



St David's Church of England Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 113353
Local Authority Devon
Inspection number 289595
Inspection date 11 January 2007
Reporting inspector Alexander Paul Baxter

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	9 Dinham Road
School category	Voluntary aided		Exeter
Age range of pupils	5–11		EX4 4EE
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01392 255569
Number on roll (school)	102	Fax number	01392 255569
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Peter Cobbold
		Headteacher	Sally Roberts
Date of previous school inspection	21 October 2002		

Age group	Inspection date	Inspection number
5–11	11 January 2007	289595

© Crown copyright 2007

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

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.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This inner-city school occupies a small site. The process of re-organisation to primary status began in September 2005 and continues. Planned improvements to accommodation have yet to be provided. Currently there are 102 pupils aged from four to ten on roll. The pupils come from a wide variety of socio-economic backgrounds, with a high percentage from over-crowded households. A below- average number of pupils are entitled to free school meals. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is above average, but the number with a statement of special educational need is average. The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic groups and with English as a second language are below average. Children's attainment on entry is generally below the level expected for their age.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school with an inclusive Christian ethos that promotes a strong feeling of community. It is achieving full primary status successfully, despite disconcerting delays in obtaining improved accommodation. Leadership and management, including self-evaluation, are good and the school is more effective than its reserved view would suggest. This is because it has secured consistently good teaching and learning in all classes. As a consequence, pupils achieve well both academically and personally.

The pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. This is evident in the pupils' good attendance, enjoyment of learning and wholehearted contributions to the school and local community. These qualities reflect the warm and effective care, support and guidance provided by the adults who work in the school. Parents appreciate this help, saying 'This a happy school where children enjoy learning.'

A majority of children enter the school with a below-average range of skills. Pupils are taught and progress well in the Foundation Stage (Reception) and in other year groups as they move through the school. Pupils of all abilities are included equally and achieve well. Standards are broadly average overall. The improved and more consistent progress of pupils reflects the effective way that underachievement has been addressed. For example, skills in reading, writing and mathematics are being strengthened as pupils move through Key Stage 2, (Years 3 and 4 and now Year 5). This is being achieved despite re-organisation resulting in almost half of the pupils transferring to other schools at the end of Year 2. Although improving, pupils' imaginative writing, handwriting and mental calculation skills remain relatively weaker aspects. Teachers develop the pupils' independent learning skills effectively. They do this by providing frequent visits into the local environment and by imaginative use of information and communication technology (ICT). Improved accommodation is necessary, though, if pupils are to enhance these skills appropriately when they move into Year 6.

A good curriculum, enriched by a good range of clubs, is particularly supportive in stimulating pupils' learning. Other key factors promoting improvement are the good leadership of the headteacher, effective teamwork by staff and governors and a close partnership with parents, all within, as one parent observed, 'a unified community with a distinctive, caring ethos.' The school has made good improvement since the last inspection and has a good capacity to continue this in the future. This is because staff are strengthening their skills and are proficient in adapting learning activities to meet the needs of pupils as they grow older and move into their new classes.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve pupils' writing, particularly their imaginative writing and handwriting skills.
- Improve the pupils' ability to calculate mentally.

- Seek improved accommodation as a matter of urgency, particularly so that pupils due to enter Year 6 later this year are provided with facilities that enable effective learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils, including those with learning difficulties, achieve well. Standards in English and mathematics generally match those expected when they leave the school. Overall, children's skills are below average as they start school, especially in communication, language and literacy and in mathematics. Children make good progress in Reception, especially in their personal, social and emotional development. Given low starting points, skills remain below expectations in communication, language, literacy and mathematics and are broadly average in other areas of learning on entering Year 1.

Progress is good overall in Years 1 and 2. Except for the year group tested in 2006, which had a majority of pupils with learning difficulties, standards have been mostly average in Year 2 in recent years. However, writing has been a weakness rightly targeted by the school. Pupils currently in Year 2 show mostly average skills in reading, writing and mathematics.

Well-planned and effective teaching also promotes good progress in Years 3 to 5. Most pupils are on course to achieve appropriately challenging targets set for them. However, their imaginative writing, handwriting and mental numeracy skills remain weaker aspects.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good throughout the school. Pupils respond to effective caring support. They are proud of their school and say, 'It's nice here; we know everyone and teachers are kind to us.' Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and is underpinned by the school's caring Christian ethos. Members of the school community say this 'shines out like a star.' Several parents praised the respectful way that staff and pupils respond to different faiths.

