

# Dartmouth Primary School and Nursery

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	113195
<b>Local Authority</b>	Devon
<b>Inspection number</b>	311145
<b>Inspection dates</b>	23–24 September 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	David Edwards HMI

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>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	159
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	43
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Nick Thayre
<b>Headteacher</b>	Rik Meek
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	29 September – 1 October 2003
<b>School address</b>	Milton Lane Dartmouth Devon TQ6 9HW
<b>Telephone number</b>	01803 833521
<b>Fax number</b>	01803 835163

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
<b>Inspection date(s)</b>	23–24 September 2008
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## Introduction

The school was inspected as part of a coordinated inspection together with Dartmouth Community College, with which it is federated, and the pre-school provision. The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

Dartmouth Primary School and Nursery is a smaller than average school serving a coastal resort in a rural location. Despite being situated in an affluent area of the South Hams there is evidence of disadvantage and poor employment opportunities in the area. Almost all pupils are of White British origin, with very few coming from minority ethnic backgrounds and none in the early stages of learning English. There are a small minority of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school federated with the nearby Dartmouth Community College in September 2007 to form Dartmouth Learning Campus under a single governing body. The school has gained the Healthy Schools award and is working towards the Activemark for sports.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

**Grade: 3**

'The school has made significant improvements in the last couple of years which have made it a better school.' 'The school has done everything to help my child, and it has worked, I can't thank them enough!' These comments, written by parents, sum up the views of the overwhelming majority of parents who responded to the Ofsted questionnaire. Inspectors judge Dartmouth Primary is indeed an improving school and it provides pupils with a satisfactory standard of education.

Children get off to a flying start in the newly formed Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and make good progress in their learning. Across Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils' progress is satisfactory and improving. Standards have been below average in the past because of past underachievement, particularly in writing and mathematics. They are now broadly average in both key stages, but in science standards are now above average. The headteacher has worked single-mindedly to ensure teachers have accurate assessment data on pupils' progress, and this is being used effectively to raise teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve. Teaching is satisfactory and the school rightly identifies as a key priority the need to use the assessment data to make sure all pupils are effectively challenged in lessons. Linked to this is making sure that pupils know what to do to improve their work. Support staff are a strength within the school and dedicated to supporting teachers and helping pupils to succeed. All at the school are now working hard to do their best for pupils, with the result that underachievement is being effectively tackled.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. 'My daughter is very happy at the school and her individual needs are well catered for,' was a comment from one satisfied parent. The warmth of relationships established between teachers, support staff and pupils within the school is a significant strength and one especially appreciated by parents. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are fully included and make satisfactory progress in their learning.

The curriculum is satisfactory and improving. Appropriate links are beginning to be made between some subjects but these are at an early stage of development. The school has a satisfactory understanding of what is required to promote community cohesion and has established some good links within the local community.

The great improvements in the school are largely due to the dedication and drive of the headteacher. Under his good leadership there is now a real sense of direction and purpose within the school. Improvements, including the issues identified in the previous inspection, are being addressed systematically. The governing body has gone through a significant period of change, due in part to the federation of the two schools, and the governors are well placed now to focus on developing their monitoring role within the school. There is no room for complacency, and staff are being challenged to develop their leadership roles. The school has satisfactory capacity for continued improvement.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

**Grade: 2**

'My child really enjoys coming here!' and 'My daughter can't wait to come!' These are typical responses from parents when talking about the school's Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). This is because provision and progress in the unit are good, enabling most children to enter Year 1 with standards that are higher than national expectations in almost all areas of learning. The unit has rightly identified children's writing skills as a relative weakness, and already has plans to develop them further. Lively teaching, an attractive environment both indoors and out, and a stimulating curriculum all contribute to the effectiveness of the provision. Planning successfully incorporates children's own interests, and includes a good balance between adult-led activities and those that children choose for themselves. A strong emphasis on the development of personal and social skills ensures that children grow in confidence, learn to take turns, share and are able to work well co-operatively. This was seen to good effect when children were fishing together for sea creatures in the water play area. Children's independence is also well developed, for example when choosing their own snacks or selecting activities to do. The EYFS is successfully inclusive and provides well for all children, including those with additional support needs. Very close attention is given to children's welfare. Strong links with parents and the good nurturing atmosphere enable children to settle quickly and to develop good attitudes to learning. All staff work well together as a team and show good understanding of the needs of young children. The preparation for the Nursery and Reception classes to become an Early Years Foundation Stage unit has been extremely thorough and very well led and managed.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Raise the quality of teaching, ensuring particularly that better use is made of assessment information in lesson planning so that all pupils are appropriately challenged.
- Ensure pupils understand their individual learning targets and know what they need to do next to improve.
- Ensure all coordinators contribute effectively to school improvement through systematic monitoring and evaluation of provision.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## Achievement and standards

