

Dewhurst St Mary CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	117415
Local Authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	312607
Inspection date	21 May 2008
Reporting inspector	John Paull

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	199
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Nick Easterbrook
Headteacher	Mrs Keely Folker
Date of previous school inspection	18 October 2004
School address	Churchgate Cheshunt Waltham Cross Hertfordshire EN8 9ND
Telephone number	01992624177
Fax number	01992624233

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the school's overall effectiveness and investigated the following areas:

- inconsistencies in pupils' performance, suggested by the school's self-evaluation
- the effectiveness of subject leadership
- the effectiveness of developments in provision for children in the Reception class.

Evidence was gathered from discussions with the Chair of Governors, staff and pupils, assessment data, observations of the school at work and parents' questionnaires. Other aspects of the school were not investigated in detail but the inspection found no evidence to contradict the school's own self-evaluations and where appropriate these have been used in this report.

Description of the school

This is an average sized primary school. Most pupils are of White British backgrounds, although an increasing proportion is drawn from minority ethnic groups. A small number speak English as an additional language. Pupils come from a wide range of social backgrounds. The percentage eligible for free school meals is a little above average. Recently, several pupils have joined the school at times other than the start of school years. The percentage of pupils who have additional learning needs, including those with a statement of special educational need, is broadly average but increasing. Children's attainment on entry ranges widely. Whilst it is average in most areas of learning, many have speech and language skills below those usually found.

The school has received the Inclusion Quality Mark, Healthy Schools and Active Mark awards. It is currently working towards accreditations in information and communication technology and for its development of pupils' thinking skills.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school that is improving under the successful leadership of its headteacher. Some features are already outstanding. Pastoral care and guidance are exceptional and contribute much towards pupils' outstanding personal development and well being. Standards in Year 6 are a little above average and pupils' achievement is good. Pupils' work in science and their understanding of mathematics are particularly good. In English, pupils' writing is not quite as strong as either their reading or their ability to express ideas orally. Nevertheless, pupils' achievement in speaking and listening is very good. All of this results from a successful adaptation of the curriculum that meets pupils' individual needs well. Consequently, the good teaching provides many opportunities for pupils to discuss their thoughts and feelings with a partner, and plan together how they will approach tasks, learn effectively and evaluate their own work. Furthermore, good learning is supported by all pupils being involved in setting their own targets. They then develop their individual knowledge in order to achieve them. The local authority has recognised the effectiveness of this good practice in accrediting the school with its 'Learning to Learn' award.

Standards indicated by Year 6 national English, mathematics and science tests are frequently above average. Current work reflects this and achievement is good. In 2007, results in science were particularly good. Standards in the Year 2 assessments are usually average, but dropped to below average in 2007. At this stage, achievement was only satisfactory. However, senior staff and governors displayed no complacency about this just being a 'blip'. They took prompt action, which has already had an impact towards rectifying the situation. Much support and intervention for the same group of pupils has resulted in accelerating their progress considerably in Year 3. School data shows that many have already caught up with expected standards and their achievement is now good. This rigorous academic care and support is indicative of good leadership and management. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have introduced very thorough systems for monitoring and tracking progress. They use these arrangements increasingly effectively to identify, and quickly resolve, any gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills. However, because some of the school's key subject leaders are new to their posts, they are still developing the expertise necessary to take over full responsibility for such monitoring. Nevertheless, all leaders are working well as a team, applying policies and procedures effectively. Governors are supportive and their chair is knowledgeable and willing to question staff whilst always being positive.

Care, guidance and support are characterised by outstanding pastoral provision. Safeguarding, child protection and health and safety measures are all in place, although one security matter was pointed out. There are many opportunities for pupils to make their views known and to contribute to how the school operates. The curriculum is good and enhanced well by themed days as well as visits to places of interest and residential trips. The latter often feature a variety of outdoor pursuits and sports. Pupils study French and there are many after school clubs. The outcome of all this is remarkable. Pupils support each other as playleaders, buddies act as very effectively trained mediators and carry out a vast number of helpful routine jobs around the school. They do this smoothly, efficiently and with considerable enjoyment. One said, 'No-one is ever bored here, because there is always something to do.' Pupils also arrange collections for charity, write to pen-pals in Zambia and support events locally including festivals at the local parish church. The vast majority enjoy their work in a thoughtful way, explaining that their teachers try to make it fun for them, so they want to do their best. Spiritual, moral, social

and cultural development is good and includes outstanding social development. Opportunities for cultural development are increasing rapidly. Pupils' working relationships with their teachers and with each other are strong. Their strong social skills, linked with good literacy and numeracy standards, support pupils' future economic wellbeing effectively. Whilst attendance is good, it is reduced because a number of families take holidays during term time. The staff work hard to discourage this practice.

Teachers' partnership links with parents are notable. One parent commented, 'I've always found the teachers very approachable, they're easy to see and to talk to.' This was the view of the overwhelming majority in the questionnaires. Good links with outside agencies, including advisory services for pupils who find learning harder than others, are similarly strong. Teachers and teaching assistants alike respond effectively to such advice, adapting what they teach to suit individual needs. This results in such pupils making good progress. Pupils who speak English as an additional language also thrive well because they are effectively included in all aspects of curriculum. Pupils who join the school during the year, including a few directly from overseas, are welcomed by all and soon begin to learn effectively, often making rapid progress.

The headteacher, senior staff and governors are thoughtful and realistic when evaluating the school's performance. They deploy staff and resources effectively in response to needs and see themselves as on a journey towards excellence. Based on their track record, their capacity to achieve this aim is good.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Much has been done since the last inspection to improve the curriculum, resources and the quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage. Consequently, provision for children in Reception and their achievement in all areas of learning are now good. This represents considerable improvement. Nevertheless, a lack of shelter in the outside area still restricts its use for learning when the weather is either very hot or wet. Good links with parents help children to settle well at school. As a result, their personal, social and emotional development is good. Effective early interventions to improve learning support the needs of those children who have weaker language skills or who find learning more difficult. Consequently, the majority of children progress well and are on track to reach the expected goals for their age.

What the school should do to improve further

- Maintain the focus on improving pupils' writing skills, so standards rise further.
- Improve further the management skills of new subject leaders, enabling them to become more adept in the use of data to ensure pupils' progress.

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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?	2
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?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
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?	1
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	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	2

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?	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?	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

22 May 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Dewhurst St. Mary Church of England (VC) Primary School, Cheshunt, EN8 9ND

Thank you for all your help when I inspected your school. It was very good to meet you and your behaviour was excellent. I thoroughly enjoyed speaking with some of your school councillors, playleaders, buddies and mediators. I agree with them that yours is a good school. What they do to help your school run smoothly is exemplary and all of you do much to help and support your teachers. It was excellent to hear that so many of you had such good reasons for liking your school. You have very good attitudes to learning because you have a clear understanding of your targets and how to reach them.

Here are some more good things about your school.

- Your work is above average.
- You are taught well and your teachers take outstandingly good care of you.
- What is taught is interesting and provides you with opportunities to learn a wide range of important skills.
- Your headteacher, senior staff and governors are putting into practice well their good ideas for improving your school even further.

Here are two things that your headteacher, staff and governors can do to make your school even better.

- Carry on helping you to improve your written work.
- Develop further the ways in which some of your new subject leaders use information about your progress to help you achieve even more.

You can help with these improvements by keeping up your outstanding behaviour, helping your teachers and remembering your targets as well as you do now. I wish you every success and hope that you will always remain proud of your school.

Yours sincerely

John W. Paull Lead inspector