

Drake's Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113429
Local Authority	Devon
Inspection number	311264
Inspection date	1 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Peter Clifton

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	72
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Marjorie Crones-Smith
Headteacher	Carron Saunders
Date of previous school inspection	18 June 2002
School address	East Budleigh Budleigh Salterton EX9 7DQ
Telephone number	01395 443871
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average primary school with four classes. A minority of pupils attend from the local village with most attending from further afield. Nearly all pupils are White British. Pupils' attainment varies widely from year to year when they start school because of the small numbers. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Drake's Primary School is a satisfactory school with many good features. It is improving because of strong leadership by the headteacher over the past two years. In recent years, standards in the Year 6 national tests have fallen to around average or below. This decline has been arrested. Rigorous monitoring of teaching and well focused professional development for the teaching staff in the last year have led to much improved teaching and improved progress and learning over the past year among the pupils. Standards are rising and are now broadly average and pupils' achievement is now satisfactory in Key Stages 1 and 2. However, pupils' progress in writing remains inconsistent. Provision in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory but the children's progress is sometimes less than it might be because the curriculum for them is not always sufficiently different from that for the Year 1 pupils in the mixed-age Reception/Year 1 class.

Parents very strongly support the work of the school and make many positive comments. Many say that the staff are 'supportive and approachable' and that they like the school's 'small friendly nature'. Parents and pupils also comment that the school is improving because of the work of the headteacher. Pupils are also very complimentary about the school and say they really enjoy coming. They are very happy in school because it is a safe place and they feel well cared for. Pupils say they like school because it is 'not too big and we know everybody'. They take pride in their school and have their say through the school council, which is run by the pupils themselves. Pupils' enjoy school and the many interesting and stimulating activities provided through the curriculum and several good quality trips and visits.

Good learning is a result of pupils' very positive attitudes and good teaching. Teachers foster good relationships and create a friendly and positive atmosphere for learning. Pupils are provided with challenging work which they respond to well showing high levels of concentration. Pupils are keen to show what they know and understand in lessons. Teachers' marking acknowledges what pupils have learned and the efforts made by pupils. However, identification of the next steps for learning is much less consistent. There is currently insufficient information available for pupils to enable them to set their own learning goals. The school's caring approach results in well behaved and confident pupils. Their personal development and well-being are good. Pupils' behaviour during playtimes is good and in lessons, sometimes outstanding. They respect each other and have a very clear understanding of right and wrong.

Leadership and management are good. Leaders have a very clear view about the school's strengths and weaknesses and use monitoring and assessment information effectively to plan appropriate action to tackle the identified weaknesses. For example, adaptations to the curriculum are beginning to have an impact on pupils' standards in writing. Effective self-evaluation and a picture of rising standards indicate that the school has good capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Several children in Reception have started coming to school later than at start of the school year. They come with widely different skills and abilities, which taken as a whole are broadly in line with expectations. They are settling well in class and have good access to a secure outdoor environment. Teaching assistants guide the children's learning appropriately and most activities are enjoyable. Children are confident in their play, however, they sometimes become restless

because they are kept too long sitting on the carpet with the older Year 1 pupils, as the teacher discusses and explains what is to be learned. There are occasions when the curriculum provided is not sufficiently distinct from that for the older pupils in the class.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve standards in writing by tackling inconsistencies in progress through curricular development that maximises opportunities for pupils to write in different styles and for different purposes.
- Ensure marking gives pupils a clear understanding about how they can improve, and involve individuals more in evaluating their own work.
- Improve provision in Reception so teaching and the curriculum has a clearer focus on the children's needs. A small proportion of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Children come into school with skills and abilities that are broadly in line with expectations. In the Reception Year, children make satisfactory progress. Pupils reached broadly average standards in the 2007 Year 2 tests. In Year 6, the 2007 results show that standards in science were average and in English and mathematics, they were below average. Throughout Years 1 to 6, rates of learning and progress are improving because of good teaching and a lively and interesting curriculum. This is particularly so in Years 3 to 6, where the decline in standards in recent years has been halted. Achievement is now satisfactory. Standards are rising and are now average to slightly above. Weaknesses in writing are being tackled firmly through adaptations to the curriculum. However, leaders have rightly identified that raising standards here remains a key priority. Across the school, pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress in relation to their individual learning targets.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' behaviour is good and sometimes outstanding. At playtimes, they enjoy each other's company. They know each other well, and say there is always 'plenty for them to do'. Older pupils look out for the younger ones. They have a good understanding about keeping safe and say they enjoy coming to school. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils show a mature and responsible attitude to their work. In lessons, they work well together in groups and pairs.

