

St David's CE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113353
Local Authority	Devon
Inspection number	338151
Inspection dates	4–5 November 2009
Reporting inspector	Robert Pyner 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	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	104
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Cobbold
Headteacher	Francesca Brinicomber
Date of previous school inspection	1 January 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one additional inspector.

The inspectors visited 12 lessons, and held meetings with the chair of governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation, including the school improvement plan, curriculum and management policies, progress tracking data, performance evaluation information and safeguarding documents. In addition, questionnaires from 45 parents, 53 pupils and six staff were analysed.

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

- The effectiveness of provision for pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage in order to ensure they have an appropriate curriculum and make at least the expected progress.
- The impact on pupils' attainment, particularly in mathematics, of teaching and learning across the school in order to determine whether teaching is suitably challenging.
- How well data on pupils' progress are used to improve attainment, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The effectiveness of leadership at all levels in driving forward improvements based on self-evaluation.
- How well the governing body fulfils its statutory duties.

Information about the school

St David's Church of England Primary School is smaller than average and serves a community in the heart of Exeter. Pupils come from a wide variety of backgrounds. Some pupils come from overcrowded households and some from families housed in temporary accommodation. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals has been increasing and is now above average. The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic groups is significantly below the national average, as is the proportion who speak English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities has risen over the last three years and is now above the national average, but the proportion of pupils with statements of special educational needs is in line with the national figure. Pupils are taught in four mixed-age classes. The school has been through a prolonged and unsettling period of change since 2005, when it was designated as a primary school. The full 4 to 11 age range was finally established in 2007/08.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

St David's provides a satisfactory standard of education. Some elements of the school's work are good, in particular the care, guidance and support provided for the pupils which are valued by parents and pupils alike. During her two years leading the school, the headteacher has shown a clear determination to raise standards, as well as resilience and fortitude in the development of provision for the full primary age range. Her professionalism and drive for improvement are appreciated by parents, staff and governors.

Pupils make satisfactory progress. Their attainment by the end of Year 6 is broadly average, but with outcomes in English and science better than in mathematics. This is confirmed by the school's self-evaluation, which has identified that it has been more successful in preparing older primary pupils in literacy, particularly reading, than in mathematics. To remedy this situation, the school is working with the local authority to improve aspects of teaching and the monitoring of progress made by pupils. School progress tracking data indicate rising standards, particularly in writing, but mathematics still lags behind.

Pupils like being part of a small school where they know everyone well and adults take such good care of them. They play a part in developing the environment of the school, for example in deciding the décor of the refurbished toilets, and the newly established school council has plans, and a budget, for further improvements. Pupils reflect deeply on issues such as supporting others who have difficulties or disabilities or may be new to the school or, indeed, the country. They are well involved in the local community in a range of musical, sporting and parish activities.

Pupils enjoy learning in the school's bright and attractive environment where their work is shared and celebrated. They particularly enjoy the opportunities they have to be involved in sports, learn musical instruments and take part in performances. One pupil delighted in explaining how to 'play' a hosepipe when learning about brass instruments.

Teaching is satisfactory overall. In about a quarter of the lessons observed during the inspection, teaching was judged as good. In these lessons learning was at a brisk pace and questioning was effective in challenging pupils. Activities were based on accurate assessments of pupils' needs and they had adequate time to practise and develop their skills. Teaching assistants are skilled and play an important part in lessons by working effectively with small groups and supporting pupils who need extra help. Where teaching is less successful, teachers spend too much time talking to the whole class and do not match teaching to pupils' needs or provide appropriate challenges; this means that pupils of different ages and abilities are doing the same work for long periods and

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do not have adequate time to develop and practise their skills and learning. There are some good examples of marking helping pupils to know what they need to do to improve their work. However, this good practice is not consistently applied across the school and is better in literacy than mathematics, where some teachers do not have sufficient subject knowledge or high enough expectations of what pupils can do.

The developing curriculum provides a sound balance of subjects, with a renewed focus on developing pupils' skills. It enables them to learn how to keep safe and live a healthy lifestyle. The curriculum for the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage provides an appropriate range of activities and teachers use the restricted outside area well to enhance pupils' physical development. The leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage needs further support if it is to bring about the desired improvement in assessment and recording systems.

