

Datchet St Mary's CofE Primary School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 110034 |
| Local Authority | Windsor and Maidenhead |
| Inspection number | 310183 |
| Inspection dates | 13–14 November 2007 |
| Reporting inspector | Malcolm Johnstone |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Voluntary aided |
| Age range of pupils | 3–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School | 251 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Rev C Mattock |
| Headteacher | Mrs J M Pinkerton |
| Date of previous school inspection | 6 October 2003 |
| School address | The Green Datchet Slough SL3 9EJ |
| Telephone number | 01753 542982 |
| Fax number | 01753 593492 |

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|--------------------------|---------------------|
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is larger than most other primary schools. Pupils come from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds. The majority are from either the housing association provision or the permanent traveller site in the village. Most pupils are of White British heritage but a greater than average proportion of pupils are from a variety of minority ethnic groups. A few of these pupils have English as an additional language. The largest minority ethnic group are of Romany or Gypsy heritage. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and statements of special need is above average. Pupil mobility is above average. The school is regularly oversubscribed.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

'I think our school is extraordinary because it caters for our own uniqueness'. This comment by a pupil captures the essence of this outstanding school. Achievement is outstanding for all pupils, whatever their backgrounds or abilities. Overall, they make excellent progress and attain well above average standards. This picture of attainment and achievement has improved since the previous inspection and has improved year on year. Based on pupils' achievements, value added data puts the school among the highest performing schools in the country, a position it has maintained over the past few years. Nonetheless, as the school has identified there is still scope to improve the standards attained by boys in writing.

A majority of children enter school with attainment that is below average, particularly for boys in communication, language and literacy. From this starting point excellent teaching in the Foundation Stage enables all children to make rapid progress. Teaching is outstanding in all other year groups and as a consequence, this rapid progress is maintained. Pupils who are new to the school soon settle, make friends and achieve extremely well. All teachers keep a very close check on pupils' progress and very good record keeping systems ensure that work is matched well to pupils' abilities. Teachers and classroom assistants provide excellent support for pupils who have learning difficulties and for the few minority ethnic pupils who are at the early stages of English language acquisition.

Pupils' personal development and well being and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are outstanding. Their behaviour, attitudes, commitment and enjoyment of learning are exemplary. Racial harmony is very strong and relationships at all levels are excellent. These factors make a significant contribution to the well above average standards pupils attain and their achievements across an excellent, exciting and relevant curriculum. Pupils become confident and articulate individuals who are prepared extremely well for the next stage of education. Care, support and guidance are excellent. All adults working in the school are exceptionally good at building pupils' trust and have an outstanding commitment to encouraging enjoyment and achievement. Pupils have excellent knowledge of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle and how to stay safe.

Outstanding leadership and management underpin all that the school achieves. The headteacher and senior managers are excellent role models in their commitment to meeting the needs of all pupils. There is an outstanding team spirit and staff are not complacent about the high standards. Self evaluation is excellent and is grounded in incisive monitoring of teaching and learning and data analysis. These strengths in the leadership and management of the school mean that there is an excellent capacity for continuing improvement. Except for boys in writing, target setting has been highly successful in reducing the gaps in attainment between different groups of pupils. Almost all the parents have very positive views of the school. As one parent wrote, 'The school deserves to be highly commended. It is a wonderful school with a friendly caring and understanding approach to each child's needs.'

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children make excellent progress in the Foundation Stage and most reach the expectations for children entering Year 1. This is because the teaching is outstanding overall. Planning includes an effective balance between teacher-directed and free choice activities. This makes learning

