school. Child protection procedures are good, and good relationships between adults and pupils help pupils to feel secure and settled. Staff are alert to signs that any pupil might be worried or anxious. Teachers take every care to ensure pupils' security and well-being despite the difficulties of the sites. Regular safety checks and risk assessments ensure that pupils work in a safe environment. The school actively promotes healthy lifestyles and physical activity. Pupils are routinely reminded about the need to take care, such as currently wearing hats and using protective cream when out in the very hot sun.

Effective guidance and support in class means that pupils are given the skills to become successful learners. A strong feature is individual pupils' 'Learning Passports' which were introduced to help pupils understand what they need to do to improve their work further and record their successes.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Good leadership and management have maintained the school's strong reputation in the area as shown by the fact that more than a half of pupils come to the school by parental choice. The headteacher, senior management team and governors work closely together to monitor the work of the school and set the agenda for improvement. Parents and pupils are encouraged to share in the process. The success of this approach can be judged by the many references to successful, very necessary, actions in previous sections of this report. The school's current improvement plan, which largely reflects inspectors' views of the school, shows that the school is in a good position to continue to improve. The partnership between the headteacher and the deputy headteacher provides the school with very good leadership.

The school is rightly proud of its inclusive ethos and is to be complimented on its excellent work with the special and secondary schools with which it is federated. The professional development of all staff has a high priority and is extremely well organised as shown by successive 'Investor in People' awards. The governing body plays a vital role in the school community. Governors are very active around the school and in their work with partner schools. They are currently playing a lead role in promoting the proposed, much needed, new building. Managing the old buildings is very time consuming and expensive but, by being creative and pragmatic, the school is well resourced and achieves good value for money.

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## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	3	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	4	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2	NA
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2	NA

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

You probably know by now that we think that Dartington Church of England Primary is a good school. It certainly has lots of character and personality and we are not surprised that you enjoy your time there so much. Thank you for sharing it with us. You are really good at talking and we enjoyed chatting with many of you about your work and time in school.

This is what we liked most about your school.

- Your behaviour is very good and everybody gets on really well together.
- Everyone tries hard and is very positive. Most of you make good progress.
- Your teachers and helpers arrange lots of interesting activities for you.
- Everyone is welcome at the school and included in all there is going on.
- You know you are safe and that there is always someone to turn to.
- All the grown ups are working hard to make sure your time in school is as happy and positive as possible.

To make things even better, this is what we have asked your school to do now.

- Make it possible for you to learn a bit faster when you start in the Nursery and Reception classes.
- Help you to improve your handwriting so that you can write more easily and present your work really well.
- Improve attendance by helping everyone to realise that every day matters.

Have a good summer holiday and come back ready to carry on all your good work.