



St Dominic CofE VA School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 112029
Local Authority Cornwall
Inspection number 295624
Inspection dates 18–19 October 2006
Reporting inspector Peter Way HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary	School address	St Dominic
School category	Voluntary aided		Saltash
Age range of pupils	4–11		PL12 6SU
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01579 350581
Number on roll (school)	50	Fax number	01579 350581
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	J M Totterdell
		Headteacher	Jane Biddle
Date of previous school inspection	5 May 2005		

Age group 4–11	Inspection dates 18–19 October 2006	Inspection number 295624
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools.

Description of the school

St Dominic is a small school which serves its local community and the surrounding rural area in East Cornwall. The school is growing in popularity. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is slightly lower than the national average and, unusually, there are none currently with a statement of special educational needs. After the inspection of 2005 the school was placed in special measures.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

In accordance with section 13(4) of the Education Act 2005, it is the opinion of HMCI that the school no longer requires special measures. Since the inspection of 2005, many improvements have been made and the school now provides a better quality of education. The standards of pupils' attainment are not yet as high as they should be because there are gaps in their basic skills, but they are now making good progress. The school is well led and managed and the headteacher provides a clear vision for school improvement, although self-evaluation does not yet clarify priorities. Because the quality of teaching and learning has improved, pupils are now much more aware of their own learning needs. Performance is beginning to be closely monitored and analysed and this is leading to more appropriate work being set for pupils of all abilities, although the most able pupils are still not being sufficiently challenged. The standard of teaching is now good and the staff are working closely together to bring about further improvements. There is a clear focus on an active learning environment and pupils are fully engaged in the first-hand experiences which the teachers now provide. Pupils work with much enjoyment and are very appreciative of the diversity of activity which the curriculum offers. There is a strong emphasis in the school on personal development. Behaviour, which was previously judged to be unsatisfactory, is now good. All aspects of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are well supported through the Christian ethos, curricular activities and the good relationships which exist between staff and pupils. The significant improvements which have been made since the last inspection show that the school has the capacity for continued development.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that lesson planning and teaching enables those pupils who are capable of reaching the higher Level 3 in Key Stage 1 and Level 5 in Key Stage 2 do so.
- Ensure that school self-evaluation more accurately reflects the school's strengths and weaknesses in order to set priorities for continuing improvement.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

The pupils are now making good progress in lessons and the standards which they reach are improving. However there has been too much underachievement in the past. Although this is now being successfully remedied through much improved teaching standards remain below average because there are still gaps in pupils' basic skills in both English and mathematics. The number of pupils in each year group is very small, nevertheless too few pupils reach the higher Levels 3 and 5 in the national tests. At the end of the Foundation Stage, children are now reaching the standards which are expected of them and do as well as, and in some aspects better than, pupils in other schools in the local authority. The 2006 Key Stage 1 teacher assessments show that standards are rising and the majority of pupils are now more likely to reach the

standards of which they are capable by the end of Key Stage 2. Performance in the national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 has fluctuated in recent years, but has generally been below the national averages. Pupils regularly use information and communication technology (ICT) in lessons and standards in this subject have improved considerably.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Many opportunities are provided for pupils to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. Progress in these aspects of their personal development is very good. The Christian ethos is strongly promoted and assemblies provide moments for pupils to reflect on social and moral issues. The school pays good attention to introducing pupils to other cultures and beliefs, especially through the links with Kenya and Jamaica. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is generally good. From an early age, pupils learn to share and work well together. In the playground they mix freely, both boys and girls, and older and younger pupils. This helps to create the caring family atmosphere in which pupils and staff show genuine care for each other. At lunchtime all the pupils sit down together and engage in quiet conversation; the dinners and packed lunches reflecting the pupils' awareness of healthy eating. In discussion the pupils show good understanding of healthy lifestyles and safety issues; they are aware of dangers in the outside world. The school places a high value on the principles of the 'Every Child Matters' issues and there is evident enjoyment amongst the pupils during lessons and at other times. Their involvement in community projects is good and shows their concern for their environment and other people.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The standard of teaching has improved since the last inspection. It is now generally good and examples of outstanding practice were seen during the inspection. Lessons are well prepared and carefully planned to meet the wide age range and abilities found in all three classes, although the most able pupils are not sufficiently challenged. Resources are used to good effect and chosen with care. All staff display a good level of skill and confidence with using the interactive whiteboards and these have improved pupils' concentration and teachers' presentation. Classroom environments have been much improved and display a good range of pupils' work as well as teacher-prepared material to support current lessons. There is much good use of discussion during lessons and pupils are frequently asked to turn to a partner and share their ideas. This is having a significant impact on the progress which pupils are making during lessons and the quality of pupil responses to the teachers' questions. Pupils are motivated by the lessons and are beginning to take a much greater part in assessing their own success and understanding their next learning targets. During the last year very good progress has been made by the staff in their approach to assessment and the marking