**Grade: 3**

Children enter school with abilities that are broadly in line with national expectations and make good progress in their early years. However, until very recently, pupils in Key Stage 1 did not build on this good start and progress towards achieving the expected levels in reading, writing and mathematics was unsatisfactory, especially for pupils that were more able. The history of underperformance was halted following the appointment of the present headteacher, who has made determined efforts to improve standards in teaching and learning throughout the school. As a result, pupils in Key Stage 1 in the past year made satisfactory progress so that

standards are now in line with national expectations. Recent strategies to raise achievement and standards in Key Stage 2 are having the desired impact. Standards in English and mathematics are now broadly in line with the national average while standards in science remain above average. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make similar satisfactory progress to that of other pupils, relative to their starting points.

## **Personal development and well-being**

**Grade: 2**

The majority of pupils are proud to talk about their school and enjoy their lessons. This is because adults work hard to ensure pupils are safe and have a stimulating environment in which to learn. Not surprisingly, pupils' behaviour is good both in lessons and at break and lunchtimes. Pupils report no problems with bullying and are confident that if any were to occur it would be dealt with swiftly. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is also good. They integrate well during playtimes and look out for one another. As one pupil new to the school said, 'Everyone makes me feel really welcome.' Their cultural development is satisfactory, although their understanding of Britain as a multicultural society remains a weaker area. Attendance, although still below national average, has begun to improve due to recently introduced initiatives such as the 'walking bus' and first day calling, where the school calls the pupils' home on the first day of absence.

The school council makes an important contribution to the life of the school. Pupils demonstrate a good understanding of the importance of eating healthily, as seen through the introduction of a popular healthy tuck shop, which older pupils take responsibility for running. A satisfactory range of healthy food is available at lunchtimes.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

**Grade: 3**

The majority of learners show good attitudes to their work and cooperate well together. Teachers manage classes effectively and work hard to provide stimulating lessons that motivate pupils to learn. In the best lessons, pupils engage in practical activities that help to make learning meaningful; for instance, in a Year 5 and Year 6 science lesson pupils were being detectives investigating different ways plants disperse their seeds. However, some pupils say that work does not always challenge them and is sometimes too easy. This is because teachers do not always use information about individual pupils' progress to best effect in planning their lessons, which results in not all pupils being appropriately challenged. Some teachers do not give sufficient time for pupils to respond to questions. When this occurs, pupils withdraw from participating and their learning stalls. In better lessons, teachers maintain a good pace of learning through careful questioning that allows pupils time to reflect. Teachers are confident in their use of information and communication technology in their lessons, which engages pupils and maintains their concentration. Teaching assistants work effectively alongside teachers and play a full part in supporting pupils with additional needs.

## Curriculum and other activities

**Grade: 3**

Teachers' planning is based on national frameworks but these are not yet sufficiently adapted to the individual needs of learners, especially more able pupils. There has been a strong emphasis on the teaching of literacy and numeracy throughout the school. Teachers are currently working on developing links across subject areas to integrate literacy and numeracy into appropriate aspects of the curriculum, but this work is still in the early stages of development. A well-structured personal, social and health curriculum contributes positively to pupils' personal development. The majority of curriculum time is well used; however, time spent before assemblies is sometimes lacking in purpose.

There are some good enrichment opportunities within the curriculum, such as a residential visit to London, and day trips to Blackpool sands and the Plymouth aquarium. Pupils also participate in community activities, recently joining the community college in an assembly for peace and the Remembrance Day celebrations. A wide variety of good after-school clubs is also provided, including gardening and a very popular homework club.

