

# Dolton Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	113450
<b>Local Authority</b>	Devon
<b>Inspection number</b>	311273
<b>Inspection date</b>	14 May 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Rowena Onions

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	64
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Alison Atton
<b>Headteacher</b>	Catherine Davis
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	15 March 2004
<b>School address</b>	The Square Winkleigh EX19 8QF
<b>Telephone number</b>	01805 804315
<b>Fax number</b>	01805 814315

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<b>Age group</b>	4-11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

The school is much smaller than average and serves the village of Dolton and the surrounding district. Almost all pupils are of White British origin. All speak English as their first language. Few pupils are eligible for free school meals. An above-average proportion of pupils has learning difficulties and/or disabilities. At the time of the inspection, an acting headteacher had been in post at the school for half a term during the absence of the substantive headteacher.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Dolton is a satisfactory school. It is improving, with some aspects of the school already good and others close to being so. Constructive and effective work has been done towards making improvements. As a result, children make good progress in the Reception year. This gives them a good start to their schooling. Overall, current standards in Year 2 and Year 6 are a little below average, but given that pupils enter the school with below-average starting points, this represents satisfactory achievement. Progress in English has gradually improved over the last three years and is now good, with standards significantly better than they were. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve well. Well-devised development work has begun in mathematics and science, but this is not as established as that in English and, although its impact is beginning to be evident, pupils' progress remains satisfactory in these subjects.

Pupils like school and their overall personal development is good. Teachers successfully enthuse them in class to want to learn and do well. The variety of teaching methods used makes lessons interesting and forges good relationships between teachers and pupils. Of particular significance are the strong use of information and communication technology (ICT) and the way teachers link one subject with another. Pupils' very good behaviour in class makes a significant contribution to the way they learn. English is taught well, with teachers providing good opportunities for pupils to build and practise their skills. Procedures for assessing progress in English are good and effective use is made of this knowledge when planning lessons and intervention work for those experiencing difficulties. However, teaching and learning are satisfactory overall because they are not as effective in mathematics and science as they are in English. Teachers are not yet sufficiently confident in helping pupils to use and apply their skills in mathematics and in teaching them to investigate in science. Marking is inconsistent and is sometimes inadequate in mathematics, so pupils are not as fully involved as they might be in learning to assess and improve their work.

The curriculum is particularly strong in supporting pupils' personal development and enthusiasm for school. Pupils are provided with a wide programme of work, in which subjects are linked together so activities are varied and relevant. Pupils, for example, learn about Africa in their geography lessons while studying books with an African theme in English. This deepens pupils' understanding and makes a good contribution to their awareness of themselves as citizens. Although not yet fully embedded, changes have been made to the mathematics and science programmes of work that are supporting improvement.

Good quality personal care and guidance ensure pupils' safety and well-being. The individual nature of such support means that each feels well supported in school. Lessons in personal, social and health education ensure that pupils know how to keep themselves safe and well. They are very conscious of the need to eat healthily and to take good amounts of exercise. Pupils experiencing additional difficulties receive very good support to help them move forward. Pupils are given secure academic guidance through the setting of targets and through useful verbal feedback about their work.

The leadership of the headteacher has driven school improvement forward successfully. In her absence, this has continued under the good leadership of the acting headteacher, together with governor support, to ensure that the school continues to improve. Governors provide good support and are managing the tight school budget well. Although staff work hard as a team, the role of other leaders is not well developed, placing a very heavy burden on the headteacher.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Children in the Reception class do well. They settle quickly into a warm, stimulating environment that allows them the freedom to select activities for themselves as well as being well taught in a focused way. A good, balanced curriculum makes the most of the local environment to help children become interested, enthusiastic learners. In the past, although the children achieved well in many areas of learning, there was a weakness in their knowledge of how to link sounds and letters and in their early writing skills. This has been addressed, and current progress is good in all aspects, meaning that most children, who started school with skills below those typical for their age, will attain the expected goals by the end of the year. Satisfactory leadership and management have enabled this improvement.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Extend pupils' ability to use and apply their mathematical skills in solving problems and practical work.
- Provide more opportunities for pupils to develop their investigative skills in science.
- Improve the quality and consistency of marking.
- Develop the leadership roles of staff.

