

Dartington Church of England Primary School

Shinners Bridge, Dartington,, Totnes, Devon, TQ9 6JU

Inspection dates

24–25 April 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Pupils' attainment over time has been below national averages at the end of Years 2 and 6, especially in writing and mathematics.
- Although improved, pupils are still not achieving well enough by the time they leave the school.
- Teaching requires improvement because it has not been consistently good enough to ensure that all pupils sustain good progress as they move through the school.
- Marking is not used consistently well to help pupils improve their work. Teachers' comments do not always clearly inform pupils about what they need to do to improve.
- Improved teaching and more effective additional support for pupils have not been working for long enough to fill all gaps in pupils' previous learning by the time pupils leave the school.
- Pupils' work and activities in Key Stage 1 are not always challenging or stimulating enough. As a result, some pupils do not learn or progress as well as others.

The school has the following strengths

- Children get off to a good start in the Nursery and Reception classes because teaching is good and makes full use of the stimulating learning facilities.
- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are kept safe, are well cared for and enjoy warm relationships with each other and with adults at school.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well and this underpins the pupils' consistently good attitudes to learning.
- More sharply focused leadership at all levels and good governance are strengthening the drive for improvement. Links with parents are also more strongly supporting improvement.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors visited 23 lessons and the lead inspector was accompanied by the headteacher during some of these observations.
- The inspectors observed morning playtime and lunch breaks, and also visited the breakfast club, and attended collective worship.
- Meetings were held with members of the school council and many other pupils were spoken to during lessons and breaktimes.
- Inspectors also met with governors, and the lead inspector held a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors held meetings with school staff, including senior leaders.
- The inspectors took account of 26 staff questionnaires and spoke informally with a number of parents as they brought children to school. The inspectors also received a letter from a parent.
- The views of parents were also gathered from 62 parents' responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning and undertaking the inspection.
- Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a number of documents, including the school's own information on pupils' progress, planning and leaders' checks on the quality of teaching.
- The inspectors also examined records relating to behaviour and attendance, and safeguarding policy, procedures and practice.
- The inspectors also looked at the school's sports premium action plan.

Inspection team

Alex Baxter, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Pauline Price

Additional Inspector

Ann Sydney

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils attending the school are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils entering or leaving the school at other than the normal times is above average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also below average.
- There is a below average proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium. The pupil premium is additional funding for children in local authority care and those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are accommodated in Nursery and Reception classes, which work closely together as an Early Years Foundation Stage class base. Other pupils are taught in mixed-age classes.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set out the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen the quality of teaching, particularly in Key Stage 1, so that it is consistently good or better across the school by ensuring that teachers:
 - make better use of the information that is collected about pupils' achievement to plan work which builds on previous learning and is hard enough for all groups of pupils
 - ensure that teachers always help pupils to improve their work in a variety of ways, particularly when making comments about their work and how to improve it.
- Raise pupils' attainment and achievement in mathematics and writing by:
 - ensuring that pupils' basic numeracy and calculation skills and their spelling and grammatical skills are emphasised and extended as pupils move through the school.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because inconsistent teaching over time has not enabled pupils to sustain the good progress across all subjects of which they are capable. This has led to gaps in pupils' attainment by the end of Year 6, especially in their basic numeracy and literacy skills.
- Children's skills on entry to Nursery and Reception classes mostly match those expected for their age, but the skills of those arriving in other years are more variable.
- Children make a good start and do well in Nursery and Reception and, following improved teaching, often achieve even better than at times in the past in reading and writing.
- Inspectors' evidence of achievement through Key Stage 1 shows some variable progress in this key stage. Over time, pupils have generally achieved higher standards in reading than in writing and mathematics. Teachers are now focusing more consistently on developing pupils' writing and mathematical skills. However, sometimes pupils, including some with the most ability, make better progress when receiving more focused additional teaching than they have in class. Even so, the earlier focus on improving pupils' skills, including for those joining at other than the normal time of entry, is quickening their progress.
- Inspection evidence and the school's own checks of pupils' skills show that pupils are also making faster progress than in previous years through Key Stage 2. This is evident in the improved and broadly average levels of attainment in writing and mathematics now found at the end of Year 6.
- Teachers are now focusing more strongly on pupils' calculation, spelling and grammatical skills, but these are still not good enough by the time they leave the school.
- In recent terms, improved and now good teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make) and of reading is promoting pupils' good progress through the school. This was evident in the much improved and above average outcomes of the annual phonics check in Year 1 in 2013. Improving progress continues to be reflected across the school in the increasing number of pupils developing good reading skills.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs receive effective support to improve their skills. At times, in response to warm encouragement and additional support from sensitive adults, they make better progress than their classmates.
- Compared to other pupils, the Year 6 pupils in 2013 who benefited from additional government funding made better progress from their previously lower starting points in writing and mathematics. Their attainment at two and a half terms behind their classmates' in mathematics and one and a half terms in writing represented a substantial narrowing of the gap compared to the previous year. Nonetheless, their progress requires improvement in order for these gaps to close more quickly.
- In reading, despite making better progress than other pupils, those supported by additional funding were still about two terms behind in their attainment. Whilst these gaps still reflected some previous underachievement they are closing well in current year groups as these pupils are getting effective extra help that is speeding up their progress.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because, over time, it has not been sufficiently strong to promote good achievement across the school. Teachers are now focusing on pupils' basic numeracy and literacy skills more purposefully, but this better teaching has not been in place long enough yet to rectify all gaps in pupils' previous learning.
- Teachers mark pupils' work regularly, identify mistakes and give warm encouragement to enthuse pupils. However, pupils are not always given enough information about how to improve or are not expected to respond to teachers' guidance. This means that pupils are not sure how

