

# Dry Sandford Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	123063
<b>Local Authority</b>	Oxfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	340270
<b>Inspection dates</b>	5–6 October 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Mike Capper

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>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	108
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Jan Bartlett
<b>Headteacher</b>	Karen Harrington
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	3 October 2006
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 10 lessons or parts of lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at teachers' planning, the school's assessment information, safeguarding policies and samples of pupils' work. They analysed questionnaires from staff and pupils, as well as 46 from parents.

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

- how well teaching provides the right level of challenge for all pupils, particularly the least able in writing
- the impact of pupil mobility on attainment and how well those new to the school are supported and welcomed
- pupils' levels of enjoyment and the way in which they learn to take responsibility
- the impact of recent initiatives to improve pupils' progress and how effectively leaders use data to check pupils' progress.

## Information about the school

The majority of pupils come to this small rural primary school from the village of Dry Sandford, although some travel from further afield through parental choice. The school also admits pupils from a nearby army barracks. These pupils can arrive or leave the school at short notice, meaning that the turnover of pupils from year to year is high. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. Most, but not all, of these pupils have moderate learning difficulties.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in a mixed age class alongside some Year 1 pupils. The remainder of Year 1 pupils are taught in a mixed age class alongside Year 2 pupils. There have been significant changes in staff with three out of five class teachers new to the school in the last 14 months.

The school has an Activemark for its work in physical education and has achieved the Financial Management Standards in School for its systems for managing school finances.

**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?**

**3**

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

**3**

### Main findings

This is a satisfactory school with strengths in the way that it supports pupils' personal development. Pupils learn to care for each other and they develop positive attitudes towards learning. There is a calm and happy atmosphere in most lessons with pupils keen to learn. Pupils support each other very sensitively in and out of lessons. New pupils are welcomed with open arms and are helped to settle quickly. As one recently arrived pupil commented, 'The kids are kind and friendly and look after us well!'

Satisfactory teaching means that pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Children settle quickly in the Early Years Foundation Stage and make steady progress but there are missed opportunities to extend learning when children are working independently. Adults in the Early Years Foundation Stage are keen, enthusiastic and know that they need to meet formally to share observations and plan what children need to learn next. From Year 1 onwards, pupils continue to make satisfactory progress. Pupils' attainment, which is improving, is broadly average by the end of Year 6. Pupils make the best progress in Year 2 and in Years 5 and 6, where teachers are most successful at providing the right level of challenge for all pupils. Leaders know that inconsistency in the match of work to all pupils' needs is the main factor preventing more teaching from being good across the school, with teachers not making enough use of assessment information to plan the next stage of learning. There are no significant differences between the progress being made by different groups of pupils, including the least able in writing. However, in English, where performance in writing lags behind that in reading, the curriculum does not include enough opportunities for pupils to write at length in literacy lessons or in other subjects.

Good relationships between teachers and children mean that pupils are very happy at school. Almost all pupils' behaviour is consistently good and pupils are polite and helpful. They thoroughly enjoy school, especially the exciting range of clubs, visits and visitors. These activities help to bring subjects alive. Pupils keenly take on responsibility and make a good contribution to the community by taking part in village events and by organising their own fund-raising events for local charities. They contributed well when the school developed a travel plan. There are good opportunities for pupils to learn to play a musical instrument and to take part in sport. Clubs such as the 'Mathletics Club', where pupils compete against others to improve their numeracy skills, make a good contribution to learning.

The headteacher is providing a strong drive to raise standards although the pace of change has been slowed significantly by the need for new staff to become fully established in their roles so that they can take a full part in self evaluation systems, which are currently satisfactory. Staffing is now stable and this is already having a

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positive effect on provision; subject leadership can now be shared between more staff. Subject leaders and governors share the headteacher's ambitions for the school and together they are doing the right things to move things forward more quickly. Leaders have already demonstrated through the positive impact of recent initiatives, such as the increased focus on teaching phonics across the school, that there is a satisfactory capacity to improve. The school has a wealth of data on pupils' progress and leaders have started to use this well to identify any potential underachievement so that it can be tackled quickly. Leaders are aware that pupils in Year 1 do not have access to the same opportunities because they are spread across two mixed age classes. They have clear plans to tackle this.

Members of staff have forged a strong partnership with outside agencies to support pupils' learning and well-being. Particularly noteworthy is the partnership with a local independent school that has provided the school with an additional teacher as well as other support. This has had a positive effect on learning, with pupils benefiting greatly from being able to work in very small groups for some literacy and numeracy work.

