

Diptford Parochial Church of England Primary School

Diptford, Totnes, Devon, TQ9 7NY

Inspection dates 5–6 June 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The school has many outstanding features, but a few weaker areas prevent it from being outstanding overall.
- Pupils make outstanding progress in Key Stage 2, and reach high standards by the time they leave at the end of Year 6.
- Some teaching is exceptionally skilful. The teaching of writing observed during the inspection was outstanding.
- The headteacher is taking strong and effective action to improve the quality of teaching even further.
- Pupils behave well and feel very safe. Older pupils show excellent levels of courtesy and maturity.
- Pupils enjoy a very wide range of stimulating learning activities. They develop outstanding personal skills as they move through the school, and by Key Stage 2 they work exceptionally well in teams.
- The headteacher and governors know the school very well. They know what they have to do to raise pupils' achievement, and are in a good position to do so.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Progress in Reception and Key Stage 1 is not as rapid as in Key Stage 2. It is slowest in Year 1.
- Not all of the pupils in Reception or Year 1 have developed good attitudes to learning or concentrate as well as usual for their age.
- Lesson activities are not always planned precisely enough to make sure pupils build on what they already know and can do.

Information about this inspection

- At the time of the inspection most of the Years 5 and 6 pupils were on a residential trip, so Class 3 was much reduced in size. In addition, the permanent teacher of Class 1 was on sick leave, and this class was taught by a temporary teacher who had been in the school only a few weeks.
- The inspector visited six lessons, and also observed a whole-school assembly in the church and an evening session for pupils from the school held at the residential centre.
- She talked informally to pupils in the playground and in lessons, and discussed a range of topics during a more formal meeting with six pupils from Year 6.
- She listened to Year 1 pupils reading, and studied the literacy and numeracy books of pupils who were on the residential trip.
- She held meetings with the headteacher, the Chair of the Governing Body and the school's link governor. She spoke with teaching staff and support staff, and also received their views through a questionnaire. She spoke to a representative of the local authority by telephone.
- The inspector analysed the 39 responses to the Ofsted on-line questionnaire, Parent View, and spoke informally to parents when they collected their children from school.

Inspection team

Deborah Zachary, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much smaller than the average primary school.
- The large majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. No pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is broadly average. The proportion supported at school action plus or through a statement of special educational needs is above average. However, in both cases, the actual numbers are small because the school is so small.
- A very small proportion of pupils are supported by the pupil premium, which is additional government funding given to schools to help certain groups of pupils. In this school, the pupils involved either have a parent in the armed forces or are known to be eligible for free school meals.
- Pupils are taught in three classes. Class 1 is for Reception (Early Years Foundation Stage) children and Year 1 pupils, Class 2 is for Years 2 and 3, and Class 3 is for Years 4, 5 and 6.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment.
- Diptford is part of the Totnes Federation of Village Schools, which was formed in November 2011, along with five other schools. Each school has its own headteacher and staff, but the whole federation has just a single governing body.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement in Reception and Key Stage 1, particularly in Year 1, by ensuring that:
 - teachers always identify exactly what pupils of different abilities should be learning in each lesson, and provide activities that are chosen to make sure that this specific learning takes place
 - consistently effective approaches to behaviour management in Reception and Year 1 help pupils to improve their concentration and involvement in learning
 - the links between sounds and letters are taught consistently and systematically across each class, so that each pupil builds on what they can already do.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- The school is very small, so children's attainment on entry varies from year to year. It is often above what would be expected for their age. By the time they leave, standards are high in English and mathematics.
- There is a marked difference in the pace of progress that pupils make in different parts of the school. It is consistently outstanding in Key Stage 2. For example, the current Year 6 pupils have made the equivalent of one year's extra progress as they passed through the four years of the key stage. Pupils make slower progress in Key Stage 1 and Reception. Progress requires improvement in Year 1.
- The school promotes equal opportunities effectively. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make very similar progress to others. At times they make even more progress. For example, a pupil in Key Stage 2 made two years' progress in a single year last year. Pupils from different ethnic backgrounds all achieve equally well.
- Only a very few pupils are known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium, so statements about attainment must be treated with caution. However, taking these pupils together to avoid identifying individuals, they are reaching the same standards as others in English and are on average a year ahead in mathematics. The money the school gets for them is used to provide extra help from adults in class, extra teaching on specific areas, and time for emotional support. They make good, and sometimes outstanding, progress.
- Year 6 pupils enjoy both English and mathematics and feel they are doing well. They thoroughly enjoy reading, and spoke with interest about books they liked and why they liked them.
- Regular attention is given to teaching the links between sounds and letters (phonics). The checks in summer 2012 showed that last year the Year 1 pupils learnt these links effectively. However, although some current Year 1 pupils read well, a few struggle to sound out anything beyond basic three-letter words. Phonic lessons are sometimes aimed at the whole year group, so the phonic being taught is already known by some pupils but too advanced for others.
- The school has recognised that the slightly different systems for teaching phonics in Classes 1 and 2 are slowing progress. Materials have been purchased and planning reviewed, so that from September there can be more consistency in approach across different year groups.

