

Ditchheat Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123642
Local Authority	Somerset
Inspection number	340386
Inspection dates	19–20 May 2010
Reporting inspector	Ann Henderson

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	82
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Cathy Clayton
Headteacher	Beth Hopkin
Date of previous school inspection	15 May 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited seven lessons or part lessons and observed three teachers. They held meetings with groups of pupils, staff, parents and governors. They observed the school's work and looked at data on pupils' attainment and progress, the school's strategic plan, lesson plans, curriculum plans, governor minutes, records held on vulnerable pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, school policies and procedures for keeping pupils safe. Inspectors scrutinised questionnaires returned by pupils, staff and 65 parents and carers.

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

- pupils' learning and progress in English, particularly writing
- the quality of teaching and the use of assessment in mathematics, particularly in Years 1 and 2, and the impact on the learning and progress of pupils
- the extent to which pupils understand ethnic, religious and cultural diversity in a global society
- the achievement of more-able pupils to determine whether teaching is sufficiently challenging.

Information about the school

This is a smaller than average primary school with provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage in a mixed Reception/Year 1 class. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities □ most commonly behavioural, emotional and social and speech and language difficulties □ is lower than the national average. The school has several awards including Eco-Schools bronze and Dyslexia Friendly status.

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

The school's welcoming and caring family ethos enables pupils to settle very quickly and enjoy learning. The positive atmosphere reflects the strong and highly regarded leadership of the headteacher and an outstanding partnership with parents and carers. As one parent commented: 'The school has a very strong family feel with all children caring and respectful to others.' Pupils feel safe and have an excellent understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle. Relationships are positive and behaviour is good. All pupils genuinely care about one another and the adults who work with them. Their good attitudes to learning are evident throughout the school. The enthusiastic team of staff provide good care and support for pupils, particularly the most vulnerable.

Children begin school in Reception with skills and knowledge expected for their age. They get off to a good start and make good progress as a result of effective teaching and a stimulating learning environment. By the time they reach the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment is above average. Current school data indicate that pupils are achieving well and overall progress is good throughout the school, due to good teaching. However, there is some variation in the rate of progress in different subjects. In Years 1, 2 and 3 progress in mathematics, while satisfactory, is slowed because not enough use is made of assessment to focus planning on addressing any misconceptions and ensuring that basic mathematical concepts are embedded. Progress in mathematics accelerates in Years 4, 5 and 6, where attainment is above average. Improving writing has been a focus over the last two years, but there is still more to be done. In particular, there is insufficient challenge in the work being set for more-able pupils in writing and consequently their progress dips. Throughout the school pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress. Those with speech and language problems are very well supported and significant improvements are evident. The school's own self evaluation is accurate and based on rigorous monitoring activities. School leaders, together with an effective governing body, have correctly focused on the main areas of improvement. Results of national tests in science have improved since the previous inspection and are now above the national average. There have been improvements in pupils' skills in writing as a result of targeted initiatives to enhance opportunities to write for a variety of purposes. While there is still a need to ensure that more-able pupils extend their skills in this area, overall attainment in English has improved. The success of the school in improving provision and raising pupils' achievement in these subjects indicate a good capacity to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

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- Make effective use of assessment in Years 1, 2 and 3 to enable pupils to embed their mathematical understanding and build on prior learning.
- Ensure that more-able pupils are provided with greater challenge to enable them to improve their rate of progress in writing.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

A key element in pupils' good progress is their positive attitudes to work. For example, in a mathematics lesson pupils were enthused by the use of a range of dice to organise three- and four-digit numbers in sequence. As one pupil said: 'Learning is fun, because teachers explain things well and help you to understand.' Pupils have a good understanding of the next step in their learning and know how to improve their work because teachers communicate successfully through marking and providing clear feedback. Pupils respond well to this and know when they have achieved their targets. Attainment is above average by the end of Year 6. However, performance is generally stronger in mathematics and science than it is in English. This is because too few pupils attain higher levels in writing.

Pupils are proud of their school and enjoy the many opportunities to develop their skills across a wide range of activities. They particularly enjoy the contribution they make to their local community through the Social Action Group to help people in the village. The school council has contributed many ideas to improve the school, including linking with a garden centre to grow vegetables in the planters. This reflects the positive impact of work towards the National Eco schools award and adds to the pupils' already exceptional understanding of how to keep healthy. Pupils have a good understanding about keeping safe in school and when using the internet, and are confident an adult will help to sort out problems if they arise. They use their literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills well, which ensures good preparation for the next stage in their learning. Pupils' good moral and social development is seen through their positive behaviour and attitudes to others. Spiritual development is satisfactory, but there are few opportunities for pupils to reflect on their experiences. As a result of the recent 'One World Week' pupils demonstrate enhanced understanding of a variety of cultures in Britain and across the world.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

¹ 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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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	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
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

There have been improvements in the quality of teaching since the last inspection and it is now good throughout the school. Nevertheless, inconsistencies remain, particularly in challenging the more-able pupils in writing and in addressing the misconceptions of some younger pupils in mathematics. Planning shows clear expectations and activities are interesting and varied, leading to good progress and enjoyment in lessons. Teachers present lessons with energy and enthusiasm and make good use of new technologies to support learning, which helps them cater for the preferred learning style of all pupils. The new bank of laptops is being effectively used in lessons to enliven learning and develop vital skills in ICT.

