

Dunsford Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113199
Local Authority	Devon
Inspection number	325772
Inspection dates	28–29 April 2009
Reporting inspector	Anne Newall

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.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	69
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Martyn Watts
Headteacher	David Gibbard
Date of previous school inspection	4 July 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Dunsford Exeter EX6 7DD
Telephone number	01647 252548

Age group	4–11
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Fax number

01647 252548

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one additional inspector.

Description of the school

Dunsford is a small rural primary school situated 7 miles from Exeter. In recent years, the number of children on roll has grown steadily. Pupils are taught in mixed age classes. The school has a lower than average percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals. There are no pupils from an ethnic minority background, or who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is slightly higher than average, and there are two pupils with a statement of special educational needs.

Since the last inspection, the school has established a breakfast and after-school club, situated in a new building which is also used by the local pre-school.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Dunsford is a good and inclusive school. It provides an outstanding level of care, guidance and support to its pupils, resulting in their good academic progress and achievement as well as their outstanding personal development and well-being. Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides strong leadership for a committed and cohesive staff team. Together they have created an exciting and nurturing environment and implemented many improvements since the last inspection. The vast majority of parents who responded to the inspection questionnaire are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. As one says, 'Dunsford is a little gem' and another wrote, 'we are very lucky to have such a fantastic school in our village'.

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and abilities broadly as expected for their age. They make outstanding progress so that by the end of the year, they are working securely within the higher levels of the early learning goals. Pupils continue to make good progress during Key Stages 1 and 2, attaining overall standards well above the national average. Teamwork and co-operation are encouraged amongst pupils, which, together with their high academic standard, bodes well for their future success. Good and often outstanding teaching, together with an interesting and carefully planned curriculum enriched by wide-ranging visits and visitors, contributes to pupils' enjoyment and achievement. However, teaching does not always provide sufficient challenge to enable some pupils to make even more rapid progress. School self-evaluation identifies strengths and weaknesses and leaders implement suitable actions, although the plans do not contain sufficiently challenging targets to improve the rate of pupil progress.

Pupils thrive in an atmosphere where they have many opportunities to lead a healthy lifestyle free from poor behaviour or bullying. They greatly enjoy their education, as seen by their outstanding attendance and their participation in numerous school events and clubs. The school makes outstanding use of links with other providers and external agencies to enrich the experience for pupils and to ensure that the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are met. A new building houses the recently opened breakfast and after-school club, used also by pupils from neighbouring schools, which provides a safe and enjoyable place for pupils whilst also providing a valued service for parents. Already close liaison with the local pre-school has been enhanced by their use of the new building, and pre-school staff are working with the Early Years Foundation Stage to gain Partnership Foundation Stage Unit (PFSU) status. The youngest children benefit hugely from this close partnership. At the other end of the school, the oldest pupils sometimes work with their peers in local primary schools, forming friendships which help ease their transition to secondary school.

The many improvements made since the last inspection and the appropriateness of actions taken to improve the progress of current pupils indicate that the school has a good capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and abilities broadly as expected for their age. Due to the excellent provision, they make outstanding progress during their first year at school. The proportion of pupils working at the higher levels in all aspects of learning by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage is well above that found nationally. The vision

of the headteacher and Early Years Foundation Stage co-ordinator has led to the creation of a beautiful outdoor learning environment which is also used by the pre-school. Relationships with the pre-school are strong, with staff and children regularly participating in shared activities. Excellent partnership with parents ensures they feel included in their child's school life and know what their child is learning. For example, a slide show of photographs is displayed in the mornings while parents bring their children into the classroom, promoting discussion between parent and child. The regular Early Years Foundation Stage newsletter also keeps parents informed, and they speak highly of their children's experiences in the Early Years Foundation Stage, describing them as 'stimulating, challenging and fun'. Detailed and thorough planning is based upon an in-depth knowledge of each child. This, together with an excellent range of resources, ensures children are given numerous opportunities tailored to their needs and interests and providing an appropriate balance of adult-initiated and child-initiated activities. This results in creative and active learners, who play and co-operate well with each other. Skilful teaching develops the children's interests, encouraging them to concentrate and persevere; consequently, children demonstrate excellent behaviour, attitudes and social skills and increasing confidence. The children's personal development and well-being is outstanding. Great care is taken to ensure the children's health and safety in an environment where they are encouraged to be active and aware of their surroundings and each other. Rigorous evaluation of the Early Years Foundation Stage has led to sustained improvements in provision and in children's progress, demonstrating excellent leadership and management.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that teaching consistently provides a high level of challenge for all pupils to enable them to maintain the rapidly improving rates of progress currently evident
- Ensure subject leaders' action plans include sufficiently challenging targets for pupil progress

