

Dilton Marsh CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	126375
Local Authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	315522
Inspection dates	18–19 March 2008
Reporting inspector	David Mankelow

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	164
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mike Cavalla
Headteacher	Judith Finney
Date of previous school inspection	7 June 2004
School address	High Street Dilton Marsh Westbury BA13 4DY
Telephone number	01373 822902
Fax number	01373 822902

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average primary school. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is below average and includes some from traveller backgrounds.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Dilton Marsh is a good school. Good leadership and management have led to a significant improvement in achievement, which is now good. Children's skills when they enter Reception vary from year to year but are generally below those expected for their age, especially communication, language and literacy skills. From their starting points, pupils make good progress as they move through the school and they generally reach broadly average standards by the time they leave. Standards in English are higher than those in mathematics. Improvements in assessment and tracking procedures and in the curriculum have led to the improved achievement. Teachers make regular and accurate assessments of pupils' work and record the results clearly. They use this information to identify pupils who are beginning to fall behind and then provide appropriate support to ensure that they keep up. The curriculum is good because teachers plan exciting work around topics chosen to interest and motivate the pupils. Planning also ensures that the statutory curriculum is fully covered. A typical comment from a pupil was, 'The work is such fun that half the time we don't even know we are working.' Teachers make good links between different subjects, providing excellent opportunities for pupils to practise language skills in history and geography. However, fewer opportunities are given to develop mathematical skills in the same way, which is why standards in English are higher.

Because of effective monitoring and the commitment of all staff to improvement, teaching is good across the school and is characterised by good relationships. These help children to settle quickly into the Reception class and to develop into mature, confident and polite young people by Year 6. Teachers mark work conscientiously and, particularly in English, marking gives pupils an idea of how well they have done and a few pointers about what they need to do next. However, whilst whole-class targets are set for improvement, pupils do not all have individual targets so they do not have a clear enough view of the standards that they have reached and what they need to do to move to the next level.

Pupils' personal development is good. They very much enjoy coming to school because the work is interesting and they are well looked after. However, attendance levels are only average because of the number of families who take holidays during term time. Behaviour is generally good and, where there are lapses, teachers manage it well. A very small minority of parents expressed concerns about bullying. Pupils do not generally share this concern. They recognise that bullying happens on occasions but they feel that it is dealt with well. One typically commented, 'I suppose it happens in all schools but if it happens here the teachers quickly sort it out for us.' Pupils make a good contribution to the school and wider communities. They raise funds for a number of charities, for example, to provide mosquito nets for communities in Ghana. Year 6 pupils proudly take responsibility, in small groups, for cooking lunch for a weekly visitor. This contributes significantly towards pupils' good social skills. Pupils work well together collaboratively and, coupled with good achievement in basic academic skills, they are well prepared for their future lives.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

There are good induction procedures and the Reception class is very safe and secure so children settle quickly and happily into school routines. Children make good progress in all areas of learning because teaching is effective and there is a good balance between adult-led and child-initiated activities. Social skills are developed particularly well because there are many

opportunities for children to interact with each other through role play. For example, during the inspection, children delighted in creating Noah's Ark and counting in the animals. The outside area is used well to support language development. For instance, children finding and re-arranging letters of the alphabet to promote their phonic understanding. However, it provides limited opportunities to support children's physical development.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise achievement in mathematics by providing more opportunities to practise numeracy skills in other subjects.
- Implement procedures for involving all pupils in setting individual targets for improvement so that they are better informed about how well they are doing and what they need to do next.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

As cohorts are relatively small and attainment on entry varies from year to year, it is impossible to make meaningful year on year comparisons of attainment in national tests and assessments. However, most pupils now make good progress, from the time they start in the Reception class to the time they leave. Children in the current Reception class entered with skills that were a little below those expected. They have made good progress and skills are broadly average as they head towards Year 1. They have made especially good progress in language skills, which are above average. Standards in the current Year 2 are below average but nonetheless, that group of pupils have made good progress from when they entered school. Standards in Year 6 are above average in English and broadly average in mathematics and science. Again, this represents good progress for these pupils, especially in English.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils know that eating a healthy diet and taking exercise is necessary in order to lead a healthy lifestyle. A typical comment from a pupil who had just enjoyed a very energetic skip at playtime was, 'You need to eat lots of fruit and walk to school instead of coming in the car!' Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Assemblies provide good opportunities for reflection, as do many lessons. For example, pupils provided passionate arguments for and against a national supermarket company being allowed to buy the village playing field to build a superstore. Pupils have a good understanding of the beliefs of a variety of cultures but their understanding of Britain as a diverse society is less well developed. The school council makes a genuine and mature contribution towards running the school. It independently organised the school's participation in 'Anti-bullying Week', which led to the provision of the buddy bench on the playground. Older pupils confidently take responsibilities around the school, for example, as playground buddies and reading buddies.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers use their good subject knowledge in lessons to ensure that explanations are clear and well understood. They provide work that is interesting and well matched to pupils' prior learning

