

Dunstone Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113312
Local Authority	Plymouth [113312]
Inspection number	311201
Inspection dates	9–10 July 2008
Reporting inspector	Chris Nye HMI

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 on roll	
School	165
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Doreen Tozer
Headteacher	Julie Jane
Date of previous school inspection	9 July 2008
School address	Shortwood Crescent Plymstock Plymouth PL9 8TQ
Telephone number	01752 401293
Fax number	01752 481086

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The school admits pupils from the Plymstock area and beyond. Because a large number come from service families, the percentage of pupils who join or leave the school other than at the usual times is above average. Pupil numbers have decreased recently and the school is now smaller than average. Pupils come from a range of socio-economic and mainly White British backgrounds. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is higher than average. The school has received a number of awards, including the International Award for Global Citizenship, Healthy School's Award, Quality Skills Mark, Activemark and Investor in People.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Dunstone Primary School is a good school that works hard with parents to ensure that pupils are well cared for and achieve good standards. Provision in the Foundation Stage is good and children make good progress as a result. This is maintained throughout the school and by the time they leave at the end of Year 6 most achieve, and many exceed, the standards expected for their age in English, mathematics and science. This is because teaching is good and pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are identified early and benefit from good support and well focused teaching.

The school works well with local authority support services, the local secondary school and parents, most of whom are very positive about the school. One parent expressed the view of many with the comment that 'the pupils are happy, so learn more and take a pride in their school' and inspectors agree. A small number of parents are concerned about behaviour, and although a few pupils with particularly challenging behaviour are well supported, the school is aware of the need for greater consistency with regard to how minor behaviour issues are managed to ensure even better concentration in lessons.

Teaching is good throughout the school and lessons are planned well. Relationships are good and the support provided by teaching assistants is having a very positive impact on pupils' learning. Activities are well matched to the needs of pupils, although opportunities in lessons for pupils to talk together about their work and so be more actively involved in their learning are sometimes missed. The curriculum is broad, well balanced and inspires and motivates pupils. A recently introduced thematic approach to curriculum planning is having a positive impact on learning and good use is made of local opportunities such as activities linked to the Ten Tors Challenge to enrich the curriculum still further.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good because they are encouraged to take a responsible and caring attitude towards each other and their school. They learn and play well together and take their responsibilities as play leaders, mediators, school council members or prefects seriously. Pupils enjoy school and make a positive contribution to the community. A particular strength is the excellent awareness that pupils have about healthy living, exemplified by their good food choices at lunchtime, involvement in sport and enjoyment of the daily 'wake and shake' activity.

Good systems are in place to ensure that pupils are well cared for and supported. Teachers' written comments on pupils' work are positive and helpful and pupils are developing an increasing awareness of their own targets. However, although there is some good practice in providing clear guidance to pupils about how they can improve their work, this is not yet sufficiently consistent across the school.

The school is well led and managed and, because leaders are aware of where they need to improve further and have made good progress since their last inspection, the school has a good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision for the youngest children is good because leadership of this area is effective and the staff provide good teaching, care and support. Children enter the Foundation Stage with skills and knowledge that are broadly in line with expectations for their age and make good progress

so that by the time they transfer to Year 1 most have met or exceeded expectations in most of the areas of learning. Progress is particularly good in personal, social and physical development, but progress has been slower in writing and reading. Staff work well with parents to ensure that children settle into school quickly and become independent learners. They work hard to create a varied and exciting curriculum in an attractive environment. Suitable plans to improve and extend the outside area are at an advanced stage.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that behaviour management systems are consistently applied throughout the school.
- Extend opportunities for pupils to be more actively involved in their learning through talking together about their work.
- Ensure that all pupils are given clear guidance about how to improve their work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Those pupils who start school in the Foundation Stage make good progress from average starting points and most meet or exceed expectations by the time they transfer to Key Stage 1. Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 improved considerably last year to well above national expectations in reading and writing because of the focus that the school placed on teaching phonics. Standards in mathematics were in line with national expectations. This year standards in the very small Year 2 have dipped slightly due to the high proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, but this still represents good progress from the comparatively low starting points of the cohort.