Attendance is good, reflecting the pupils' enjoyment of school. Behaviour is mainly good, but a few pupils still need and receive guidance, especially during whole-class lessons. Pupils accept responsibility and contribute well through the school council. They offer opinions confidently and say, 'We'd like more room to move about in our school and better toilets!' Pupils have a good understanding of healthy, safe lifestyles and have contributed enthusiastically to the school's new 'Healthy Schools Award.' They also contribute well to the local community. The pupils' broadly average skills prepare them appropriately for the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Consistently good teaching and learning throughout the school are having an increasingly beneficial impact on pupils' achievement. Teachers assess pupils' work effectively and plan work that is well matched to their wide-ranging needs. Teachers and their capable assistants give good support to pupils with learning difficulties. High expectations and a stimulating range of independent learning activities underpin the successful teaching in the Reception/Year 1 class. Good features of teaching throughout the school include imaginative use of ICT, good links with pupils' previous learning, clear learning objectives and challenging questioning and expectations. These promote pupils' enthusiasm, channelling good attitudes to learning and capturing their full participation. However, on occasion, overlong introductory whole-class discussions result in a few pupils losing interest, slowing their progress. Pupils' independence is promoted well. For example, pupils in a mathematics lesson in Years 4 and 5 could choose from four levels of work and were challenged to 'raise their game.' Teachers place an effective emphasis on practical activity but it is restricted at times by the school's cramped accommodation.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum, including that for children in Reception, is good. It is enriched with a good range of well-attended clubs, visits beyond the school site and good links with parents, the local community and outside agencies. These have a supportive influence on pupils' academic and personal development, especially their enjoyment of school. The teachers are diligent in emphasising literacy and numeracy, making links between subjects and adapting activities to meet pupils' diverse needs. For example, producing animations and play scripts promotes pupils' self-confidence and their speaking and listening and writing skills. In the Reception/Year 1 class, practical work and play have the same beneficial impact. ICT, music and the expressive arts are also used to enrich pupils' learning well. However, refurbishment is urgently required to meet the independent learning needs of pupils when they enter Year 6.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good and have a beneficial impact on pupils' academic and personal achievement. Warm relationships and mutual respect between staff and pupils, and with parents, ensure good day-to-day pastoral care. Pupils appreciate the 'Bubble Cushions' and feel they help resolve problems at playtimes. Pupils' well-being is safeguarded effectively. Links with outside agencies are good, especially in supporting pupils with learning difficulties. Links with parents and the local community are particularly effective in developing the pupils' personal qualities and ensuring pupils'

good attendance. A parent commented, 'All staff go out of their way to help the children.' Teachers know pupils well, have a clear picture of their progress and have high expectations of pupils' achievement. They share this academic guidance well orally with pupils. One pupil remarked, 'Teachers have a purpose when they talk to us.' Teachers' marking, however, is not always as consistent and does not always offer pupils sufficient ways to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher, ably assisted by staff and governors, provides well-considered leadership. Parents are consulted and involved and offer their understanding support. Governors fulfil their duties well, especially given the frustrated time and effort spent in seeking a new school.

The headteacher, with substantial encouragement from the chair of governors, has successfully promoted a team approach to managing the school. In particular, this has enabled staff to strengthen the emphasis on raising pupils' achievement whilst retaining the school's well-established caring ethos. Self-evaluation is good. It is informed by close monitoring of teaching and has helped to establish consistently good teaching and learning in all classes. This is supported by a strongly shared determination to provide a stimulating, inclusive curriculum relevant to the pupils' needs. The results are evident in the pupils' improving academic skills, for example, in ICT. It is also seen in the pupils' good personal development, especially their eager participation in the good range of clubs provided. Teachers assess pupils' work accurately, and this has informed the focus on raising standards in writing and mathematics. It is having a positive effect, but needs more time to impact fully. Strategies to track pupils' progress as they move through the school are being developed effectively as new year groups are established.

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	-----------------------

Overall effectiveness

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

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

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

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

We really enjoyed our visit to your school. You made us feel very welcome. You and your parents think it is a good school where you are taught and learn well. We agree with you. These are the main things we found out about your school:

- Most of you make good progress and meet the standards expected of pupils of your age by the time you leave the school.
- Your attendance is good and you enjoy school, behave well and have a good understanding of how to live a healthy, safe lifestyle.
- The headteacher, staff, governors and parents work well together and there are good plans to make your school even better.
- You are taught well in every class and the staff take good care of you.
- Even though the school buildings are in urgent need of improvement, you are provided with many interesting activities which help you to learn.

To help your school to improve further we have asked the headteacher and staff to help you improve the standards you reach in writing and mathematics. This is because some of you need to learn and use a wider range of words to improve your imaginative writing, and many of you need to improve your handwriting. Some of you also need to learn your number facts better so that you can count and work out number problems in your head. We have also asked the governors to try and achieve the planned improvement to the school's buildings as soon as possible. This would give you the better facilities that you told us you wanted and will help you to learn even more independently.

You can play your part by continuing to work hard and help each other. Thank you again for being so helpful and friendly when we came to see you.