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children make outstanding progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Pupils make good progress during Key Stage 1 so that by the end of Year 2, they consistently attain standards above the national average in mathematics and well above in reading. They attain exceptionally high standards in writing. Pupils continue to make good progress during Key Stage 2, resulting in standards which are well above the national average in English and above the national average in mathematics and science. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make outstanding progress and achieve standards higher than those of their peers nationally. The strong progress these pupils make is due to good and sometimes outstanding teaching, together with the use of increasingly detailed assessment information which enables teachers to plan activities more closely matched to the needs of the pupils. The school is increasingly using this information to set targets for each pupil. However, targets are not always sufficiently challenging to ensure a sustained good or better rate of progress from the pupils' high starting points. Initiatives resulting from the whole-school focus on writing since 2007 and mathematics since 2008 are now having a good impact on progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

- Pupils demonstrate highly positive attitudes to school, as reflected in their excellent attendance and obvious enjoyment. When asked 'Would you recommend your school to others
- ' one pupil responded 'Why wouldn't I
- ' Pupils love coming to school because of the interesting lessons, visits and visitors, and the exciting range of extra- curricular activities offered. The outdoor facilities promote their role play, for example the swimming pool changing room which is currently a stable, complete with rosettes and hay. Linking with schools in Leicester and France, studying a range of different religions, and learning from visitors from different ethnic backgrounds ensures that pupils develop national and global awareness. Pupils grow into thoughtful, sensible young people who relate well to one another and to the adults in school. Their behaviour is outstanding, and pupils say there is no bullying. Pupils on the school council have brought about improvements to the facilities, such as play areas and the bicycle shelter. Pupils have a strong understanding of how to stay healthy through a good diet and taking exercise. They all participate in 'DPA' – daily physical exercise – and many participate in the wide range of extra-curricular sporting activities. Many pupils cycle or scoot to school. The outstanding relationships between pupils are evident in the playground pals scheme and the way in which the older children care for the younger ones. Pupils feel safe and well cared for in an environment which allows them to take sensible risks so that they are not unnecessarily fearful. Their teamwork and problem solving skills are excellent which, combined with their high standards of literacy and numeracy, gives them outstanding skills which will contribute to their future success. The school ensures that supporting charities is fun, for example in the recent Junior Masterchef competition, where money raised went to Children in Need.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers demonstrate a detailed understanding of each pupil's needs and are making increased use of assessment information to plan work that is closely matched to pupils' individual abilities. Consequently, progress in lessons by pupils currently in the school is good, and in some cases outstanding. On occasion, however, not enough is asked of pupils, and as a consequence they do not always produce work of which they are capable. Warm, caring relationships between adults and pupils create a positive atmosphere for learning. Teaching assistants are well trained, have a good level of expertise, and are skilful at unobtrusively supporting pupils. Their effective liaison with teachers ensures they understand what pupils are expected to learn from activities. Teachers encourage pupils to talk in ways that help them develop their ideas and choice of vocabulary, and that encourage them to organise their writing effectively. Lessons provide good opportunities for pupils to practise their skills through investigation and problem solving, and effective use is made of a wide range of interesting resources, including information and communication technology, to motivate and inspire pupils. The needs of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are carefully identified through close liaison with external agencies and the strategies put in place to support them are highly successful.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The outstanding, exciting, active and broad curriculum fills every minute of the day, ensuring that pupils are constantly engaged in learning. Days are planned to provide frequent change of activity, refreshing the pupils so that there is no boredom or 'switching off'. Curriculum planning is detailed and comprehensive, with care taken to address the needs of pupils in mixed age classes and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The use of the school's outdoor environment and the immediately locality to promote learning is a strength. A varied range of visits and visitors enhances learning. Pupils throughout the school enjoy learning French, and swimming lessons in the solar heated pool are eagerly anticipated every summer. Excellent use is made of cross-curricular links and a variety of resources is used in lessons to appeal to pupils' different learning styles. Pupils are confident in using information and communication technology for research as well as, for example, reinforcing mathematical skills. The needs of more able, talented and gifted pupils are addressed through carefully planned work as well as occasional master classes at local secondary schools and the university.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The staff team has created an extremely caring environment where every pupil is valued and nurtured. Pupils say that there is always someone to turn to if they have a problem. Procedures to safeguard pupils, including child protection procedures, are appropriate and diligently implemented. Excellent links with a variety of agencies ensure that the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are carefully identified, resulting in impressive provision and excellent outcomes for them. Procedures to involve pupils in evaluating their progress against targets are good and improving; the marking of pupils' extended writing and mathematics gives them clear guidance on what they need to do to progress and pupils say they find this helpful. The actions taken by the school to improve attendance have had an outstanding impact, with no unauthorised absences and no persistent absentees. Attendance is considerably higher than that found nationally and well above the school's target.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Very effective leadership by the headteacher, together with the strong support and teamwork of the staff, have provided a clear focus upon raising standards. The school has a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses gleaned through monitoring of teaching and assessment of pupils' work. Subject leaders' improvement plans contain well-thought-out actions and provide good detail, but do not contain quantifiable targets against which to judge pupil progress. As a consequence, leaders have not had a clear understanding of what constitutes 'outstanding' as opposed to 'good' progress, leading to over-generous self-evaluation. There have been recent changes in the composition of the governing body, with some new members. Governors have a good knowledge of the school. They provide good support for the school and meet their legal obligations. In addition, they have been influential in improving facilities for pupils. The school makes an outstanding contribution to community cohesion through participation in local events, celebrating the heritage of the village, and by the provision of a breakfast and after-school club which provides a valuable service to parents. Pupils learn about