Strong features of the curriculum include appropriate subject links and special events, such as a science week and the 'One World' week, which are used to stimulate learning. The diverse learning needs of pupils in mixed-age classes are skilfully met. Provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is targeted well, which enables them to make good progress. This has been recognised by the school achieving the Dyslexia Friendly award. The additional enrichment activities, visits and visitors provide another dimension to the learning experiences and most pupils take advantage of the extra-curricular activities offered. Links with secondary schools are good, and enable pupils to feel confident about the next steps in their education.

Staff work hard to ensure that all pupils are able to participate fully in all aspects of school life. There is good support for pupils who may experience barriers to learning; consequently, their attendance and levels of attainment are good. Additional support is sought when required to meet specific needs of individual pupils. As a result, their

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learning and well-being improves.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher, governing body and staff are fully committed to ensuring that pupils are provided with high-quality opportunities so that they are successful in their learning. Pupils' progress and attainment is tracked well and monitoring of their learning is systematic and reflective. Following scrutiny of work, lesson observations and analysis of data, 'Talk Homework' was introduced. This provides valuable opportunities for parents and carers to discuss themes with their children in preparation for a writing task. This has been welcomed by pupils and parents and carers and has resulted in greater involvement in their children's learning.

School development planning is clearly focused on the main improvements which have been identified through a good range of monitoring activities undertaken by governors and staff. Leaders and governors take very seriously their responsibility to promote equal opportunities and tackle discrimination and the success of this is seen in the improvements in attendance and achievement of vulnerable groups.

The school is a very cohesive community and an integral part of the village community. Governors have undertaken a review of pupils' understanding of cultural diversity in the United Kingdom and across the world and have begun to address the identified areas for improvement. Partnerships with other schools support pupils and staff well and facilitate the sharing of experiences and expertise, for example through a joint athletics event with a local secondary school.

The school's safeguarding procedures are good. At the time of the inspection all statutory requirements were met, including those for child protection. Risk assessments and policies are regularly reviewed and approved. Health and safety is rigorously managed and monitored well by the governing body.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2

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	
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make good progress because of the good provision made for them. They clearly enjoy learning and this is reflected in their good behaviour and personal development. Since the last inspection leaders have correctly focused on improving the quality of teaching and opportunities for outdoor learning. Teaching is lively and exciting. The theme of 'Alice in Wonderland' captivated children's interest as they followed instructions to make 'lemonade for the Queen!' Outdoor provision now offers an exciting and stimulating range of opportunities across all areas of learning. Although there are various areas for learning inside the classroom, there is limited focus on encouraging independence in writing to support children to get off to a good start in developing this skill. Staff have created very good opportunities for parents and carers to share in their children's learning and the recent 'Mad Hatter's Tea Party' was very well attended. Parents and carers express appreciation of the learning environment provided for their children. Staff work well together and safety and welfare arrangements are rigorous. They carry out good on-going assessments of children's learning by recording observations of their successes and areas for development.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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

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

The response from parents and carers was high. They are unanimous in their support of the school in just over half of the questions asked and nearly unanimous in the remainder. They appreciate particularly the fact that their children are kept safe and are encouraged to live a healthy lifestyle, and the close partnership between themselves and the staff.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Ditcheat 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 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 65 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 82 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	51	78	13	20	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	57	88	7	11	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	47	72	18	28	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	53	82	10	15	2	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	57	88	8	12	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	49	75	16	25	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	50	77	15	23	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)	48	74	15	23	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	50	77	10	15	2	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	42	65	20	31	1	2	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	44	68	16	25	3	5	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	59	91	5	8	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	57	88	7	11	1	2	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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

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 is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.



21 May 2010

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Ditcheat Primary School, Ditcheat, Shepton Mallet BA4 6RB

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school. We very much enjoyed our visit and particularly enjoyed talking to you about your learning and found your comments very helpful. Your school is a good school.

These are the things we most liked.

- You enjoy learning, behave well and make good progress in your learning.
- You are polite, friendly and helpful to everyone. You enjoy taking responsibility and have done many things to support improvements to your school and the local community.
- All the adults look after you well and you feel safe and happy in school.
- You have an excellent understanding of how to live a healthy lifestyle.
- Your parents and carers are extremely pleased with all the opportunities that you have to learn.

Even though the school is good, there are two things that we have asked your headteacher and governors to do to make it even better:

- help you to reach even higher levels in writing, particularly if you have good skills in this area
- help those of you in Years 1, 2 and 3 to develop a good understanding in mathematics by building on what you have already learned.

You can help by continuing to work hard and always trying your best in everything you do. Thank you for making our visit so enjoyable.

Yours sincerely

Ann Henderson

Lead inspector

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