Standards are above average overall at the end of Key Stage 2. Last year they were in line with national expectations, but have improved considerably this year in English and mathematics, although they remain average in science. In the current Year 6, most pupils have achieved expected levels for their age and many have exceeded them. This is impressive as there are a higher than average percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and this represents good progress in English, mathematics and science. Pupils are making good progress because they are well supported through teaching and intervention work. The high percentage of pupils who join the school during Key Stage 2 have their needs accurately identified and supported early on in their time at the school.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The personal development and well-being of pupils are good. Most play well together and enjoy coming to school so attendance is good. Pupils demonstrate caring attitudes towards each other, take their responsibilities seriously and know who to go to if they feel unhappy or vulnerable. Behaviour is satisfactory, but in some lessons noise levels are too high and this can slow the pace of the lesson and make concentration difficult. Pupils have good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They value and celebrate each other's achievements and have a good cultural awareness, although they are less well aware of the diversity of cultures within Britain. Their understanding of how to keep fit and healthy is outstanding because there is a very effective whole-school ethos which encourages sport, healthy living and eating. For example, pupils are proud of having carrots from their school allotment on the lunch menu. Pupils make a positive contribution to the community and have good opportunities to develop skills for their future economic well-being, such as by running a daily break time toast stall.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is good because lessons are well planned and structured and exciting activities focus well on the wide-ranging needs of the pupils. Good relationships between staff and pupils are a strong feature. The support that teaching assistants give to the learning is very good, particularly for those pupils who find learning difficult or who have joined the school later on in their primary years. Imaginative activities motivate pupils and many teachers are inspirational in their delivery, for example through story telling. As a result, most pupils make good progress in lessons, although in a few lessons the pace is not sufficiently brisk because behaviour management strategies are not always consistently applied. Pupils are enthusiastic learners, but opportunities for them to discuss what they are learning with each other and take a more active part in assessing their own progress is not yet sufficiently well embedded across the school. A recently introduced assessment and tracking system is having a positive impact on teaching and learning because teachers are using the outcomes of assessment to plan their teaching more effectively.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum takes good account of statutory requirements and provides a broad and balanced range of classroom and other activities that meet the needs and interests of pupils. Good use is made of local opportunities, such as the modern foreign languages 'Extravaganza' link to other schools, to extend the curriculum. The recent development of a thematic approach is contributing to pupils' enjoyment of their learning, exemplified by the Key Stage 2 'Britain in the Blitz' performance, and this is ensuring a more cohesive approach to curriculum planning. Good use is made of the school's extensive grounds to develop physical education and a range of activities such as the residential visit is enriching the curriculum.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school cares well for its pupils' personal welfare and systems to ensure their safeguarding are fully in place and rigorously applied. Vulnerable pupils, those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who display challenging behaviour are well supported, often with the help of outside agencies. Pupils say that they feel safe and incidents of bullying or racism are dealt with appropriately when they occur. Targets for improvement in pupils' work are identified, but pupils are not always clear about what they are or how to achieve them. Work is conscientiously marked with positive and sometimes evaluative comments, but existing strategies to provide clear guidance to pupils about how they can improve their performance are not consistently applied across the school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher, ably supported by senior teachers, sets a clear direction and suitably challenging targets for the school and this has resulted in good progress being made since the

last inspection. She accurately evaluates the school's strengths and weaknesses and effective plans are in place to ensure that weaknesses are suitably addressed. A committed team of curriculum coordinators monitor their subjects well and have had a positive impact on raising standards, particularly in writing and mathematics. Limited resources are well managed and the school provides good value for money. Following an unsettled period, governors are now having a more positive impact on the development of the school and they are discharging their responsibilities well. They know the school well and provide good levels of challenge and support.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Dear Children

Inspection of Dunstone Primary School, Plymouth PL9 8TQ

Thank you for being so helpful and friendly when we visited your school. We really enjoyed seeing some of your lessons, and talking with you and the adults who work in the school. We also enjoyed hearing about the 'Britain in the Blitz' production. You all worked really hard on that!

This letter is to tell you what we found out about your school, which we think is a good one.

Standards are good in English and mathematics and you all make good progress throughout the school, especially those of you who find learning hard. This is because you are well taught and supported by the adults. We were very impressed with how much you know about how to keep healthy. Well done! You are very caring of each other and most of you behave well and take your responsibilities seriously.

The people in charge of the school do a good job and have improved things recently. There are three things which we have asked the school to do to make things even better, and you can help by making sure that you behave really well all the time:

- Make sure that everyone always follows the rules for good behaviour.
- Make sure that you have more opportunities to talk with each other about what you have learned.
- Make sure that you are given clearer guidance on what you need to do to improve your work.

Many thanks again for making us so welcome. I hope you have lovely summer holidays.

Yours sincerely

Chris Nye Her Majesty's Inspector



11 July 2008

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Chris Nye
Her Majesty's Inspector