A small proportion of the 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

Pupils throughout the school achieve well in English. By Year 2, standards in both reading and writing are average, demonstrating good progress from pupils' below- average starting points. By Year 6, they are also broadly average. This also represents good progress between Years 3 and 6, as the current group attained below-average standards in Year 2. Progress in mathematics is improving, especially in the gaining of number skills. There remain, however, weaknesses in the way pupils use and apply their mathematics in practical and problem-solving situations. Additionally, there is a weakness in the ability of pupils in Key Stage 1 to record their work. Standards in Year 2 and Year 6 are currently a little below average. Taking their below-average starting points into account, this represents satisfactory achievement. Progress in science is only satisfactory because pupils are not yet fully developing their skills in scientific enquiry. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are supported well and make good progress.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 2

Pupils clearly like school and are keen to attend, which is reflected in their above- average attendance. Pupils are eager to join in with the activities provided for them and they apply themselves very well in class. They work well together and are confident in responding to questions. Their very good behaviour in lessons allows these to be relaxed and productive. Most also behave very well in the playground and around the school. However, there are a few examples of immature behaviour that occasionally spoil the overall impression. Pupils accept a good level of responsibility in day-to-day activities and through the school council, which has, for example, improved the recycling of school waste by organising the provision of separate

bins. Through their lessons, pupils have a growing awareness of diverse world cultures and are beginning to relate this knowledge to multicultural Great Britain. Pupils' progress in English and mathematics, together with an increasing ability to work both cooperatively and independently, is ensuring pupils are soundly prepared for their future lives.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

There are a number of significant strengths in the way pupils are taught. Teachers manage pupils well in class. This enables lessons to be taught in a good working atmosphere. Teachers try very hard to inspire and interest their pupils and to plan work that has a good balance between practical and written activities. Work is adapted to cater appropriately for the needs of the different ages and abilities of pupils. Teachers' knowledge of how best to teach English is now well established and is having a positive impact. However, teachers are not yet fully confident in knowing how best to teach pupils to use, apply and record their mathematics, or how to teach scientific knowledge through an investigative approach. There are examples of good marking in English, although practice is inconsistent, especially in involving pupils. However, there is little marking in mathematics that shows pupils how to improve their work.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum supports the improvements in standards well. Consideration has been given to the development of subject-specific skills and the way these can be developed and consolidated in other subjects. Development of the curriculum in English has been productive. The science and mathematics programmes have been revised and are already supporting improved progress. There is a wide, enriched curriculum, including much-enjoyed elements such as French and an initiative that promotes outdoor learning. Pupils describe the latter, which gives them opportunity to problem solve and work cooperatively, as 'the best'. Pupils' experiences are extended by visits, for example, visiting a local farm, and by taking part in after-school clubs. The curriculum provides very well for the promotion of personal skills, demonstrated, for example, by its Healthy School award. It successfully supports the learning of those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 2**

Strong pastoral care and support is based on the in-depth knowledge adults have about their pupils and the value that is given to each one. Good procedures ensure pupils' well-being and safety and there is ready support for any pupil who needs it. Links with other agencies help this process and are of particular benefit to the pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Tracking systems enable teachers to set targets for pupils and these targets are appropriately shared and reviewed with both pupils and parents. Pupils are aware of how to improve their work over the longer term. However, inconsistencies in marking mean that pupils are not always as well informed as they might be about their current work.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

Good leadership and management by the headteacher have promoted rising standards and the significant improvements in provision. The school's self-evaluation accurately identifies and prioritises areas for improvement, although its overall evaluations are sometimes a little generous. Whole-school planning is detailed and, as a result, the acting headteacher has been able to maintain the work of school improvement. The school's tracking arrangements are used well to set challenging targets for pupils. Governors play a good part in evaluating the school's work and in ensuring that it continues to provide secure standards of education despite the recent changes in leadership. In part because of recent changes in staffing, the leadership roles of staff other than the headteacher are not fully developed. Subject leaders work closely with the headteacher, but are not always confident in gathering information, using data or leading improvement for themselves. For this reason, although the school's track record in promoting improvement is good, the capacity for making further improvements is currently satisfactory. Close links are forged with the local community and parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school.

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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	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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	2

### 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	2
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?	3
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

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
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	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
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

15 May 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Dolton Church of England Primary School, Dolton EX19 8QF

We really enjoyed our day at your school. We would like to thank you for your help and the friendly conversations we had with you. We think yours is a satisfactory school that is getting better all the time.

This is what we liked most about your school.

- You make good progress with your reading and writing.
- You behave very well in class.
- Your teachers try hard to make your lessons interesting.
- There is a wide range of activities planned for you, which helps you enjoy your time in school.
- You know how to keep yourselves safe and well, and are happy to make choices that help you to do this.
- Your school takes really good care of you all.
- Your headteacher, teachers and governors are working hard to improve your school.

To make things even better, this is what we have asked your school to do now.

- Give you more opportunities to use your mathematical skills in solving problems and practical work.
- Help you to develop your investigative skills in science.
- Make sure that your work is marked in a way that helps you know how to improve.
- Share some of the jobs that the headteacher is doing with some of the other teachers.

You can help make your school better by continuing to work hard and by making sure that everyone behaves well all the time.

Best Wishes

Rowena Onions Lead inspector



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Rowena Onions  
Lead inspector