

Denbury Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113197
Local Authority	Devon
Inspection number	311146
Inspection date	20 May 2008
Reporting inspector	Colin Lee

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	112
School	
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Chris Burford
Headteacher	Tracey Hart
Date of previous school inspection	28 February 2005
School address	West Street Denbury Newton Abbot TQ12 6DP
Telephone number	01803 812583
Fax number	01803 813560

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector, who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated in detail the following issues:

achievement and standards in writing

the achievement of the less able pupils

the effectiveness of new arrangements for subject leadership.

Evidence was gathered from discussions with the headteacher, other staff, pupils and governors, and from the parental questionnaires. Lessons were observed, and school self-evaluation and other documentation and samples of pupils' current and previous work were analysed. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation form, were not justified.

Description of the school

The school is smaller than average but numbers on roll are rising. A significant number of pupils join the school at times other than the start of the school year, mainly in Years 3 to 6. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. Children's attainment on entry is slightly below the levels typically 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: 1

This is an outstanding school. It provides a high quality of education and works constantly to improve this still further. Most pupils make excellent academic progress and all show outstanding personal development and well-being. Pupils have immense pride in their school and play a major part in making it successful. They have an infectious enthusiasm for the school and all that they do there. This is one of the main reasons why those who transfer to Denbury from other schools settle so quickly and start to flourish. Many parents of such pupils have commented on their delight with the change they have seen in their children.

The headteacher's dynamic leadership is the driving force behind the school's progress to its present level of effectiveness. She maintains a skilful balance between direct leadership and delegation of responsibility to others. She has created a strong sense of teamwork and a collective determination to improve. This has moved the school forward significantly since the previous inspection, most noticeably in the standards pupils are attaining in relation to their starting points, the development of an innovative curriculum and the leadership and management roles played by members of staff. Additionally, there has been excellent progress in promoting parents' involvement in school life and in the way they help their children's learning. These achievements indicate that there is an excellent capacity for more improvement in the future.

Pupils' outstanding achievement is shown by the excellent progress they make from their varying starting points. Those who enter school in the Foundation Stage benefit from outstanding provision that meets their needs very successfully. There has been a downward trend in the children's attainment on entry, with increasing weaknesses over time in language and personal, social and emotional development. Particular attention to these areas of learning helps children to catch up so that most are at the level of language development typically expected for their age by the end of their first year in school. In personal development and all other areas of learning, the majority exceed expected levels.

Rapid progress is maintained in Years 1 and 2. The standards of the current Year 2 pupils are at expected levels in mathematics, above the expected levels in reading and writing, and well above the level expected in science. These raised standards represent a significant achievement by the school. Historically, assessments at the end of Year 2 have shown standards to be below national averages for several years. Improvement in reading owes much to the introduction of daily, intensive sessions on the learning of letters and their sounds. Additionally, there has been a series of successful initiatives to help parents become more involved in developing their children's reading skills. There has also been a whole school focus on writing, which is raising standards in all year groups and very significantly so in the case of less able pupils.

The standards of the current Year 6 pupils are above the levels expected at their age, putting them on track to continue the above average national test results that the school has achieved in recent years. This represents outstanding achievement by this group of pupils, a good proportion of whom have joined the school since Year 3. Many of these incoming pupils arrive with a range of learning difficulties and/or disabilities or social and emotional problems and this affects the average standards of a year group. However, the high quality of extra support moves these pupils forward quickly and they catch up with their peers. All pupils in Year 6 have made exceptional progress in English and are on track to exceed the target set for them by the end of the school year. Standards in mathematics are not quite as high, but still good and likely to meet the target. Throughout the school, the proportion of pupils in each year group reaching

standards above the levels expected of their ages in English, mathematics and science is rising steadily.

The improved picture of pupils' achievement is due to several factors but most especially to the high quality of teaching and learning. This results from close working relationships between teachers, teaching assistants and the many parent helpers, constant checking of pupils' progress and use of these assessments to plan the next stages in pupils' learning. All provision is carefully matched to individual pupils' needs. Any signs of a slowing down in progress, or difficulties experienced in acquiring literacy or numeracy skills, lead to support programmes being put in place to speed up pupils' learning. This extra support is highly effective. Its impact is constantly checked and pupils move in and out of support groups as needs arise. There is similarly rigorous attention to the needs of the more able pupils and lesson planning consistently ensures the right level of challenge for these pupils. All pupils have specific literacy and numeracy targets, which they know well, and delight in their achievement. They are fully involved in decisions about their next targets, having regular opportunities to discuss their progress with their teachers and receiving highly constructive feedback through the marking of their work. Such academic guidance exemplifies the outstanding care, guidance and support provided by the school.