## Care, guidance and support

**Grade: 3**

Strong pastoral care and support ensure good and supportive relationships between pupils and all adults. There are strong and effective links with external agencies that ensure extra help and support are available when children and families need it. The role of the family support worker is particularly appreciated by the pupils and parents. This role has been extended effectively as one of the strategies to improve attendance. Health and safety issues are carefully managed and appropriate arrangements are in place for the safeguarding of all pupils. Care is taken by the school to help pupils understand the safety issues in relation to recent building works on the school campus.

Academic guidance is satisfactory. Year group targets are in place within all classes and the majority of pupils know what they are, but not how they could help to improve their work. Pupils' targets are too broad and not specific to the learning needs of individuals. Likewise, marking, whilst taking place regularly, does not yet give pupils sufficient guidance in what they should do next in order to improve their work.

## Leadership and management

**Grade: 3**

The culture change that the headteacher has brought about in the past eighteen months has been impressive. He has established effective strategies for monitoring and evaluation. As a result, all staff have a clearer understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and are beginning to address the causes underlying its long history of underachievement. Through the introduction of effective monitoring and analysis of data, pupils' progress is now being carefully tracked. A system of whole school targets for improvement is supporting staff and beginning to impact on improving pupils' progress. This is why standards throughout the school are rising. Senior leaders rightly acknowledge there is still more to do, especially in providing for

the learning needs of the most able pupils. The headteacher has worked hard to ensure all teachers understand and use the termly pupil assessment data to set targets for pupils, and acknowledges that as yet, coordinators are not all contributing effectively to the monitoring of pupils' work.

Clear leadership and vision from the chair of the governing body and the headteacher have enabled positive first steps in building the federation between the primary school and the community college. The governing body knows the strengths and areas for improvement for the school and has a clear focus on raising standards. It increasingly understands its role of providing appropriate challenge to the school. Communication with parents is good.

**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).**

## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

<b>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate.</b>	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	<b>3</b>
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	<b>Yes</b>
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	<b>2</b>
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	<b>3</b>

### Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

<b>How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?</b>	<b>2</b>
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	<b>2</b>
How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	<b>2</b>
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	<b>2</b>
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	<b>2</b>
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	<b>2</b>

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	<b>3</b>
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	<b>3</b>
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	<b>3</b>
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	<b>3</b>

<sup>1</sup> 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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	<b>2</b>
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	<b>2</b>
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	<b>2</b>
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	<b>2</b>
How well learners enjoy their education	<b>2</b>
The attendance of learners	<b>3</b>
The behaviour of learners	<b>2</b>
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	<b>2</b>
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	<b>3</b>

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	<b>3</b>

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	<b>3</b>
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	<b>3</b>
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	<b>3</b>
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	<b>2</b>
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	<b>2</b>
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	<b>3</b>
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	<b>3</b>
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	<b>3</b>
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	<b>Yes</b>
Does this school require special measures?	<b>No</b>
Does this school require a notice to improve?	<b>No</b>



25 September 2008

Dear Pupils

### **Inspection of Dartmouth Primary School and Nursery, Dartmouth, TQ6 9HW**

Thank you for welcoming us to your school recently. We really enjoyed our visit and valued the opportunities we had to talk with some of you and see you in your lessons. In return, I want to tell you what we thought of your school. We have decided yours is a satisfactory school. This means there are some good things to celebrate and some important areas we would like your teachers to improve.

First, here are some of the things that we particularly liked about your school. When you begin school, you settle very well and make good progress. Your behaviour is good. For example, you work well together in lessons and include one another at playtimes. You know how to keep safe and make sensible, healthy choices when eating (I particularly liked the look of your healthy tuck shop trolley!). You have many after-school activities, which you say you enjoy, such as your gardening club. By the time you leave school in Year 6, you have made satisfactory progress in English and mathematics and good progress in science.

We have asked your headteacher to think about ways he could make your school even better for you. In particular, we would like teachers to:

- raise the quality of their lessons, ensuring especially that all pupils are given work that will help each of you to achieve higher standards
- make sure you understand your individual learning targets and know what you need to do next to improve
- make sure they all work towards making your school more successful through careful and regular checking of how you are all doing in school.

I am sure that if you continue to hold such positive attitudes to your work, like those you showed us when we visited your school, you will succeed very well in the future.

With very best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'D Edwards'.

David Edwards  
Her Majesty's Inspector