The school has satisfactory capacity to secure and sustain further improvements. The headteacher works closely with staff and governors to evaluate all aspects of provision and set the school's priorities. The chair of governors is particularly knowledgeable and understands the strengths and weaknesses of the school well. The recent appointment of a senior teacher is beginning to develop the provision for the older pupils. Nevertheless, the school recognises the need to raise standards further, accepting that the initiatives introduced have not yet been translated into a concerted trend of improvement in performance.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that the proportion judged good or better is at least 75% by the end of the summer term 2010 by ensuring that:
 - senior leaders undertake focused monitoring and feedback
 - teaching is informed by pupil assessment so that it is closely matched to pupils' needs and provides appropriate challenges
 - all lessons provide adequate time for pupils to develop and practise their skills and learning.
- Raise standards in mathematics by:
 - improving the subject knowledge of teachers and raising their expectations
 - developing the focused use of progress tracking systems to identify and target underachievement
 - ensuring that marking clearly informs pupils about what they need to do to make progress.
- Improve the progress made by children in the Early Years Foundation Stage by
 - helping the new leader to develop effective systems for observation, assessment and record keeping.

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The lessons observed during the inspection showed that, for the most part, pupils concentrate, enjoy their work and make adequate progress. Their behaviour is satisfactory and they show respect for the teachers and for each other. Sometimes, when explanations are too long or activities are not sharply matched to their abilities, some pupils can lose interest.

Attainment on entry to the school is lower than that expected, particularly in literacy. In Key Stage 1, pupils make satisfactory progress and standards are broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2. By the end of Key Stage 2, standards in reading are above average, with writing improving and broadly average. Science results are average overall. However, outcomes for mathematics remain below average, although the school predicts broadly average results in 2010. Results indicate that there is no significant difference in performance between boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress; they are well supported by teaching assistants and grow in confidence as their skills improve. More able pupils generally make satisfactory progress, but too few attain the high standards of which they are capable in mathematics.

Pupils are proud of their school and appreciate the good friends that they make there. They feel safe and say that bullying is rare and quickly dealt with if it occurs. Attendance is good. Pupils understand the importance of a healthy lifestyle and can explain how the school is working towards the Healthy School Plus award. Pupils reflect on spiritual issues in lessons and assemblies. For example, following some role-play work on the shepherds' role in the Nativity story, a pupil explained that 'awe' meant shock and inspiration. Despite shortcomings in mathematics, pupils are satisfactorily prepared for the transfer to secondary school.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2

¹ 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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The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teachers prepare well and effectively use technology to enhance lessons. In most lessons teachers use interactive whiteboards to provide stimuli which are interesting and relevant. In one lesson, where pupils were considering different types of rain, examples were displayed on the whiteboard, stimulating a lively debate. Some lessons provide highly appropriate activities to reinforce learning, such as a lesson for Key Stage 1 pupils which involved making a fruit salad to emphasise the use of 'busy verbs' when writing instructions. However, there are shortcomings in teaching that affect the pace and extent of pupils' learning. For example, sometimes teachers talk to the whole class for too long, and do not sufficiently match the work to pupils' needs or provide enough challenge. Teachers' assessment of progress can be effective in whole-class sessions when they ask questions to test pupils' understanding. However, tracking data are not yet used effectively to ensure pupils are challenged, particularly in mathematics. There are good examples of marking in literacy but fewer in mathematics.

The curriculum satisfactorily meets the wide range of ages and abilities in the school. It is currently under review to allow more opportunities for pupils to develop the skills that they have learned. The literacy and numeracy provision is satisfactory and there are ample opportunities for pupils to use their reading and writing skills in all subjects. There are fewer opportunities to develop their mathematics skills across the curriculum. The pupils benefit from a range of opportunities in sport, music, art and drama. For example, one pupil spoke knowledgeably about the work involved in making an animated film as part of a competition. The central location of the school means that pupils benefit from visits to places of interest in Exeter, while visitors to the school enhance the provision.

Parents are right to feel that the care, guidance and support given their children by 'supportive and approachable' staff are good and that the high level of individual support makes pupils feel secure and valued. Vulnerable pupils and families whose children have special educational needs and/or disabilities benefit from the sensitive support offered by the headteacher and staff.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3

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The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher leads the school with a clear vision and high expectations and is highly respected by pupils, parents and staff. She is supported by the whole staff team, who share a commitment to improving provision and the standards achieved. The school's self-evaluation is accurate. Progress tracking has been improved, with teachers beginning to use it to target specific underachievement, although this development is not yet evident in improved outcomes for pupils. Teachers in this small school have many responsibilities and satisfactorily lead and manage subjects. They are aware of the need to provide a broad and balanced curriculum but also of the importance of the continuing drive to raise standards in literacy and mathematics. The governing body is well aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses and fully supports the determination to raise standards.

