

# South Tawton Primary School

## Inspection report

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	113263
<b>Local Authority</b>	Devon
<b>Inspection number</b>	338130
<b>Inspection dates</b>	14–15 October 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Colin Lee

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

---

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	187
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Peter Brotherton
<b>Headteacher</b>	Heather Poustie
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	3 October 2006
<b>School address</b>	Tawton Lane South Zeal Okehampton EX20 2LG
<b>Telephone number</b>	01837 840242
<b>Fax number</b>	01837 840848
<b>Email address</b>	admin@southtawton.devon.sch.uk

---

<b>Age group</b>	4–11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	14–15 October 2009
<b>Inspection number</b>	338130

---

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It rates council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 08456 404045, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

Royal Exchange Buildings  
St Ann's Square  
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 08456 404045

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)

W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2009

## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 15 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at the data the school has collected on pupils' attainment and progress, the school development plan, lesson and curriculum planning and procedures for keeping pupils safe. 93 parental questionnaires were returned and scrutinised by the inspection team, who also spoke with a number of parents.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- pupils' attainment and progress in writing
- pupils' progress in mathematics in Years 3 to 6
- the impact of subject leaders on outcomes and provision.

## Information about the school

The school is smaller than average. Almost all of the pupils are from White British backgrounds. Pupils are taught in seven single age classes. The current proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

2

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

2

### Main findings

This is a good school. It has some outstanding features in all aspects of its provision and the outcomes this produces. Much of this is due to the school's high expectations, particularly of the standards pupils should attain and of their attitudes and behaviour. Staff show a strong sense of teamwork that has been fostered by the headteacher's highly effective leadership.

Pupils enjoy coming to school. They know that they are cared for well and that they make a real contribution to the school community. Their achievement is good. They make outstanding progress in much of their personal development, but their academic progress is not wholly consistent. Variations in progress between year groups are being tackled successfully by seeing where teaching can be improved and by constructive use of information about progress to decide on actions to be taken. Part of the problem lies in some of the teaching, where pupils' progress during lessons is not checked often enough to see if pupils are finding work too difficult or too easy. This is particularly so in mathematics, where standards are not generally as high as in reading, writing and science. Nevertheless, teaching and learning overall are good. There is some particularly outstanding teaching and teachers have the opportunity to learn from this by observing colleagues' lessons.

Leadership and management are good. Having focused successfully on improving outcomes and provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage, raising standards in English and science and developing the curriculum, the school shows it has a good capacity for improvement in the future. The school knows itself well and self-evaluation is accurate. There is a strong sense of partnership with parents and carers, as well as with other schools and external agencies. Local, regional and international links benefit teachers' professional development and pupils' understanding of their place in different communities. The promotion of community cohesion is exemplary.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- raise standards in mathematics by ensuring that pupils' progress is consistent across the school
- raise the quality of teaching and learning by frequent checking of pupils' work during lessons to ensure that tasks are matching pupils' needs.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**

2

Pupils enjoy school. They show this in their enthusiasm in lessons, the excellent

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

relationships in their playing together and in their confidence that they make an important contribution to the school community. They appreciate what they call 'the family atmosphere in our school'. From this enjoyment stem important outcomes such as outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Many parents are confident that their children make good progress, as are the pupils themselves. This has been found to be so, with ample evidence of pupils making good progress in aspects of their academic, personal and social development. At all ages, standards are at least in line with those expected. From Year 3 onwards, a majority of pupils exceed the expected standards in reading and writing. This represents a significant recent improvement in writing due to the school making this a high priority. Pupils' learning in writing is helped by effective target-setting and constructive marking that shows them what to do to improve. They know what their work is helping them to learn and how it helps future learning. For example, Year 6 pupils progressed well in a lesson on use of pronouns and verbs in biographies and autobiographies. They explained exactly how this was going to help them write their own autobiographies, which was a task they were greatly looking forward to. The good progress made by pupils with special educational needs owes much to the high quality of support from teaching assistants. This helps many of these pupils get close to average standards by the time they leave the school. The most recent data shows progress in mathematics fluctuating in Years 1 to 3 and then becoming more consistent in later years. This is resulting in standards being average by the end of Year 6, contrasting sharply with the well above average levels in English and science.

