

# St Dominic CofE VA School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	112029
<b>Local Authority</b>	Cornwall
<b>Inspection number</b>	325512
<b>Inspection date</b>	25 November 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Caroline McKee

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

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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 (total)	52
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	3
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Jo Totterdell
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jayne Biddle
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	19 October 2008
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	St Dominic Saltash PL12 6SU
<b>Telephone number</b>	01579 350581
<b>Fax number</b>	01579 350581

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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

This primary school is smaller than average and has three classes. The great majority of pupils are White British and the percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below the national average. A considerable number of pupils arrive at the school after Key Stage 1. The school was removed from special measures in 2006 and the current headteacher has been in post since May 2006.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

St Dominic Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School provides a satisfactory standard of education. It is a happy school and pupils feel very safe and well cared for. Their personal development is good because of the high quality of personal care provided. This is particularly evident in the school's highly effective links with the local community. The parents are supportive of the headteacher who has managed to gain stability in staffing and secure improvement. Good support from local consultants, including clear guidance on how to improve teaching and learning, is now having a positive impact on standards, particularly in writing and mathematics. Teaching is good overall and improving. Governors are very supportive and play a strategic role in the school's improvement. The school's self-evaluation is accurate and development plans are well focused.

Children achieve satisfactorily in the EYFS but have limited access to all outdoor learning experiences. This is because the area is too small for activities such as bike riding, which occur but only when supervised on the larger play area. Much effort at the start of the year goes into ensuring that children feel confident in their new environment and this is very evident at this early stage of this year.

Pupils make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1. Expectations are sometimes too low in relation to how much progress should be made by the end of Year 2, especially for pupils that are more able. This has resulted in too few pupils reaching Level 3 in previous years. Targets are also currently too low for more able pupils in Key Stage 1, because they are not monitored regularly enough to see if they need to be raised. In Key Stage 2, pupils are now making good progress. The approaches that the school has implemented for improving the pupils' skills in writing and mathematics have had a positive impact in accelerating progress and raising standards. In 2008, standards were broadly average at the end of Year 2 and above average in English in Year 6. Attainment in mathematics and science in Year 6 was not as high as in English.

The pupils have a good knowledge of how to live healthily. They know well how to stay safe and who to talk to if they have a problem. The pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. They say that they really enjoy school and the many additional activities that the school provides. The school council plays an active role in decision-making processes. It is involved, for example, in designing the Eco Garden and playground. Pupils are effectively involved in the life of the local and wider communities and regularly help to raise funds for charities. They talk enthusiastically about their links with schools in Kenya and Jamaica, marvelling at the differences in lifestyles. The school is proactive in creating effective links with the main secondary school which the pupils move on to.

The curriculum is good and enriched by the provision of French. Additional activities such as residential visits, music and sports clubs ensure that the pupils receive a good range of opportunities. There is a good emphasis on personal, social and health education as well as the multicultural development of the pupils, and this makes an effective contribution to their personal development.

Leadership and management are good. The school has made good progress since the previous inspection, particularly in raising standards, and is well placed to improve further.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 3

Provision in the EYFS is satisfactory. The children are in a combined class with Years 1 and 2 pupils and start school with skills as expected for their age. They attain average standards by the time they enter Year 1. Good relationships and care from the staff and the quality of information received before they arrive ensure that the children settle quickly and make good progress in their personal development. The children feel safe, confident and happy at school. They play and behave together very well, benefiting from interacting with children of different ages. The parents are very appreciative and say that they are pleased with how well the children settle. Learning outside is restricted by the very small area but the school has plans to improve this. The teachers capture children's interest and mostly assess their needs accurately. The children are helped by adults during group activities, but opportunities to turn these activities into learning experiences are sometimes missed. Children have good opportunities to make their own choices. The leadership and management of the EYFS are satisfactory and improving with good team work. Current planning looks well set to secure a smooth transition to Years 1 and 2.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Review the process of monitoring targets to ensure that there is a good overview of how well pupils are achieving.
- Ensure teachers use assessment data to set more challenging work in Key Stage 1 so that more pupils reach Level 3 by the end of Year 2.
- Develop the outside learning area to allow EYFS children to access all types of learning experiences.

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

There has been much improvement in the progress pupils make in Years 3 to 6 and all pupils in these years are now making good progress in English and mathematics. Attainment in the national tests for eleven-year-olds in 2008 showed an improvement, especially in English, over the previous three years when standards were significantly below the national averages. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 have managed to catch up any underachievement from their earlier schooling, particularly in mathematics and writing. They are very well involved in using their targets to help them improve further. Pupils who arrive after Year 3 make good progress and several are reaching standards that are above average.

Pupils in Years 1 and 2 make satisfactory progress and reach broadly average standards. However, target setting does not always address underachievement in Key Stage 1, so expectations of what they should be able to achieve are occasionally too low. There has been, however, good progress in reading, improving on the previous year's assessments.

