

Darite Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111962
Local Authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	310743
Inspection date	3 October 2007
Reporting inspector	Alex Baxter

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

Type of school	Middle deemed secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	62
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Barry Dunkey
Headteacher	Helen Smith
Date of previous school inspection	27 January 2003
School address	Darite Liskeard PL14 5JH
Telephone number	01579 342155
Fax number	01579 342155

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: achievement in mathematics; achievement in the Foundation Stage, and in Years 1 and 2, especially by potentially higher attainers; opportunities to develop pupils' independent learning skills; and how effectively leaders and managers bring about improvement by using target setting. Evidence was gathered from observations of lessons and school assembly and observations of pupils at lunch and play. Evidence was also gathered from teachers' assessments, pupils' work and discussions with pupils, staff, governors and parents. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in equal detail but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Children's attainment on entry varies from year to year, but mostly it broadly matches that expected for their age. There has been a falling roll in recent years and some of the year groups in the school are very small. Very few pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds and have English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is also above that found nationally. The school holds the following quality marks: Healthy School Status and Activemark Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Darite is an outstanding school. It has several special qualities that 'dovetail' extremely effectively to help pupils achieve their full potential. These include:

pupils who eagerly give of their best and genuinely care about each other and the adults who look after them

a staff, which as a leadership team is committed to working together to achieve the very best for all the pupils

governors and parents playing a full part in helping the school to be a caring community and a place where children succeed academically and personally.

One parent summarised these qualities and represented the supportive views of other parents when writing, 'Darite is a lovely school that provides excellent standards of care and education'.

The quality of teaching and learning is another outstanding feature. Teachers and their assistants take care in explaining learning intentions to the pupils and encourage them to evaluate their own efforts. They challenge pupils to take increasing responsibility for their learning as they move through the school. This has been a key factor, for example, in lifting standards in mathematics, where pupils know they have, and are able, to explain their own strategies. Teachers are very skilled in matching work closely to the pupils' ability. They help higher attainers and pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities with equal success. Teachers and their assistants are careful in sustaining excellent links with parents and outside agencies to meet pupils' needs. These approaches are successful in promoting the pupils' high academic achievements and skills, for example in expressive writing. They are similarly effective in promoting pupils' outstanding personal development and well-being. For example, pupils show enthusiasm for school, have positive attitudes towards learning and respect the contributions of others.

Children have a good start in the Foundation Stage (Reception), especially in developing the social and communication skills needed to do well at school. However, their independent learning is constrained, on occasion, by too much adult led activity and limited provision outdoors specifically for Reception children. Good progress continues in Years 1 and 2. Several children are quickening their progress and lifting their skills, especially in writing, in response to increasingly challenging teaching. Standards in Year 2 are rising and are above average in reading, writing and mathematics and, although closer to average, are improving in science. By Year 6, standards are very high in English, mathematics and science. Pupils show very well developed independent learning skills such as undertaking research and problem solving and use computers very proficiently. Despite significant variation in the size of year groups and the nature of pupils' needs, overall standards represent outstanding achievement for pupils of all abilities.

The school provides an excellent curriculum. It is rooted in providing many and varied practical opportunities for pupils to enjoy successful learning. There is strong enrichment from clubs, visits and other activities that develops pupils' personal, social and emotional qualities very effectively. There is an excellent focus on literacy and numeracy. Information and communication technology (ICT), in the form of interactive whiteboards, personal and laptop computers and electronic microscopes, is used very effectively to promote the pupils' investigative and enquiry skills. The richness of the pupils' physical education opportunities is evident in the awards the

school has achieved. These promote the pupils' great enjoyment of learning, their excellent pursuit of healthy lifestyles and their full participation as members of a community. Consequently, pupils are extremely well prepared for the future.

The school provides outstanding care, support and guidance; consequently, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Pupils really enjoy school and clearly feel secure in the knowledge that caring and capable people are safeguarding their well-being very securely. As a result, pupils show self-confidence, express their views openly, attend well and participate fully in the life of the school. They say, 'We know and like everyone here and there is always someone to go to when you have a problem'. The school council is valued and pupils who serve on the council do so diligently and responsibly.

The headteacher provides high quality, calm, sharply focused leadership. The small staff of the school each undertakes several areas of responsibility willingly and works very effectively as a team to meet the pupils' differing needs. Governors give very effective support. Together, leaders and managers set high expectations and are constantly seeking ways of bringing about improvement. They are accurate in identifying priorities and rigorous, but realistic, in setting targets for improvement. Their excellence is apparent in the improvement in standards and pupils' achievement since the last inspection, especially in writing and mathematics. It is also evident in the consistently high quality of teaching in all classes. This success in accomplishing intentions, despite a period of a falling roll, which brought financial constraints, shows an excellent capacity to improve into the future.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children are warmly welcomed into school. Staff promote very supportive relationships with parents. These help to ensure that children settle quickly and benefit from a good start to their education in the Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 class. From varying starting points, Reception children make good progress during their first year in school. Most attain the early learning goals set for their age. Because they have such close and very effective adult care and support, many exceed expectations in learning how to mix and learn with others. Teaching and learning are good. The teacher and learning assistant work closely and effectively together. They sustain a strong emphasis on communication, language and literacy, helping children to develop these skills particularly successfully. Because of the very advantageous adult-child ratio, learning is always effective. However, at times, partly because of limited outdoor learning facilities, children do not have enough opportunities to initiate learning for themselves. As result, children's independence is not always developed sufficiently.

What the school should do to improve further

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- Provide more opportunities for children in Reception to learn independently, especially outdoors.

Annex A

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?	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	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
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

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	2
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

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	1
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

4 October 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Darite Primary School, Darite, Liskeard, PL14 5JH

I very much enjoyed my visit and immediately sensed the warmth of the friendly relationships that exist in the school. You and your parents were clearly very happy to be there as you gathered in the playground before school started. Your great enjoyment of school was apparent throughout the day. I would like to thank those of you who took the time to talk to me, particularly members of the school council. I was very interested to hear what you had to say about your school. You were all very polite and helpful during my visit. Your headteacher has created a calm community where you all work very hard, feel safe and are extremely well looked after. I agree with you and your parents and consider Darite to be an outstanding school. These are the main things I found:

- You make excellent progress and by the time you leave the school the standards you achieve are much higher than in most schools.
- Your behaviour and attitudes to learning are outstanding. They reflect the high quality of the teaching and care that you receive.
- You enjoy excellent learning activities and I was very impressed with the way you take increasing responsibility for your work as you move through the school.
- You are very clear about how to live healthily and safely and how to be a caring member of a community.
- Your headteacher, staff and governors work extremely well together to help you learn.

To help the school to become even better, I have asked the headteacher, governors and teachers to provide more opportunities for the youngest children to learn by choosing more activities for themselves, especially outdoors.

Please keep working as hard as you do.

Thank you once again, and best wishes for the future.

Alex Baxter Lead inspector

Annex B

4 October 2007

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Lead inspector