Pupils have a love of learning. Their enjoyment is heightened by the richness of the curriculum and the many opportunities for activities and clubs outside the school day. The curriculum has many exciting features. It has been planned so that the six areas of learning that constitute the Foundation Stage curriculum are continued throughout the school. Topics link subjects together to provide stimulating activities that make learning exciting and take full advantage of the surrounding environment. This has been achieved while ensuring that requirements of the National Curriculum for Years 1 to 6 are fully covered. Planning of topics identifies where pupils' specific literacy skills can be applied and developed, but the same process has not been carried out for mathematical skills and the school recognises this as an area for development in order to raise standards. Topics vary in length but all produce work of high quality. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 have written poems, stimulated by geological features of Dartmoor, worthy of inclusion in published anthologies. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 planned their own topic, based on a night-time hike, resulting in written and other work where the thrills and the awe and wonder of the experiences shine through. Pupils are now talking excitedly about the annual community arts week when they will work on a variety of projects in school and around the village.

Pupils talk enthusiastically about their learning, showing the positive attitudes that feature strongly in their outstanding personal development. This is further exemplified by their excellent behaviour, the care and concern they show for one another and the considerable contribution they make to the school and village communities. A hardworking school council sets the example for others, leading the way in projects to improve the school environment. Concern for others is shown in many ways, for example, extensive fundraising, the links with a Zambian school, and the collaboration with the local church on restoring a cottage. The curriculum has helped pupils to develop an excellent appreciation of healthy lifestyles and knowledge of safe practices in and out of school. Their good and improving basic literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology skills, along with their mature social skills and experience of enterprise activities, contribute considerably to their future economic well-being.

The headteacher and senior management team carry out rigorous monitoring and evaluation of the school's performance, identifying areas for development and taking firm action to improve pupils' achievement and the quality of provision. The traditional middle management role of

teachers acting as subject leaders has been discarded and staff now act as leaders of each of the six areas of learning on which the curriculum is based. Such innovative leadership and management are proving to be highly effective. The school benefits from the support and guidance of an excellent, well informed governing body that plays a prominent part in strategic planning of the school's development. That planning process also involves thorough consultation with parents and pupils.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

At Denbury, the Foundation Stage curriculum flows across and into both early years' classes including children in Years 1 and 2. Parents express their delight with how well the staff help the children settle into school life. Excellent liaison with the main pre-school provider ensures that the children are well known to staff before they start. The high quality of teaching and learning and the exciting, well planned curriculum in both classes enable children to make outstanding progress. There is a strong focus on children's language development and each of the many structured play experiences has an accompanying lesson plan informing support staff and parent helpers of the main learning objectives of the activity. The beach created for the seaside topic is currently a favourite attraction and staff skilfully make paddling and sandy feet a source of endless language development. The majority of children are confident learners who have the maturity to work independently of adult support. They delight in responsibility, such as the rota for washing and drying up at the daily café time. There is thorough recording of children's achievements and regular checking of their progress in all areas of learning. The classrooms and outdoor work areas are attractive and stimulating and constantly change to reflect the main learning focus.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop the opportunities for pupils to practise and apply their mathematical skills in topic work.

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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	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

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

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

21 May 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Denbury Primary School, Denbury, TQ12 6DP

Thank you for making me welcome in your school and for talking to me so willingly. I thoroughly enjoyed joining you in lessons and seeing you at work. You told me how much you enjoy going to school, and I think you have an excellent school that is very successful in helping you to learn. The school does many outstanding things. This is what I particularly appreciated:

- You are making excellent progress in your work.
- By the time you reach Year 6, many of you are reaching above average standards in English, mathematics and science.
- You behave excellently and this makes your school a friendly, pleasant place where everyone helps one another.
- Many of you have responsibilities around the school that you carry out very well and this helps the school run smoothly.
- Teaching is excellent and your teachers work hard to plan interesting things for you to do in your lessons. This is helping you to learn very well.
- You told me how much you enjoy the very good range of clubs and activities at lunchtime and after school.
- All the adults look after you very well and make sure that you are safe and get help whenever you need it.
- The school is led superbly by your headteacher, and all the adults, including the governors, work very well together to improve it.
- I have one recommendation to help your school to get even better:
- To encourage you to think about how you can practise and improve your mathematical skills in your topic work.

I hope you will carry on enjoying learning and helping your teachers to make Denbury Primary School to be an even better school.

Yours sincerely

Colin Lee Lead inspector