Overall, the achievement of pupils is satisfactory and improving, especially in Key Stage 2. The improvements in teaching in the lower years are accelerating progress but this is yet to show through in terms of improved outcomes in the assessments at the end of Key Stage 1. Pupils

who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress towards their individual targets.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' understanding of healthy lifestyles is good. Pupils participate enthusiastically in a wide range of extra-curricular sporting activities. The school council has a strong voice and ensures that the school is environmentally friendly and safe. The pupils' good knowledge of how to stay safe is reflected in their good behaviour at break times. Their positive attitudes and relationships with adults and with each other show their enjoyment of school. They know who to talk to if they have any worries. Their attendance is above average. Pupils support each other well and are considerate of those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The pupils have satisfactory skills in literacy and numeracy, which, combined with their good entrepreneurial skills, help to prepare them satisfactorily for their future education and the later world of work.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Stability of staffing and improved teaching in Key Stage 2 have led to improvements in standards and pupils are now making good progress. Good relationships are evident in all classes. Teachers are encouraging and therefore the pupils are confident learners, willing to respond to questions and say what they think. Older pupils work at a faster rate and with very good concentration. They explain what they are doing with great confidence, knowledgeably using words that are associated with each subject. Older pupils are challenged effectively to write good quality stories and to develop their mathematical skills across a range of activities. The teaching is improving for pupils in Years 1 and 2 and has some good features, as shown in the improvements in reading. However, it is not yet as strong as in Years 3 to 6, particularly because assessment data are not used to set tasks to stretch the more able students.

Lessons are generally well structured and teachers give good feedback to pupils in lessons to help them understand how well they are doing. Marking is consistent and identifies areas for improvement. Teaching assistants are well deployed in lessons. For example, they work effectively with lower attaining pupils, explaining tasks clearly while 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. This is particularly effective in Key Stage 2. For example, the pupils used maps of the local area to measure distance and improve their skills of using decimal points. There are fewer opportunities in the curriculum to extend the higher attaining pupils in Key Stage 1. There are good displays of artwork throughout the school. Leaders have taken effective steps to adapt the curriculum to remedy weaknesses in writing and mathematics. There are now many opportunities for pupils to write at length and this has had a positive impact recently on raising standards. The school's personal, social and health education curriculum is well developed. Assemblies provide a strong Christian message and promote tolerance and thoughtfulness well. There are plenty of opportunities for pupils to be active

and this is promoting good health awareness. A good range of clubs and visits to different places are carefully linked to topics to enable learning to be relevant and more enjoyable. The pupils were very excited about their forthcoming residential visit. They had been able to inform the centre of the size of bikes required having done a statistical analysis of their own heights.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The school provides an extremely caring environment where pupils feel very safe and have a great sense of belonging. This contributes strongly to their personal development and the pupils grow in confidence and maturity as they move through the school. The school responds quickly to any issues that arise and take parents' views very seriously. Child protection procedures are in place and regularly reviewed. The needs of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are assessed effectively and they are provided with support that enables them to make satisfactory progress.

The school has an academic tracking system that shows individual pupils' progress towards their targets. The pupils are fully involved in checking and setting their own targets. However, the targets in Years 1 and 2 are not reviewed at sufficiently regular intervals, with the result that the more able pupils in Years 1 and 2 have not been set sufficiently challenging targets to promote higher achievement.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The headteacher and governors continue to be fully committed to improving the learning for all pupils and have a realistic view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The school development plan accurately reflects necessary areas for improvement. The staff form an effective team and have overcome significant difficulties over the last few years. The school's main focus is to improve literacy and numeracy and in this it is succeeding. Regular and effective lesson observations provide an accurate view of the quality of teaching. However, the targets for pupils in Key Stage 1 have not been monitored regularly enough. The school is proactive in seeking and reacting to the views of pupils and parents. There is a strong community influence that has a positive impact on the pupils' personal development and on the lives of people in the village who are keen to be involved in school life. The governors are very active in the school and ready to challenge leaders. They are well informed about issues arising 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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

### 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/or disabilities make progress	3

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<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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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
The extent to which 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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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?	2

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

26 November 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Dominic Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, Saltash, PL12 6SU

Thank you very much for welcoming us to your school. We think that you are very serious about the responsibilities you take on to help make the school a better place. We were impressed with your good behaviour around the school and in lessons.

We have judged your school to be satisfactory, and improving. You settle quickly into your school life because the teachers make you feel welcome and help you to make sound progress in the way you talk, use your numbers and play with other children. We think that you could work harder in Years 1 and 2 so you will now have to try to meet the teachers' new challenges. In Years 3 to 6, you are now making good progress, and this was especially so last year for Year 6 pupils in English. You show that you very much enjoy teaching that is exciting and using different ways to help you to learn. Teaching and the curriculum are now good. For example, you told us that using ICT helped you to learn well and you told us how much you enjoy learning about other countries and their different customs. The school provides good care and support so that you make good progress in your personal development. Good guidance for your work is starting to speed up your learning.

The headteacher, staff and governors have worked hard to ensure that the school is a happy place and so far, they have made the right changes so that the school is making satisfactory progress. So it can continue to improve, we have asked the school to:

- keep a closer eye on how well you are working towards your targets
- help more of you to reach the higher levels by the end of Year 2
- improve the outside learning area for the youngest children.

In order to do this we would ask you to play your part and accept the challenge to work harder. We wish you every success for the future and hope that you enjoyed the residential trip.

Yours sincerely

Caroline McKee Lead inspector