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

- Improve provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
- strengthening the quality of adult interventions when children are working independently so that learning is moved on more quickly (by July 2010).
- providing opportunities for adults who work in the class to meet formally so that they can discuss planning and share assessments (by November 2009).
- Move the quality of teaching in Key Stages 1 and 2 from satisfactory to good by ensuring that teachers consistently use information about how well pupils are doing to provide the right level of challenge for all (by July 2010).
- Improve attainment in writing by giving pupils more opportunities to write at length in literacy lessons and in other subjects (by July 2010).
- Improve provision for pupils in Year 1 so that they all have access to the same good range of learning opportunities (by December 2009).

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****3**

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and pupils thoroughly enjoy school. Their learning on most quickly in Years 2, 5 and 6. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 rapidly improved their writing skills when they were given clear guidance from the teacher about what they were doing well and how to improve. Progress is satisfactory in the majority of lessons. In these, pupils work steadily and support each other well, but work is not always pitched at the right level for all, slowing the overall pace of learning. The progress of pupils in Year 1 in lessons is uneven according to which class they are in; there is a significant difference in the range of opportunities provided in the two mixed age classes.

Attainment in test results at the end of Year 6 is broadly average although it varies from year to year because of the small size of cohorts. Pupil mobility also has an impact,

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especially in Years 3 to 6. Newly arrived pupils, whether from the army barracks or elsewhere, make the same progress as others in lessons, despite their sometimes lower starting points. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are given sound support and they make the same progress as others.

The school promotes pupils' personal development well. Pupils develop a good awareness of the importance of adopting healthy life styles. They participate enthusiastically in physical activities and hold strong views on why it is right for the school to allow only healthy snacks at playtime. Assemblies make a good contribution to spiritual development; pupils are comfortable talking about their feelings and they are sensitive about the beliefs of others. Most pupils say that they feel safe. They know who to turn to if they have a worry, although their understanding of the dangers they may face in the outside world is comparatively limited.

Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education and for later life. In addition to the sound progress they make in basic skills, they develop good levels of self-esteem and confidence. Consequently, they are sociable and articulate. Good rates of attendance attest to the positive attitudes to learning that pupils show and these should stand them in good stead as they get older.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</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>2</b>

<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.

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## How effective is the provision?

There are good features to teaching across the school. Teachers are very enthusiastic and they get on very well with their pupils. In lessons, behaviour is managed effectively and teachers make good use of resources such as the interactive whiteboards to make learning interesting. In Years 5 and 6, where teaching is most consistently good, work is generally pitched at the right level for all pupils and consequently they quickly acquire new skills. In other year groups, there are occasions when work is too hard or too easy for some pupils and this slows learning. This is because assessments of prior learning are not always used sharply enough to plan what needs to be taught next. Across the school, teachers make satisfactory use of marking and targets to help pupils understand how to improve their work. Where practice is best, for example in English in Year 2, pupils are able to talk confidently about what they need to do to improve.

Pupils are well cared for and supported. In this small school, adults know every pupil well and treat them all as part of the 'school family'. There is clearly targeted support for pupils who are in danger of falling behind and the school works well with outside agencies to find additional help when it is needed. Parents are very positive about the way that members of staff respond to specific medical needs, reflecting their willingness to go the extra mile in these situations to help both parents and pupils. There are good transition arrangements for when pupils move to their secondary schools; pupils report that they 'are well prepared' and 'confident' about moving on.

The curriculum soundly promotes basic skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology, but as yet there are not enough opportunities for pupils to write at length in different subjects. Teachers follow national guidelines very closely but do not always show enough flexibility in adapting to the specific needs of their pupils, especially in literacy.

A particularly strong feature of the curriculum is the way that it is enriched through additional activities including many clubs and visits. These promote personal development and enjoyment well. Good partnerships with other schools have a good effect on learning. For example, more able mathematicians in Years 5 and 6 benefit enormously from additional teaching time that is funded by the trustees of an educational charity linked to a local independent school.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

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## How effective are leadership and management?

There is a renewed drive for improvement now that there is a settled staffing situation. The leadership of the headteacher is helping the school to move forward, with all staff involved and committed. The headteacher has established a clear vision for school development that is shared by senior leaders, middle managers and governors. Together, they are identifying the right priorities for improvement. They are taking the right steps to tackle weaknesses including the need to iron out remaining inconsistencies in teaching. There have been some helpful recent initiatives and these are beginning to have a positive effect, although many are too new to have had a sustained impact on raising attainment. For example, new approaches to teaching letter sounds are helping to improve pupils' writing.

