

Diptford Parochial Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113395
Local Authority	Devon
Inspection number	289608
Inspection date	9 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Alexander Paul Baxter

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	72
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	George Lacon
Headteacher	Lynda Rutkowska
Date of previous school inspection	1 February 2002
School address	Diptford Totnes TQ9 7NY
Telephone number	01548 821352
Fax number	01548 821352

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This very small primary school accepts pupils from the village and surrounding rural area. Children's attainment on entry varies, but generally matches the level expected for their age. Very few pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals or are from minority ethnic backgrounds. No pupils have English as an additional language. Although the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is below average, three pupils have a statement of special educational need.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school, which continues to improve. The school reflects a small, tightly-knit, caring community where pupils' enjoyment of learning flourishes. The experienced headteacher gives a strong lead to a united team of staff and governors. The headteacher empowers her colleagues and is well supported in return. They share an effective commitment to continued improvement. Consistently good teaching and close pastoral support are significant features in all parts of the school. They are successful in promoting the pupils' good personal development and well-being, particularly the pupils' outstanding behaviour and relationships. Pupils also show a good understanding of how to live healthy, safe lifestyles and contribute well to their school and local community. Parents welcome this support and the positive effect it has on their children. Several parents, some with more than one child at the school, wrote or commented that, 'Our children are treated as individuals and do really well'.

Teaching and learning are good overall. They are underpinned by the teachers' good knowledge and skills and the close individual attention each pupil receives. Learning continues to improve as teachers and pupils alike apply their developing information and communication technology (ICT) skills. Care, support and guidance are good. Teachers know their pupils well. They give good oral feedback to pupils about their work, but do not always make enough use of written marking to show pupils how to improve their work.

Throughout the school, pupils of all abilities are included equally and achieve well. Standards are above average overall. Children are taught well and make good progress in the Foundation Stage (Reception) and in all other classes as they move through the school. Standards are above average in reading and writing and in mathematics and science by the end of Year 2. Pupils continue to make good progress in Years 3 to 6 and attain above-average standards in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6. Pupils also make particularly good progress in speaking and listening and increasingly in ICT.

The school provides a well-planned curriculum that has a strong focus on personal, social and health education. The curriculum is enriched by a good range of interesting activities, including learning French. Children in Reception enjoy a good curriculum where there is an appropriate amount of adult-led and independent activity. Currently, children do not have ready access to outdoors and this limits their choice of learning activity. Leadership and management and self-evaluation are good. The school has a proven track record of improvement. This is evident in the rising achievement and standards, especially in mathematics and ICT. The school is well placed to continue this in the future.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that teachers are more consistent and precise in the way they use marking to inform pupils about what it is they need to do to improve their work.
- Improve access to the outdoor facilities provided for children in Reception so that they can make their own choices about when to learn outdoors.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well by the time they leave the school. Current standards are above average by the end of Year 6. The pupils' good progress stems from consistently good quality teaching