Pupils are eager to contribute to school life, and those with specific responsibilities, such as school councillors and play leaders, carry out their duties very conscientiously. Whilst behaviour is generally good, it is excellent at playtimes. This is due to the way that Year 6 play leaders help all to be active and play purposefully. This in turn helps the strong sense of community within the school. Pupils follow a clear moral code, placing great emphasis on fairness. They have good understanding of other cultures and faith groups. They talk very knowledgeably about the importance of healthy eating and take regular exercise. The range of good outcomes in academic and personal development means that pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

---

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>1</b>

### How effective is the provision?

Good outcomes are the product of good teaching. Senior leaders place great emphasis on monitoring and improving the quality of teaching and learning, and teachers benefit greatly from this focus on their professional development. By observing aspects of colleagues' exemplary practice and by looking collectively at how the curriculum can be developed, teachers help one another in trying to make learning exciting and relevant to pupils' needs. In most lessons, pupils have tasks closely matched to their different abilities. This is a strong feature of learning in reading and writing throughout the school. Past observations by senior leaders and inspection evidence show that planning for different groups in mathematics and checking pupils' progress during lessons are not quite so consistent, and improving this is a high priority in the school development plan. There is consistent checking of pupils' progress through testing and assessment at fixed points during the year. Teachers use this information constructively to get a picture of long-term progress and to identify groups or individuals who are not reaching targets set for them. This establishes those who need particular provision to help them where they are finding learning difficult. Teachers' good quality marking aids pupils' learning by showing how a piece of work can be improved. A good feature of many lessons is the opportunities given to pupils to evaluate both their own and their classmates' work and learning. Year 2 pupils were seen offering each other excellent advice on how dance sequences could be improved. Year 6 pupils' marking of a partner's writing identified three good features of the work and a target for future improvement. The perceptive comments reflected mature appreciation and understanding of the features of different form of writing.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Planning of the curriculum is ongoing and staff are working on developing a series of topics in which subjects are linked together. Current planning identifies clearly where pupils can apply and develop literacy skills in other subjects and topics and this is raising reading and writing standards. There are other good features in the curriculum that are very popular with pupils, for example theme weeks such as a languages week, the use of school and local environments as learning resources and the use of visits and visitors linked to topics. These include residential visits to a Tudor mansion, to London for experiences linked to multi-cultural awareness, and to France to support language and other aspects of learning.

Care and concern for pupils' well-being are central to the school's ethos and are a good feature of the school. Pupils feel safe and happy in school. The needs of any vulnerable pupils are met well and there is extra help and support for any pupil who needs it. This has particularly good impact on pupils' personal development.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

The headteacher provides outstanding leadership, and staff and governors respond to her drive with a shared ambition for school improvement. The priorities for the school's development are monitored and evaluated continuously by the senior leadership team, subject leaders and the governing body. This means that strategic planning has direction and clear goals. The school makes excellent use of various partnerships, in particular with the local pre- and secondary schools, the Okehampton Learning Community and agencies providing specialist support. These links have good impact on provision.

Safeguarding arrangements are thorough and staff are well trained and vigilant in their attention to health and safety, risk assessment and child protection issues.

Data on pupil performance is used constructively to check pupils' progress over time. The headteacher meets class teachers regularly to review that progress and decide the action needed to improve the achievement of individuals or groups. The senior leadership team is starting to develop its strategies for following up the impact of any action, and it is monitoring and evaluating progress in addressing priorities in the school's development plan. This gives good momentum to school improvement. The headteacher observes lessons regularly, often alongside subject leaders. The focus of such observations is generally how the curriculum is being taught but, in subjects other

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

than English and mathematics, leaders' knowledge of standards and progress of different groups of pupils is not yet sufficiently detailed.