The quality of teaching is good

- The teaching seen during the inspection was not necessarily typical of the teaching pupils usually receive, because one class of the three was taught by a temporary teacher and another had a high number of pupils away on a trip. However, the work in pupils' books, discussions with pupils, records of the progress of pupils currently in the school, and the school's own checks on teaching support the view that teaching is good overall.
- When teachers and teaching assistants work with small groups of pupils they challenge them well. They ask probing questions to draw out their understanding. They make sure less-able pupils, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress and understand the work.
- The current planning for children in the Reception Year is effective. The temporary teacher is drawing well on the expertise and knowledge of the teaching assistant, and is making sure there is a good balance of adult-led and child-chosen activities. Moreover, she is planning carefully so that activities provided for children to choose are deliberately designed to build on the teacher-led work.
- The work set for pupils in Years 2 to 6 usually takes account of what they can already do or already know. Groups are chosen and activities for the different pupils are carefully planned to make sure that tasks are well matched to what the teacher wants them to learn. This is not consistently the case through the school. Sometimes groups of different abilities have different

activities, but they are not fine tuned and it is not always clear what progress the teacher wants each group to make. For example, in Year 1, pupils of different abilities worked with different shapes, but the shapes allocated for the more able were not always more challenging than those for the less able.

- Some teaching is excellent. Pupils' books and school data support the view that it is outstanding in Key Stage 2. Pupils made exceptionally rapid progress in a writing lesson for Years 4, 5 and 6 about choosing vocabulary. The teacher handled the whole-class session at the start superbly, constantly insisting on involvement from all pupils and rigorously checking their understanding. In this lesson the key was that she very skilfully picked up on the pupils' suggestions and used them to drive learning forward at a very rapid pace, rather than relying on her own pre-planned words and phrases.
- In an outstanding Years 2 and 3 writing lesson, the pupils were developing their ideas for a story by role playing and interviewing different characters. Here the planning and structure of the lesson were exceptional, with all ability groups having worthwhile and challenging tasks. Again the teacher kept a close check on pupils' understanding. As a result, when the groups of pupils started interviewing each other, they worked with immense concentration and maturity, and showed very good understanding of the emotions and feelings the characters might have.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils say they feel very safe in the school, and they are well aware of potential hazards in school and out. For example, older pupils often walk with younger ones across to the church, and say they check that nobody gets lost. They say bullying is not an issue, but are well aware of the forms it might take if it did happen. They have a particularly good awareness of how to stay safe when using the internet.
- All parents who responded to the questionnaire said they feel pupils are safe and that behaviour is good. Many commented that their children are well looked after. The pupils say they are confident that if they had any problems they could go immediately to an adult. Older pupils feel responsible for the well-being of the younger ones, which makes the school a secure and comfortable place.
- Year 6 pupils showed exceptional maturity and gave very thoughtful answers when talking to the inspector. When two wanted to speak at once they gave way and took turns without the need for any adult intervention, and they listened carefully to what each other said.
- Most pupils show excellent behaviour for learning during lessons. They work particularly well with each other, organising themselves and keeping a sharp focus on what they should be doing. They say they are greatly helped by the information given in their targets and through teachers' marking.
- Pupils in the youngest class present more challenge to the adults. They are not disruptive, but have not developed the attitudes and concentration that usually result from good teaching and consistent systems and procedures for this age. During the inspection the temporary teacher and the teaching assistants were working together well to provide consistent routines and boundaries.
- Pupils of all ages behave well in the playground. The school's records show that good behaviour is the norm and any incidents are minor.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has a very accurate awareness of the school's strengths and weaknesses. He is taking strong action to improve teaching where it is weaker, although has not yet been fully successful in ensuring rapid progress throughout the school. Staff responses to the questionnaire and their comments show he has their staunch support.

- The headteacher observes teaching regularly and identifies its quality, giving good attention to the learning that results. He has drawn effectively on the expertise of other headteachers within the federation to make sure judgements are accurate and consistent with other schools. Teachers engage well with the process of improvement, for example by summarising the things they want to do better and how they will get there.
 - The local authority takes a light touch approach to this school, recognising the strengths in its management. The school has made good use of support from the local authority, as well as other schools in the federation, to work on specific areas such as the way Reception children are catered for.
 - Detailed records are kept of pupils' attainment and their progress is carefully analysed. This means that any slowing of progress for individuals, groups of pupils or particular year groups is quickly identified. It also enables the school to evaluate the progress that results from particular actions, such as the way pupil premium funds are used. Development plans focus on the right things, and have clear targets and deadlines.
 - The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well. Pupils learn to work exceptionally well together, and are given really good opportunities to reflect on emotions and moral issues.
 - Pupils enjoy a wide and very stimulating range of subjects and topics. Years 5 and 6 pupils were greatly benefiting from the residential week during the inspection. For example, raft building and caving activities were developing their social skills, and they were reflecting on historical events and the issues early Christians faced. They find the Forest School activities and the yurt in the school grounds great fun. A Year 6 pupil commented that the younger ones love it and 'put so much more effort into their work because of it'.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - The structure of the federation's governing body is working well in this school. Both the Chair of the Governing Body and the link governor (identified to keep a close eye on Diptford in particular) have an accurate understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. Governors rigorously compare data about progress in Diptford with data about progress in other federation schools and progress nationally. As a result, they have the information they need to challenge the school effectively and hold it to account.
 - Governors know about the quality of teaching and have set up appropriate systems to manage staff performance. They provide the headteacher with strong support to challenge any underperformance. Pay awards from several years in the past, however, limit the extent to which they can align teachers' salaries with the impact teachers are having on pupils' progress.
 - Governors ensure that all national safeguarding requirements are met.
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What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	113395
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	403757

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 of pupils on the school roll	90
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Palframan
Headteacher	Tony Callcut
Date of previous school inspection	5–6 May 2010
Telephone number	01548 821352
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