life in a culturally and socially diverse United Kingdom through their penpal relationships with pupils in France and in a multi-ethnic school in Leicester, whilst the curriculum develops their understanding of the global community. The school provides good value for money.

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?	1
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?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

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/or disabilities make progress	1

¹Grade 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

How good are 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
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
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 learners' needs?	2
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

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 eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
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**

30 April 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Dunsford Primary School, Exeter EX6 7DD

Thank you so much for making me so welcome when I visited your school this week. I thoroughly enjoyed meeting you and watching you playing and learning. The children I met to talk about the school were very confident and chatty, telling me all about the things they like about school. It seems design and technology is a great favourite, and you also like lessons which are hard and make you think.

You attend a good school which is well led. I think you are fortunate to have such lovely facilities where you can have lots of exercise, and I could see that the youngest pupils were having great fun in their new outdoor area, while some older pupils enjoyed playing horses in the stable. I was pleased to see you eat lots of fruit which helps to keep you healthy. You obviously enjoy school, and told me this is because of the exciting range of lessons and other activities, including clubs, that you can attend. I was very impressed by your excellent behaviour and the way you look after each other.

The staff take excellent care of you and ensure that you make good progress with your work, achieving a high standard of education. However, I think many of you could do even better. I have asked your headteacher and the staff to do the following:

- Make sure you are challenged in all your lessons so that you make even faster progress.
- Make sure the teachers who are in charge of the subjects are setting you challenging targets and keeping an eye on how much progress you are making to reach them.

You can help by always trying your hardest and by letting your teachers know if you find the work too easy.

With my very best wishes for your future.

Yours faithfully

Anne Newall

Lead inspector