to move to a higher level and do not improve their progress quickly enough.

- While teaching is often more effective in the Nursery, Reception and Key Stage 2 classes, teaching requires improvement because teaching is sometimes weaker at Key Stage 1. This is because teachers do not always use information from checks of pupils' progress consistently enough to set relevant activities and to challenge pupils. As a result, tasks and activities do not maintain pupils' interest. Occasionally, pupils do not learn well, either because the work is too hard or because it is too easy and does not help them to make good progress.
- Even so, teaching is improving across the school and is strengthened by effective use of additional funding to provide timely adult support for pupils who need help to sustain good progress.
- Learning is consistently good across Nursery, Reception and Key Stage 2 classes. This is because the teachers provide pupils with exciting activities that stimulate them so that they are attentive and enjoy learning. For example, in Reception, the teacher's lively emphasis on phonics during discussions with the children, including during practical activity, developed their understanding. In both Nursery and Reception classes, across a range of activities, children were challenged to record their ideas and developed their early writing skills especially well.
- Learning typically takes place in a very positive atmosphere. All staff promote warm, supportive relationships and manage pupils' behaviour effectively. Teachers also develop interesting topics across subjects and provide plentiful practical learning activities to enthuse pupils further. For example, pupils in the Years 3 and 4 class discussed the story of *The Good Samaritan* and made good connections with the school's 'Golden Rules' to advance their understanding.
- Pupils respond eagerly to teachers' questioning and are particularly keen to explain their ideas, both to the class and to their partners, and these enrich their learning. During mathematics in a Years 5 and 6 class, for example, pupils thoughtfully discussed the fractions of shapes to successfully extend their skills.
- Teaching assistants provide sensitive support, particularly to help disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs to understand what is being taught.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils typically describe school life as 'a safe place where adults care about us'.
- The headteacher, staff and governors sustain significant diligence in ensuring that the school site is safe during continuing renovation of the school's accommodation.
- Pupils value the levels of consideration that all adults show towards them, and comment that 'there is always someone there to help if we have any problems'.
- Pupils, too, show genuine consideration of each other's needs. For example, older pupils acting as sports leaders during lunch breaks take their roles seriously and seek to help other pupils enjoy healthy and fun activities.
- The behaviour of pupils is good. The school's records show that incidents of inappropriate behaviour are rare. When there have been a few pupils with specific behavioural needs, records and improved behaviour show that pupils have responded well to effective additional adult support.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the different types of bullying, including homophobic and cyber bullying. They are well aware of what constitutes risk and talk knowledgeably about the steps the school has taken to teach them how to use computers safely.
- Pupils say that bullying is rare and that pupils get on really well together. Pupils say that adults would quickly deal with any misunderstandings should they occur.
- Pupils show good attitudes to learning and are keen to learn. When learning phonics, for example, pupils show a determination to do well and love to rise to adults' expectations.
- Most of the time pupils reply eagerly to teachers' questions. Pupils take particular pleasure in explaining their ideas to the class or when working in pairs to enrich their learning. Pupils often show excellent attitudes to learning when working practically, for example searching for 'mini-

beasts' or dressing as, and studying, the Ancient Greeks.

