

# Dunster First School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	123643
<b>Local Authority</b>	Somerset
<b>Inspection number</b>	340387
<b>Inspection dates</b>	19–20 May 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Edward Wheatley

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>	5–9
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	157
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Jim Butterworth
<b>Headteacher</b>	P Hoyland
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	21 June 2007
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Sixteen lessons were observed and five teachers seen. No meetings were held with parents but inspectors met with pupils, staff and governors. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at planning, records of pupils' progress and 60 parental questionnaires.

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

- how well the school has dealt with relative underachievement in writing and mathematics, and of the most-able pupils
- how effectively the school is dealing with apparent differences in performance between girls and boys
- the accuracy of the school's self-evaluation.

## Information about the school

This is a smaller than average school in which almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds and where none are in the early stages of learning English. About 60% of pupils come from outside the school's catchment area. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average and very few have statements of special educational needs. Children start school in Reception. About half come from the on-site private nursery and others from a number of smaller nursery settings. The school has gained the Healthy School award.

**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

This is a good school. Justifiably, the overwhelming majority of parents are very pleased with the education their children receive. One parent comment in the Ofsted questionnaire summed up those of many:  'The school treats every child as an individual and values them for their own merits and abilities.'

Pupils make good progress and by the end of Year 4 attainment exceeds expectations. Performance in writing and mathematics had fallen behind that in reading, but this has now largely been reversed. The pace of improvement in writing and mathematics has been fast and now attainment is broadly the same in all three subjects. Boys and girls achieve equally. Pupils of all abilities make good progress, and this is an improvement since the previous inspection. However, occasionally very small numbers of the most-able and least-able pupils do not make as much progress as they should. Children in the Reception class make good progress from low starting points.

Pupils behave well in lessons. They move safely and with consideration for other people around the difficult school site, with its narrow  'tunnel', stairs and steps. Pupils enjoy school and feel safe from bullying and any harassment. Their understanding of the importance of healthy lifestyles is excellent, as indicated by the Healthy School award. They make exceptional contributions to the school and wider community and readily take on a wide range of responsibilities. Attendance is excellent and has steadily improved in recent years. Pupils have outstanding social skills and, along with good development of other key skills, they are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Teaching is good and, together with excellent relationships between pupils and adults, contributes well to pupils' good enthusiasm for learning. For the most part teachers match work closely to pupils' learning needs, but occasionally they do not make it fully clear what their expectations of the most able are, or provide enough support for the least able. Consequently work and support provided at such times does not fully meet individual needs. This slows progress a little. The curriculum provides good links between subjects and a wide range of activities and trips that ensure pupils' enthusiasm is sustained. Access to outside activities for Reception children is limited, though well managed considering the age and layout of the school buildings.

The quality of care, guidance and support is excellent. Links with external agencies to support all pupils and families are outstanding. The comprehensive links with the nursery, homes and middle schools ensure the smooth transition between schools and a rapid settling in to the school process. Pupils feel very secure going to any adult for help if they need it.

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The headteacher provides outstanding direction for the school's work and improvement. He has dealt with significant changes in staffing exceptionally well. Governors' knowledge of how the school works and the challenge and support they provide are excellent. The school's self-evaluation strategies are accurate. The capacity for further improvement is good, given recent improvements in attainment and in addressing the issues from the previous inspection. The excellent engagement with parents and other very strong partnerships established play a significant role in promoting pupils' well-being and learning.

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

- Ensure by Christmas 2010 that all pupils achieve equally well by making sure that:
  - all lessons have clear expectations for all pupils, especially the most able
  - work and support are consistently closely tailored to the specific needs of all pupils.
- Take steps to improve the outdoor provision for Reception by Easter 2011 so that children have improved opportunities to choose to engage in learning activities both inside and outside.

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

Learning is good and pupils work with enthusiasm. Standards vary between years because attainment on entry fluctuates, but pupils make good progress, and some make excellent progress. Pupils work hard and are keen to do well. In mathematics attainment has improved because there has been a successful focus on developing basic numeracy skills and on encouraging mental calculation skills. The marked improvement in literacy is due to increased opportunities for writing in all subjects, a focus on sentence writing and on encouraging pupils to see how they can improve their writing themselves. In nearly all lessons pupils of all abilities make good progress, and effective support is a significant contributory factor. In addition, pupils enjoy engaging in activities that help them improve their work. The relative slower progress of a small number of the most-able and the least-able pupils is because work is not specific enough for individual needs. Past minor differences in the progress of boys and girls were due to specific learning difficulties and currently there are no significant differences.

Pupils really enjoy school. They say that on the rare occasion when there is disruptive behaviour, it is dealt with very well. Inspectors agree with pupils' observations. Pupils chose to eat healthily, and those bringing packed lunches do so too. Almost all pupils join in physical activities enthusiastically, and many are involved in competitive sports and out-of-school physical activities. Many use the playground equipment at lunchtimes to engage in physical exercise. Pupils are very active in raising money for a very wide range of charities, particularly international disasters. They eagerly take on responsibilities as playground leaders, helping Reception children, reducing the amount of packaging brought to school and planting bulbs in local tourist attractions. The school council is very active and, for example, led a school initiative to become a UNICEF

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Rights Respecting School.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	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
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>1</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>	1
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective is the provision?