so they all achieve well. Pupils with learning, social and emotional difficulties and/or disabilities also make good progress because they are well supported by skilled teaching assistants. Teachers have good management techniques so pupils behave well. Planning clearly identifies what pupils will be learning and these intentions are made explicit at the beginning of lessons. Lessons usually end with a quick check that the learning objectives have been met. Occasionally, teachers plan work that is unrealistically demanding. In these lessons, pupils lose interest and there is some low level disruption which reduces achievement.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Carefully chosen termly topics of 'space', 'celebrations', 'all aboard (explorations)', 'water', 'Wiltshire' and 'China/Olympics' are used to plan work that is stimulating, well matched to the interests of pupils and links subjects together well. An example was seen in a good Year 4/Year 5 science lesson where the teacher had collected samples of seaweeds for pupils to identify and see how they had adapted to their habitat. This work linked well with non-fiction writing done previously, based on adaptation. However, opportunities to link mathematics work to the topics are insufficiently developed and this reduces achievement in the subject. There is a wide variety of well attended out-of-school clubs, which make a good contribution to pupils' social development and active lifestyles. Visits and visitors are used well to enrich the curriculum. The school's curriculum for personal, social and health education contributes well to pupils' good personal development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

All adults in the school provide good pastoral care, following the example of the headteacher. This is very much appreciated by parents, one commenting, 'The headteacher's passionate approach only confirms that we made the right choice when choosing schools.' Pupils feel safe and secure and know that they will be listened to if they approach an adult with a concern. Staff view health and safety as highly important and carry out rigorous risk assessments when necessary. Safeguarding procedures comply with current Government guidelines. During lessons, teachers assess how well pupils are doing and provide individual teaching to help them move on if they get stuck. Pupils really appreciate this. One commented, 'If you get stuck, they don't leave you, they really help.' Pupils are given some information about how well they are doing and how they can improve their work through their work being marked, but this is underdeveloped because most are not set individual targets for improvement. As a result, they are not always sure what they need to do to move their work to the next level.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

A significant strength in the leadership and management is that all staff, including subject coordinators, are involved in monitoring how well the school is doing. As a result, they all feel very committed to continuing to make improvements. The school has an accurate view of what is good and what needs to be better. The school meets challenging targets which it sets itself and is well placed to improve further. Good use is made of outside agencies to support pupils' learning. For example, advice from the support service for traveller families is used effectively to ensure that those pupils make good progress. Parents are well informed about their children's

progress and about general school issues. A typical comment from a parent was, 'The curriculum evenings are a great idea as they give a better understanding of how our children are being educated and how we can help them at home.' Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Many visit the school regularly to monitor its work but these procedures are not fully embedded so have yet to be fully effective.

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Annex A

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	3
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	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
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?	2

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

20 March 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Dilton Marsh CE Primary School, BA13 4DY

You may remember that I visited your school just before Easter with another inspector. Thank you very much for telling us all about your school and for making us feel so welcome. I am writing now to tell you what we found.

You and your parents believe that you have a good school and we agree with you. Most of you like coming to school and one reason for this is that you are given exciting work to do. Teaching is good in all of your classes so you make good progress and reach the same standards as other 11-year-olds by the time you go to your secondary schools. The way that your teachers and other adults in the school care for you is good, as is the way that you care for each other. You try hard in your work and you know that if you get something wrong you will be helped. Your behaviour is good and you take responsibility for lots of things around the school. The school council is very helpful to the teachers. Your work in organising the anti-bullying week was especially good.

We have asked your teachers to do two things to make your school even better. Although you do lots of writing in your topic work, you do not have enough opportunities to link your mathematics to the topics so you reach higher standards in literacy than numeracy. We have also suggested that your teachers discuss with you what your individual targets should be so that you know exactly how to make your work better.

You can help your teachers a lot by continuing to work hard and behave well.

I wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

David Mankelow Lead inspector