The school has good management systems and runs smoothly. Safeguarding procedures are satisfactory. There are good links with parents, the community and partner organisations which enhance provision and help to support pupils. The school has robust procedures to tackle discrimination and takes great care to promote equality of opportunity. In this the school uses the resources of the lively and varied community in which it is situated well, although there is still some work to do on the development of a comprehensive policy for community cohesion.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

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Early Years Foundation Stage

Children start school with skills below those typical for their age, with particular weaknesses in literacy skills. By the end of the Reception year their attainment is broadly average, although some weaknesses in reading and writing remain. Children feel safe at school because all adults know them very well and take good care of them. Their personal and social skills develop well because they learn to consider the needs of others and they behave well.

The adults in the mixed-age class work as a team to make lessons fun. They plan carefully so that Reception children have appropriate activities with lots of practical work and opportunities to explore things for themselves. Sound planning means that the young children have work that is right for their stages of development. This was demonstrated in music when, following an input from the teacher, the Reception children played musical instruments with the support of the teaching assistant while Year 1 pupils learned how to maintain a steady beat.

The curriculum incorporates an interesting range of activities that provides a satisfactory balance of work and play. The small but attractive outdoor area is well used to engage children and develop their physical abilities.

The new leader of the Early Years Foundation Stage has only been in post for a few weeks. She is being supported by the headteacher in the development of more effective systems for observation, assessment and recording.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

Most parents say they are happy with the work of the school. Almost all feel that the school keeps their children safe. They are particularly appreciative of the good pastoral support that staff give their children, and of the way adults respond to pupils' individual needs. Parents feel welcome at the school and think that the headteacher does a good job. Parents have concerns about the continued inability to use the school field and how this hinders pupils' healthy development. The headteacher and governors are continuing to work with the local authority to resolve this issue. Most parents think behaviour is satisfactory but a few feel that it could be better. A few parents believe that the school does not meet their children's needs and that they could be making faster progress. The

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other parental views reflect inspection findings.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St David's CE Primary 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 12 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 45

completed questionnaires by the end of the

on-site inspection. In total, there are 104 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	28	62	14	31	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	26	58	15	33	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	17	38	23	51	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	15	33	21	47	4	9	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	12	27	25	56	2	4	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	18	40	21	47	2	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	16	36	21	47	3	7	1	2
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)	20	44	17	38	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	21	47	16	36	3	7	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	12	27	24	53	4	9	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	13	29	24	53	1	2	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	22	49	17	38	1	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	22	49	18	40	1	2	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 inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

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 were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

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:	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. ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.



6 November 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St David's CE Primary School, Exeter EX4 4EE

Thank you for welcoming the inspection team on our recent visit to your school. Many of you spoke to us and showed us your work. Special thanks should go to the school council members who took the time to talk to me. We enjoyed our time with you and it was very interesting to hear your views and these helped us to reach our judgements. This letter is to inform you of our findings.

Your school is satisfactory overall and there are some aspects that are good. One of these is the way you are cared for by the adults in the school. You have a clear understanding of how to live healthily and you enjoy school, as shown by your good attendance. You told me that you feel safe at school and your parents agree with that. You are rightly proud of the displays of your work around the school. I was particularly impressed by the collage of Daleks in the library. In your work you are making satisfactory progress overall and I know that your headteacher and staff are working hard to help you do even better.

I have asked the headteacher, staff and governors to work on a number of areas to improve your learning and achievements even further. The first is for the school to make better use of the information about what you can do to make sure that you are really stretched to learn as much as you can. We also think that teachers should make sure that you have enough time in lessons to practise the skills you have learned. The second area is mathematics, where we think you could do better. I have asked your teachers to help you understand mathematics better when marking your books. Finally, I have asked your headteacher to continue to support the Reception class so that staff can make sure that you get the best start possible to school life.

You can help by doing your best at all times. Please ask for harder work if it is too easy. You can also make sure that you follow the advice teachers give you when they mark your work.

Yours sincerely

Robert Pyner

Her Majesty's Inspector

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