Pupils enjoy learning because lessons are generally interesting with many opportunities for pupils to find out for themselves. Work is usually challenging, fast paced and varied. Teachers' expectations are high. Teachers make good use of assessment information to plan learning and usually to match work to pupils' specific needs. Classroom support assistants mostly work effectively with pupils to help them make good progress. On rare occasions expectations are not quite sharp enough and then work is not specifically tailored to the needs of a small number of high-attaining pupils. In addition, the support for a few of the least-able pupils is not always well enough focused to help them make fast progress. Marking is generally good and gives pupils information about how well they are doing, how to improve and what their next steps in learning should be.

The school aims to further improve the good links between subjects to enhance the curriculum's relevance to learning needs and to the interests of pupils. Visits are used well to enhance pupils' experiences and to provide opportunities to develop historical,

<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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geographical and scientific understanding. When they fit well into activities, opportunities for pupils to improve their writing skills are included. Information and communication technology is used well. Computers are available in all classrooms and are used regularly, an improvement since the previous inspection. The personal, social, health and citizenship programme is good and contributes effectively to pupils' social and emotional development.

Very strong relationships are significant in the school's excellent pastoral care, support and guidance. Parents and pupils feel very secure in asking for help and the school uses its wide range of established links with external agencies to help pupils and families. Support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is particularly good and involves families very effectively in planning programmes of support.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

The headteacher has an exceptionally clear vision for how the school should improve, which is shared by all staff and governors. The concerted drive for improvement is good. The programme of support to help staff new to teaching and to having responsibilities is extensive and teachers are rapidly gaining the teaching and leadership skills they need. The school identifies its strengths and weaknesses accurately and deals with them effectively. For example, underachievement in writing and mathematics was resolved quickly. Governors have an exceptionally clear view of how the school should improve. They are active in driving forward plans for buildings improvements, within the confines of being in a national park and conservation area. They challenge and support the headteacher and are active in making sure they are up to date with their own expertise and knowledge. The school has established very effective strategies to keep parents involved in supporting pupils with homework and keeping them informed of education issues. Its remarkably productive partnerships contribute significantly to the curriculum, staff expertise and out-of-school activities. Promotion of equal opportunities is good and within this, strategies to eliminate discrimination of all kinds are extremely good. Promotion of community cohesion is good and improving in making sure pupils have a good understanding and respect for the wide range of cultures found in Britain today. At the time of the inspection safeguarding requirements were met and the school, including governors, has a good awareness of the need to keep all aspects fully up to date.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

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<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<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>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make good progress from low starting points and by the time they enter Year 1 attainment is broadly average. Children enjoy school and settle into the daily routines quickly. Parents and carers are welcomed in to the Reception class in the morning and to collect their children at the end of school. Relationships with homes are very good and are the basis of the effective care, guidance and support. Children's personal, social and emotional development is good. They play and work together well, and they share and listen to each other sensibly. They behave well and work hard when expected to. They are confident in talking about what they do and to ask if they find things difficult or they are upset about anything. Teaching is good and all adults work well with the children. Tasks are challenging and adults make their expectations clear to children. Children learn to speak and write competently, they count and add on well and they use computers competently. The curriculum is fully covered, but although children have access to the outside, it is limited due to the confines of the building and security of the outside space. Nevertheless, staff make sure pupils have regular, fully supervised opportunities for learning outside. The curriculum benefits from close links with the private nursery and partial integration with Year 1 so that continuity is well established. Leadership and management are good and the school is aware of the need to improve outdoor provision so that children can make more choices in where they learn.



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

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
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**

Parents and carers are overwhelmingly happy with the school. They feel teaching is good, their children are supported, well prepared for the future and that their particular needs are met. They feel their children are safe, happy and well looked after, that unacceptable behaviour is dealt with well and their opinions and those of their children are taken into account. They feel they are well informed about their children's progress and that the school is well led and managed. Inspectors are in agreement with them.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Dunster First 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 60 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 157 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	53	88	7	12	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	54	90	6	10	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	42	70	17	28	1	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	43	72	17	28	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	51	85	9	15	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	44	73	16	27	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	53	88	7	12	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)	51	85	9	15	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	42	70	17	28	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	41	68	17	28	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	47	78	13	22	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	56	93	4	7	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	51	85	9	15	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

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](http://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"><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 pupil's 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.**



21 May 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Dunster First School, Dunster, Somerset TA24 6RX

Thank you for making us welcome when we inspected your school. You told us a lot about your school and why you think it is good. We agree with you, it is a good school.

- You make good progress and you really enjoy learning.
- Teaching is good and work is interesting and challenging. Teachers keep you well informed about how well you are doing and you know what you need to do to do even better.
- You behave well, work hard and your attendance is fantastic!
- The headteacher, staff and governors know what to do to make the school improve, and they work hard to make that happen.
- You have an excellent understanding of the importance of a healthy lifestyle. You eat sensibly and take lots of exercise.
- You carry out the responsibilities you have very well, and you are thoughtful and considerate of those less well off or as healthy as you.
- The school takes excellent care of you and makes sure you are safe.

In order for the school to be even better, we are asking your teachers to do the following things:

- make sure that all of you always know what is expected of you in lessons and that work and support is matched to what you need to do to make good progress
- improve the outdoor provision for the Reception class so that children have more freedom to choose whether they engage in learning activities either inside or outside.

You can help by telling teachers or other adults if you think the work is too easy or if you do not understand it. We wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Ted Wheatley

Lead inspector

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