An enthusiastic, well-informed governing body is very active in evaluating the school's work. It challenges senior leaders while supporting them well. Individual governors are given responsibility for monitoring the priorities in the school development plan and there is a clear schedule for reporting of progress. They work tirelessly at promoting the school's links with the local community and evaluating the impact of policy and practice for developing community cohesion. They are similarly active in seeking to improve accommodation and facilities. They recognise the need to develop the outdoor area used by the Early Years Foundation Stage children. The governing body has also made good use of individuals' specialist expertise in presenting the authorities with a strong case for a school hall in order to remove the present inadequacy in the learning environment for the pupils.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## **Early Years Foundation Stage**

A rigorous induction process enables children to settle quickly into early routines. Staff work closely together, and parents and carers say how they appreciate the strong home/school partnership that fully involves them. There is a high level of concern for children's welfare and this age group is led and managed well. Systematic observations and assessments of children's learning are carried out and used effectively to plan activities tailored to the needs of individual children. There is a smooth flow between indoor and outdoor learning, although the environment for the latter is small, which limits the scope of possible activities. The curriculum provides a good balance of



**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

adult-led and child-initiated activities. In the latter, opportunities are sometimes lost and staff recognise that there is more potential to develop children's language and numeracy skills.

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with knowledge and skills close to the levels expected of four-year-olds, apart from weaknesses in language and literacy. They make good progress and the majority leave the Early Years Foundation Stage at above average standards in all areas of learning.

Behaviour is good and children develop very positive attitudes to work which are reflected in their obvious enjoyment of everything they do.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

**Views of parents and carers**

Most parents who returned questionnaires or who spoke to the inspection team are very happy with the school. They are very supportive of the school and see it as a vital part of the village community. They agree that their children enjoy school and make enough progress. Inspectors have been very impressed by pupils' enjoyment of all that they do at school. Progress does fluctuate, particularly in mathematics, and the school has been asked to address this and make progress more consistent. A very small minority of parents have expressed concern about the way unacceptable behaviour is dealt with. No such behaviour was seen during the inspection and discussions with staff showed that there are clear guidelines and strategies in place for managing behaviour and supporting the few pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. More parents have commented on the limitations of the school's accommodation. The lack of a hall does indeed restrict delivery of the physical education curriculum and deny the school opportunities for whole-school gatherings.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at South Tawton Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 12 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 93 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 187 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	71	76	17	19	5	5	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	63	68	27	29	2	2	1	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	44	47	42	45	5	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	52	56	37	40	4	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	51	55	32	34	2	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	39	42	48	52	2	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	49	53	41	44	2	2	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	48	52	36	39	3	3	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	43	46	41	44	5	5	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	37	40	40	43	7	8	4	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	39	42	47	51	4	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	56	60	31	33	3	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	64	69	24	26	4	4	1	1

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



16 October 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of South Tawton Primary School, Okehampton EX20 2LG

Thank you for making us welcome in your school and for talking with us so willingly. We thoroughly enjoyed joining you in lessons and seeing you at work. We think your school gives you a good education overall and some things are outstanding. This is what we particularly appreciated:

- Many of you are making good progress and you are working particularly hard at improving your reading and writing skills.
- You behave well in lessons and excellently at play and lunchtimes.
- You understand very well the importance of healthy eating and exercise.
- You say how much you enjoy the opportunities you have to take on responsibility, such as being a school councillor or play leader and this is an excellent contribution to the life of the school.
- You are taught well and teachers plan many interesting activities for you to do in lessons.
- You say you feel safe in school and this is because all the adults do an excellent job in looking after you and making sure that you are safe and get help whenever you need it.
- The headteacher leads your school excellently and all the adults, including the governors, are working hard to improve the school.

We have two recommendations to help your school to get even better:

- Standards in mathematics can be higher and teachers must make sure that your progress in mathematics doesn't vary from year to year.
- Adults will check your work frequently in lessons to make sure it isn't too easy or too difficult. You can help by saying if you find it either of these.

We hope you will carry on enjoying learning and helping your teachers to make South Tawton Primary School to be an even better school.

Yours faithfully

Colin Lee

Lead inspector

**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 08456 404045, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).**