of pupils' books. Pupils' performance is now regularly monitored to ensure that pupils remain on track to attain the standards of which they are capable. Pupils with learning difficulties are carefully supported throughout the school and make satisfactory progress as a result.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum was fully reviewed during the last academic year and revisions have been made. It now meets the requirements of all learners more effectively and incorporates a range of extra-curricular activities and events. A good variety of visits and other enrichment activities support lessons and other aspects of personal development. Links with local artists and craftspeople result in the pupils having a good knowledge of their Cornish heritage. The village of St Dominick has been depicted in a super clay tile mural which adorns an inner wall. There are productive links with other local schools, including the secondary school, which provide further learning opportunities for the pupils including modern foreign languages. Pupils speak very favourably about the things which they learn and, both during lessons and when talking about school, display much enthusiasm and enjoyment in their learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

There have been significant improvements since the last inspection and care, guidance and support are now good throughout the school. The use of teaching assistants is particularly effective in providing good support to groups of pupils during lessons. Their work is well directed by the teachers. Pupils receive good guidance about their learning needs and are being helped to improve their standards of attainment. The focus on health and safety issues contributes to the pupils' enjoyment of their education and the way in which pupils participate in what the school has to offer. The school works closely with parents and other agencies to support pupils in their learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

School leadership is good. Leadership and management were deemed to be unsatisfactory in the inspection of 2005. After an interim period a new headteacher was seconded by the local authority in January 2006, taking up the permanent post after interviews in March. There is now a clear vision for future development which is shared by everyone who works in the school. The governing body was judged to be good in 2005 and has continued to be very supportive throughout the period that the school has been in special measures. It is well led by a knowledgeable chair and given good information by the headteacher. Governors provide a good link with the local community and some visit the school frequently. The school's overall performance is being carefully monitored, but the analysis does not yet present a sufficiently evaluative picture of the school for the purposes of improvement planning. Sensibly, time has

been set aside this term for the staff and governors to begin further work in this area. School leadership knows that standards in English and mathematics require improvement and there is evidence to show that this is already taking place. Subject leadership is being developed across the curriculum and guidance from within the staff team on English and mathematics is already good.

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Inspection judgements

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

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
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?	3
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	3

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	3
How well learners enjoy their education	1
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	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
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

You will remember that I visited you recently to see how well you are getting on. Some of you will know that I have been coming to your school each term over the last year to look at your work and talk to you and your teachers. I am especially pleased that you have a good headteacher, Mrs Biddle, because she has been leading all the adults at St Dominic as they continue to make improvements in and around the school. It was good to see you all enjoying the enlarged outdoor play space.

I have been looking carefully at the improvements that have been made and I think the most important of these is that you are now making better progress in your work because the lessons are well taught and the adults give you good support and advice. Your lessons are interesting and you enjoy them. The teachers give you good guidance when they mark your books. You are also developing good attitudes towards learning and you discuss things sensibly in class. You look after each other and you mix and work well together.

I have asked Mrs Biddle to continue the improvements, firstly, by providing more difficult and demanding work for some of you and, secondly, in getting all the teachers together with the governors to discuss their priorities (the two or three most important things) for the next stages of development for your school.

You also have an important part to play in improving your school. Think carefully about what could be made better and give your ideas to your teachers. Most importantly, you must keep working hard and complete all your schoolwork to the very best of your ability -don't settle for anything less.