The school council is well established. This provides pupils with a clear voice in the school and representatives take their roles seriously. The pupils enjoy taking on additional responsibilities such as organising raising money for charity. This is a healthy school. Despite limited space, pupils' physical development is evident in the good level of activity in the playground during playtime. The pupils much enjoy using the hoops on the climbing frame playing football or skipping. Pupils know about a healthy diet and the value of regular drinks of water; several pupils bring in fruit to eat at playtime. Pupils' satisfactory acquisition of basic skills and good personal development ensure they are satisfactorily prepared for their next stage of learning.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Good relationships are evident in all classes. Teachers manage pupils well and therefore the pupils are very confident learners, willing to respond to questions and say what they think. Older pupils work with great concentration and particularly enjoy using information and communication technology to help with their learning. Older pupils are challenged well to write stories and develop writing through using metaphors and this has led to improved standards.

Lessons are well planned in Years 1 to 6 to meet the needs of different pupils and as a result the pupils are challenged to do their best and are very motivated. Planning for the reception children is satisfactory, but does not always take account of their particular learning needs. Teachers give some good feedback to pupils in lessons to help them understand how well they are doing. However, marking is inconsistent and does not identify areas for improvement sufficiently well. Teaching assistants are deployed well in lessons. They work effectively, for example, with lower attaining pupils, explaining clearly but still expecting the pupils to think hard for themselves.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school's curriculum has strong creative elements with topics that are planned to enable different subjects to be linked together. For example, the pupils printed their own fabric using designs generated on the computer. There are examples of good artwork throughout the school. The school allotment is used well by pupils to develop better understanding of environmental issues through growing, costing and eating their own produce. Leaders have taken effective steps to adapt the curriculum to remedy weaknesses in writing. There are now many opportunities for pupils to write at length. The curriculum in Reception is not always sufficiently well adapted to the needs of the children. The school's personal, social and health education curriculum is well developed. Assemblies provide a strong Christian message and promote tolerance and thoughtfulness well. Pupils attend and enjoy a wide range of well planned clubs. There are plenty of opportunities for pupils to be active and this is promoting good health awareness. Visits to different places are carefully linked to topics to enable learning to be relevant and more enjoyable. The pupils talk enthusiastically about trips, for example, to the river and water mill. They particularly enjoyed the overnight camp.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Staff in the school are committed to ensure that pupils are well cared for and supported. Consequently, the pupils grow significantly in confidence and maturity as they move through the school. Adults deal quickly with any issues that arise and pupils feel that they are treated with kindness and consideration and have a sound moral awareness of right and wrong. Child protection procedures are in place and reviewed regularly. The needs of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are carefully assessed and they are provided with some good additional support.

Pupils have targets to support learning and the pupils say that these are 'right for them'. These are helpful in identifying areas they need to concentrate on in their work, for example, to ensure

that writing contains interesting descriptive words. However, pupils do not have sufficient information so that they can review these targets for themselves and set new ones on a regular basis. Therefore, while they know the targets they have been given, these have a limited use in supporting learning. The school is working hard with parents to promote regular attendance and reduce the number of holidays taken in term-time.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher has a very clear view about how the school needs to move forward. This is rooted in a good evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Her view has been shared effectively with all staff and the governors, and there is a strong consensus about what needs to be done to drive up standards. For example, improvement planning identifies writing as a key priority. Leaders have resolved some past staffing difficulties that adversely affected pupils' progress. Achievement is now strengthening because of good teamwork and effective monitoring. Consequently, standards in the present Years 2 and 6 are rising and the headteacher's view that the school is 'thriving' is apt.

The school sets challenging targets on an individual pupil basis, and these are now being used well to identify when pupils are not making sufficient progress so that extra support can be provided in small groups or individually. This is helping to boost pupils' achievement.

There have been recent improvements in the use of the school's accommodation such as the relocation of the library, which is used regularly at lunchtimes by the pupils, who are proud of the facility. The governors are very active in the school and ready to challenge leaders. They are well informed about issues in the school and this has enabled them to provide a good level of support.

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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?	3
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?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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	3
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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	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?	3

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?	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

2 November 2007

Dear Pupils Inspection of Drake's C of E Primary School, East Budleigh, Devon EX9 7DQ

Thank you for the very warm welcome you gave us to your school. We enjoyed talking to you and were very impressed with your friendliness and confidence. You clearly enjoy school. The valuable information you gave us was a great help. We think your school gives you a satisfactory education and agree with you that the school is improving. The curriculum and teaching are good and these are helping you improve your achievement. Leadership of your school is good.

What we most liked about your school:

- The leadership provided by the headteacher.
- There are very strong links with your parents or carers.
- The school ensures that you are safe and secure.
- You are polite and thoughtful towards each other.
- You have very positive attitudes to learning and you behave well.
- Lessons are well planned.
- The curriculum offers you a wide range of interesting activities.

We have asked your headteacher and others to:

- ensure that you are helped to make consistently good progress in your writing by providing more opportunities for you to write in different styles and for different purposes
- improve marking so that you have a clearer understanding about how to improve, and involve you more in evaluating your own work
- ensure the children in Reception have activities geared specifically to their needs.

We are sure that, with your hard work and help, your school will continue to improve.

Yours faithfully

Peter Clifton Lead inspector

2 November 2007



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Lead inspector