enjoyable and exciting and prepares children well for work in Year 1. There are excellent relationships between all adults and children and this engenders confidence and a love of learning. Support for children with learning difficulties is outstanding with classroom assistants making a significant contribution to the excellent progress made by these children. Assessment is good and used very effectively to plan activities that meet children's needs.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve standards in writing for boys to bring them more in line with the very high standards attained by girls.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Standards are well above average and pupils of all abilities and backgrounds achieve extremely well over their time at the school. A high proportion of pupils reach the higher levels in the national tests, attaining the challenging targets set for them. By the end of Year 2, standards are above average in reading, writing and mathematics. They have continued to improve since 2005 when they were broadly average. In the 2007 national tests for pupils in Year 6, standards were above average in English, exceptionally high in mathematics and similar to the national average in science. This represents excellent achievement since their end of Year 2 results were below average. In 2007, results in the national tests slipped marginally in science but inspection evidence indicates that standards are now above average. Boys and girls achieve equally well in English but in writing, girls attain significantly higher standards than boys. The school has quickly picked up on this and new initiatives in the teaching and assessment of writing are beginning to close the gap. It was clear from evidence seen during the inspection that there is some excellent work in information and communication technology (ICT), art and music.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils enjoy school a great deal, work hard to make outstanding progress and behave in an exemplary manner. They have excellent attitudes to their work, are keen to contribute to class discussions and willingly co-operate in paired and group learning. Relationships are excellent and pupils take on a wide range of responsibilities conscientiously. The School Council are proud of their contribution, for example, to playground developments. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe and have an excellent knowledge of the need to maintain a healthy lifestyle. They participate enthusiastically in a wide range of extra-curricular activities including sport. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. This is developed very effectively through assemblies, well-planned religious education lessons and in studies of different cultures. Through these, and a variety of fund raising and charity events, pupils become very aware of the wider world and understand that people express their beliefs in different ways. Older pupils develop their social and personal skills extremely well through residential visits and by acting as playground mediators and sports and house captains. The school has worked successfully to help the few pupils whose attendance is unsatisfactory. This is helping improve the overall attendance rate, which is now close to the national average.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Teaching and learning is consistently good and often outstanding. This is a key factor in pupils' excellent achievement across all aspects of their learning. There are high expectations of pupils' behaviour and involvement in all activities. This ensures that learning moves at a rapid pace and little time is lost. Resources are used to impressive effect, particularly ICT. Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and manage pupils extremely well. They work closely with high quality teaching assistants who are skilled at explaining to pupils what they need to learn and providing them with excellent support to achieve their goals. Pupils are fully involved in setting their own improvement targets resulting in a strong personal commitment to their learning. Very good use is made of assessment information to guide the planning of lessons. All pupils, including those with learning difficulties, are provided with activities and challenges that are matched to their abilities. As a result, they are very well motivated and make outstanding progress. Pupils say they like and respect their teachers and that they greatly enjoy their lessons.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum meets the needs of all pupils extremely well. Planning is thorough and detailed and ensures outstanding provision across all subjects. Excellent cross curricular work is being developed in an innovative and creative way so that meaningful links are developed between subjects. Pupils' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills are used extremely well to support learning in other subjects. The school makes excellent use of its locality, drawing in visitors from the community to develop understanding of local history and geography. There is high quality provision in art and music. The curriculum is further enriched by an excellent range of extra-curricular activities, including French, the arts and sport. There is a good range of interesting visits that broaden pupils' understanding of the wider world. Work in personal, social and health education helps pupils to understand their rights and responsibilities within the community. All these activities prepare them very well for future economic well-being.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Child protection procedures are rigorous and effective. Provision for pupils who have learning difficulties and for the few minority ethnic pupils who speak little English is excellent. The outstanding pastoral and academic support they receive enables these pupils to make rapid progress. The support for vulnerable pupils is excellent and includes home visits by the headteacher to ensure that everything possible is done to support families and pupils who are experiencing difficulties. Parents hold the school in very high regard and know their children are safe and cared for well. Academic support and guidance are very good. Pupils have their own excellent academic and personal targets. They fully understand the targets set for them and work diligently to achieve them.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The headteacher's commitment and dedication to meeting the needs of all pupils has ensured well above average standards and outstanding achievement across all subjects. The school has an excellent record of continuing success since the previous inspection. Outstanding team work, shared vision and corporate responsibility shown by all adults who work in school are key factors in the school's success. The partnership between the school, the parents and outside agencies is excellent, and is another important factor in pupils' high achievement. Evaluation of the school's performance is excellent. It promotes highly focused school improvement. All subject leaders monitor provision and outcomes in their subjects extremely well and have a good knowledge of strengths and any areas for improvement. Governance is excellent and all statutory requirements are met. Governors are led by a perceptive and knowledgeable chairperson and they support the school extremely well. They are fully involved in school improvement planning and hold the school to account for the quality of education it provides.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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| 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

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| How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners? | 1 |
| Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection | Yes |
| How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being? | 1 |
| The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage | 1 |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements | 1 |

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

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|---|---|
| How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners? | 1 |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 1 |
| The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles | 1 |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices | 1 |
| How well learners enjoy their education | 1 |
| The attendance of learners | 3 |
| The behaviour of learners | 1 |
| The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community | 1 |
| How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being | 1 |

The quality of provision

| | |
|--|---|
| How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs? | 1 |
| How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners? | 1 |
| How well are learners cared for, guided and supported? | 1 |

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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

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| How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners? | 1 |
| How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education | 1 |
| How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards | 2 |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation | 1 |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can | 1 |
| How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money | 1 |
| The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities | 1 |
| 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

26 November 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Datchet St Mary's CofE Primary School, Slough, SL3 9EJ

I am writing to tell you what we found on our recent visit to your school. We agree with you that your school is outstanding. We really enjoyed talking to you about all the exciting things that happen. You say that you like school and that your lessons are enjoyable and interesting. We agree with you because we also enjoyed being in the lessons. Your headteacher and all the adults who work in school care very much about you and work very hard to make sure that all of you achieve the best that you can. You have an impressive understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle and how to keep safe. You tell us that the playground buddies help sort any problems you might have, and that if they cannot, you know that there is always an adult to help you if you are worried about anything.

We were most impressed by how polite you are, how well you all get on together and how well you behave. It is clear that you always try to do your best in lessons and are keen to take part in all the exciting things that happen in school. We would like to thank the School Council for the excellent discussion we had and for telling us about all the good things that happen in school. You are certainly listened to by the teachers and many of your ideas are adopted by the school. You must have been especially proud when asked to design bowls for the Queen's corgis.

You do well in all subjects but we think the boys could do even better with their writing and have asked the teachers to help you to improve. We know that all of you will continue to work hard and make the school and your parents even more proud of you.

Good luck in the future.

Mr M Johnstone

Lead Inspector