The school tackles discrimination vigorously and ensures that pupils from different backgrounds get on well together, but equality of opportunity is no more than satisfactory because pupils in Year 1 do not all have access to the same opportunities. The school's contribution to community cohesion is good. There are close links with other schools in the United Kingdom and pupils get good opportunities to meet with children from different backgrounds. Consequently, pupils' understanding of life beyond Dry Sandford is good. The school is rightly strengthening this aspect of its work further by taking part in a European Community project that will include working with schools in France and Germany.

There are sound safeguarding procedures. At the time of the inspection, national guidelines in this area were fully met. The school is currently addressing appropriately a very small number of parents' and pupils' concerns about particular incidents of unacceptable behaviour.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
<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>3</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>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>



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<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Attainment on entry into the Reception Year varies due to the small number of children admitted each year. In the last year, the majority were working at the expected levels for their age when they started school and they made satisfactory progress. Their attainment remained broadly average as they moved into Year 1. Children continue to make satisfactory progress in the current year; there is a happy atmosphere in the Early Years Foundation Stage, with Reception Year children working and behaving well alongside the Year 1 pupils in the class. Adults are kind and caring and ensure that children settle quickly when they first start school. When children are working together as a group, adults use questioning effectively to meet differing needs. As a result, children develop skills quickly. Good use of resources, such as guttering to explore the properties of water, help to make learning fun and this means that children are keen to learn. Children's learning is slowest when they are working independently. This is because adults miss too many opportunities to extend learning through challenging questioning or discussion.

Leadership of provision is satisfactory. Leaders have a clear understanding of what needs to be improved, including the importance of finding time for all adults who work in the Early Years Foundation Stage to meet together formally to talk about activities, to share assessments and to plan the next stage of learning for each child. Leaders are beginning to use assessments more sharply so that any areas of strength or weakness can be identified more quickly and action taken more promptly.

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

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

## Views of parents and carers

Almost all parents indicated that they are very pleased with nearly all aspects of the school. They feel that their children are well looked after, are happy and enjoy their learning, with typical comments being 'teachers are friendly and caring' and 'I have always admired the way that older and younger pupils interact with each other'. The inspection supported their comments. A very small number of parents raised concerns about incidents of unacceptable behaviour which the school is addressing.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Dry Sandford 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 46 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 108 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	36	78	10	22	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	32	70	14	30	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	27	59	18	39	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	25	54	21	46	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	29	63	16	35	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	28	61	17	37	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	27	58	17	37	0	0	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)	24	52	16	35	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	27	59	17	37	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	21	46	17	37	2	4	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	22	48	18	39	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	27	59	17	37	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	31	67	13	28	0	0	0	0

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 pupils' 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.**



7 October 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Dry Sandford Primary School, Dry Sandford OX13 6EE

Thank you for welcoming us to your school and for showing us your work and completing the questionnaire. You were very polite and friendly. At the moment, your school is providing a satisfactory education. This means that we found some good things in the school but also some things that need improving.

Some of the things we found out about your school:

- You make steady progress as you move through the school. Progress is slightly slower in writing than in reading.
- Your behaviour is good and you get on well together. We are very pleased that you told us in the questionnaires that you enjoy school so much.
- All adults in school are kind and caring and they give you suitable help when you find work difficult.
- You have a hard working school council and this helps you to take responsibility for many things. It is great that you are so kind to new children when they arrive at school. This helps them to settle quickly.
- There are many interesting things to do outside lessons and these help you develop a good understanding of how to stay healthy.
- Your parents and carers are very pleased that you come to this school.
- The headteacher and governors knows what needs improving and are taking the right steps to move things forward more quickly.

What we have asked your school to do now:

- help you to make even faster progress in the Reception class by making sure that staff meet together more often and by ensuring that adults give you more help when you are working by yourself
- improve teaching in Years 1 to 6 by making sure that your work is not too hard or too easy for you
- give you more opportunities to write at length in literacy lessons and in other subjects
- work out how to make sure that the Year 1 pupils in different classes have the same good range of opportunities for learning.

We wish you all well for the future. We hope you continue to help your teachers by continuing to work hard and being so positive about your work.

Yours faithfully

Mike Capper

Lead inspector

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