and learning in all classes. The progress of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities has improved and is now good because of the increased adult support provided. Children make a good start in their Reception Year. Most enter the school with the skills normally expected, but this can vary substantially from year to year. They make good progress. Currently, many children are developing their skills beyond the early learning goals expected by the end of the first year in school. Good progress continues through Years 1 and 2. Standards are above average by the end of Year 2, especially in reading and mathematics. Pupils continue to make good progress and standards are above average in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6. An increasing number of pupils are achieving very well and show highly developed literacy, numeracy and ICT skills. These skills are not always used to best effect to promote pupils' independent research in science.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good throughout the school. The school's strong emphasis on personal, social and health education promotes the pupils' excellent behaviour and relationships. Pupils enjoy school and one parent wrote, 'My son loves going to school'. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and is underpinned by the school's caring Christian ethos. Pupils have a good awareness of local and world-wide culture. Their understanding of Britain's diverse community is not as secure. Although attendance is satisfactory, despite advice from the school, too many parents take their children on holiday during term time. Pupils accept responsibility and contribute well to the local and school community. Members of the school council offer opinions confidently. They suggest ideas about charity fund raising and say that their ideas about more playtime equipment have been acted upon. Now they would like to propose ideas about classroom activity. Pupils have a good understanding and adopt healthy, safe lifestyles. When questioned, pupils felt very confident that if they were to be troubled by another pupil, swift, effective adult help would be readily available. The pupils' self-confidence and above-average skills, increasingly in ICT, prepare them well for the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good throughout the school. Teaching is typified by its consistently good quality and the individual attention given to the pupils. All teachers and their assistants know the pupils well and value their contributions. Lessons are stimulating and are conducted with good pace. As a result, from the moment they start school, pupils work hard and enjoy what they are doing. Teachers make clear links with previous work and use questioning well to challenge pupils, to draw out their ideas and to promote new learning. Other consistently used strategies include the use of interactive whiteboards and laptop computers. Interactive whiteboards, in particular, are used well to clarify learning and show how it can be applied. This was seen to good effect, for example, in a lesson in Years 2 and 3, when adding the suffix 'es' to make plurals. Pupils' spelling and consequently their writing have been improved. Teachers set appropriately challenging targets, assess and track pupils' progress effectively. They give good oral guidance, but in Years 4 to 6, teachers do not always make best use of written marking to show pupils how to improve. This represents a weakened opportunity to promote learning even more.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school provides a good curriculum that meets the needs of all pupils, including children in the Reception Year. It is enriched by a good range of visitors and visits, including residential trips, and by the teaching of French. There is a satisfactory number of clubs. The school promotes good links with parents and outside agencies. These are particularly supportive of pupils' well-being and in meeting their differing academic needs. There is a strong emphasis on personal, social and health education and on literacy and numeracy in all classes. Daily mental mathematics is a crisp, lively and effective feature. Teachers' short term planning meets individual pupils' needs and sets clear learning objectives. The use of ICT is a developing strength throughout the school and it is helping teachers to make useful links between subjects, for example, science and healthy living. The school is aware that too many physical education (PE) lessons in Years 4, 5 and 6 have been cancelled owing to inclement weather or staff training. It has addressed this by introducing daily 'Take Ten' aerobic exercise and through visiting specialists, for example, in athletics. The school now ensures an appropriate curriculum for PE. Currently, the youngest children can only use the outdoor learning facilities when taken there by an adult and this limits their ability to choose activities for themselves.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Children benefit from being part of a small, caring community. A welcoming Christian ethos helps pupils to feel safe and valued. Staff of the school are diligent and effective in ensuring the pupils' safety and well-being. They are excellent role models and promote the pupils' outstanding behaviour and relationships. The school works closely with parents and one parent echoed the view of the vast majority and wrote, 'From the very beginning, all at Diptford School have been welcoming and helpful'. All pupils are given close individual attention. The school has good links with outside agencies to assist pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities and those identified as gifted and talented.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher is a strong and fair leader. She receives good support from staff and governors. The school is committed to a Christian ethos that values all pupils and promotes their personal well-being. Self-evaluation is effective. All members of staff share their expertise willingly and fulfil their responsibilities diligently and in a corporate, supportive manner. Teachers use their differing specialist skills well, for example, in literacy, numeracy, ICT and PE, to enrich pupils' learning. Governors give their wholehearted support and they too contribute their diverse expertise effectively, for example, in financial management. The school takes good account of parents' views and those of the pupils. The headteacher monitors the quality of teaching and learning and is involving subject leaders with beneficial effect. The way this is accomplished is not sufficiently systematic to have a sharp enough impact on pupils' skills. The school development plan is an effective tool which helps to ensure that appropriate priorities for improvement are achieved. The improved provision and progress of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities and of pupils identified as gifted and talented

reflect recent improvements. These show that the school has a good capacity to improve in the future.

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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

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 behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	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 performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Diptford Parochial C of E Primary School, Diptford, Devon TQ9 7NY

I enjoyed my visit to your school. I was very interested to see you at work and play and I welcomed the opportunity to talk to several of you. These are the main things I found:

- It is a good school and it continues to improve. The headteacher and staff share and use their skills well to help you learn. They receive good support from governors, your parents and from other adults.
- You make good progress in all parts of the school because the teaching is consistently good. The standards you reach in Year 6 are better than in many schools.
- Your behaviour and the way you treat each other is exceptionally good.
- Yours is a very caring school where each one of you receives close support. You know how to keep healthy and safe and enjoy your time at school.
- You enjoy a wide range of interesting activities and contribute well to your school.

I have asked the headteacher, staff and governors to do these things to help your school to become an even better school:

- Improve the way teachers mark your work to make sure that you know what to do next to improve.
- Make it easier for those of you in the Reception class to have more opportunities to learn outdoors.

Thank you once again. Keep happy and good luck in the future.

With best wishes

Alex Baxter Lead inspector