- On a few occasions a few pupils lose interest for a short period of time because learning activities do not challenge them or they are not shown how to improve.
- Strong leadership and close partnership working with parents have raised expectations of the importance of regular attendance in lifting pupils' achievement. As a result, attendance is much improved, now matches the national average, and is an important element underpinning pupils' quickening progress.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, ably supported by staff and by a committed governing body, has brought the school through a period of staffing instability. With stability now restored, staff work well as a team. Their clearer roles and responsibilities continue to improve the school's effectiveness more rapidly.
- Actions include regular and accurate checks on the quality of the school's work. These ensure that all the statutory requirements for safeguarding are met and there are effective systems in place to maintain the safety of pupils.
- Information about the way teaching influences pupils' progress is being used with increasing effectiveness. For example, the school improvement plan accurately identifies where further improvements are needed. Senior leaders are also more specifically holding teachers to account for standards when considering their pay progression and this is accelerating improvement.
- This is evident, for example, in the improved teaching of phonics and reading through the school.
- Leadership and management are good because actions taken to tackle a fall in results in 2012, by providing additional adult support at an earlier stage for example, continue to have a positive effect. Even though the school still requires improvement, leaders have built successfully on strengths in the Early Years Foundation Stage to develop pupils' reading and writing skills at an earlier stage.
- Improved teaching in Years 3 and 4 and pupils' consistently good attitudes to learning are also quickening progress. The work of middle leaders, for example to strengthen teachers' planning and focus on pupils' progress, is also improving learning and closing previous gaps in pupils' skills. In addition, the headteacher's diligent work with parents to successfully raise pupils' attendance also shows the school's capacity to sustain improvement.
- Leaders, including middle leaders, ensure that additional funding, including for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, is also used more effectively to lift pupils' skills. Additional support is also used well to quickly identify pupils who may be at risk of not doing as well as they should, including those with most ability. This enables staff to treat pupils equally and to eliminate discrimination so that pupils receive help when they need it most.
- The school makes good use of the new sports funding. This includes membership of a sports partnership with local schools, whereby specialist coaches provide additional training for staff to raise their skills and a wider range of sports for the pupils.
- Additional activities, such as dance and gymnastics, and increased range of clubs, such as cricket, are increasing pupils' participation. Pupils are also being developed as 'sports leaders' and are increasing levels of physical activity and health by providing games at lunch times.
- The school provides a wide range of interesting learning experiences, which include full use of the school's extensive outdoor facilities. Practical investigations, for the example in the Forest School areas, lie at the heart of school life. They strongly promote the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, for example by exploring their feelings about nature.
- Parents appreciate the school's efforts to stimulate and enthuse pupils in their learning. They have fully supported efforts to improve attendance and welcome the continuing and strengthening drive to raise standards.
- The local authority has provided effective support in developing leadership roles and raising attendance.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governors continue to fulfil a very supportive role in ensuring that current difficulties with the school's accommodation are not allowed to compromise pupils' safety and learning. Governors have improved the way they check the work of the school and hold senior staff to account. Governors regularly visit the school to observe learning in and out of classes, and speak to parents, staff and pupils about the work of the school and pupils' progress. As a result, governors have improved their understanding of teaching and learning. They give close attention to the connection between the quality of the work of staff and the arrangements for pay progression. Governors check on the challenging targets set for teachers to improve their work in raising pupils' achievement and note the more positive impact on improving teaching in Years 3 and 4. Governors manage finance effectively and know, for example, how different groups of pupils achieve in relation to pupils in other schools. This enables governors to ensure that additional funding is used well, for example to bridge gaps in pupils' achievement and currently to lift the attainment of the most able pupils. Governors are clear about the areas for improvement and question senior staff leaders to show how these are to be achieved. By these means, governors contribute well to the quickening pace of improvement.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	113394
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	426743

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	314
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mark Burton
Headteacher	Jill Mahon
Date of previous school inspection	22–23 November 2011
Telephone number	01803 862357
Fax number	01803 866872
Email address	admin@dartington.devon.sch.uk

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