

Denbigh Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	109534
Local authority	Luton
Inspection number	377939
Inspection dates	12–13 January 2012
Lead inspector	David Wynford-Jones

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	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	629
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ian Ward
Headteacher	Lynne McMulkin
Date of previous school inspection	08 July 2010
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Introduction

Inspection team

David Wynford Jones	Additional inspector
Lindsay Hall	Additional inspector
John Mason	Additional inspector
Yvonne Watts	Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors visited an assembly and 22 lessons, observing 22 teachers. They held meetings with members of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work and looked at a wide range of documentation, including: the data the school has collected on pupils' attainment and progress, procedures for keeping pupils safe and the school development plan. Inspectors analysed 315 questionnaires completed by parents and carers, together with those from staff and pupils.

Information about the school

Denbigh Primary is much larger than most schools of its type. Originally a junior school, it became a primary school in January 2011. This followed the closure of Denbigh Infant School at the end of the previous term. Almost all pupils are of minority ethnic heritage. Approximately 95% come from Bangladeshi, Pakistani or other Asian backgrounds. Most pupils speak English as an additional language. A small minority are at the early stages of learning English. The proportion of pupils identified as having disabilities or special educational needs is broadly similar to the national average. Most have either specific learning difficulties or speech, language and communication needs. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is slightly higher than the national average. The school meets the current floor standard, whereby the government sets minimum expectations for attainment and progress. A breakfast club operates during term time. The headteacher took up the position in September 2011.

The on-site children's centre and the privately run pre-school are not managed by the governing body. They did not form part of this inspection.

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	3
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	3

Key findings

- This is a satisfactory school. Under the determined and effective leadership of the headteacher the school is successfully moving forward. It is embracing the challenges following the recent change of status from a junior to a primary school. Pupils, staff and parents and carers are very positive about the developments and its future.
- Achievement and progress by the end of Year 6 are satisfactory, although inconsistent between classes and year groups.
- There are examples of good teaching, but it is not sufficiently consistent to ensure pupils make accelerated progress. Not all teachers make effective use of assessment information to set work that meets the learning needs of pupils of different abilities. Guidance to improve their work is inconsistent.
- Support for pupils with disabilities and those with special educational needs, including those whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable, and for pupils at the early stages of learning to speak English enables them to make progress similar to that of their peers.
- Pupils behave well, show respect for each other and are keen to take responsibility. Pupils have a good understanding of keeping themselves and others safe. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.
- The headteacher is working effectively with the governing body to drive improvements. Middle leaders are developing their roles satisfactorily but do not yet make a sufficient contribution to monitoring, evaluating and improving the quality of teaching and learning.
- Senior leaders have accurately identified the school's strengths and weaknesses and have rightly identified improving provision and outcomes in the Early Years Foundation Stage as a main priority for development.

Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Enhance provision and improve outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - ensuring greater rigour and accuracy in the collection and recording of assessment information

- making better use of the assessment information to plan activities that have a clear purpose, raise expectations and accelerate learning in the classroom and outside
 - extending the opportunities to promote the children’s early reading, writing and number skills throughout the day.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning to be at least consistently good by:
- making effective and consistent use of accurate assessment information to plan work that challenges and closely matches the needs and abilities of all groups of pupils, particularly the more able
 - ensuring that teachers’ marking regularly provides pupils with clear guidance on how to improve their work
 - giving staff more opportunities to share and build on good practice.
- Develop the role of middle leaders in contributing to the leadership of the school by:
- refining their skills in analysing and using assessment data to raise expectations and to challenge their colleagues
 - rigorously monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and its impact on pupils’ progress.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Most children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and knowledge generally below those expected for their age. Attainment by Year 2 and Year 6 is broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils make accelerated progress particularly in Years 4 and 6, where teaching is stronger. In other year groups, progress is less consistent because of variations in the quality of teaching. The contribution from the Year 6 teachers, the additional support provided through teaching common abilities together and booster sessions ensure that the outcomes in English and mathematics in the end of Key Stage 2 national tests are broadly average and rising. Pupils’ attainment in mathematics is more secure than in reading and writing.

Senior leaders have recently introduced a commercial scheme to help accelerate pupils’ progress in reading and writing. Although still at an early stage, this appears to be successful. Pupils are developing and applying their skills in linking letters and their sounds satisfactorily. However, in the Early Years Foundation Stage, children’s progress is not as rapid because expectations are not sufficiently high and insufficient emphasis is placed on developing the children’s reading, writing and number skills.

Pupils’ attainment in reading at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 is broadly in line with expectations. In mathematics, pupils are developing their numeric skills satisfactorily. There is an appropriate emphasis on promoting pupils’ understanding of mathematical terminology and exploring mathematical concepts. For example, in a

Year 6 class, pupils worked enthusiastically in pairs to determine whether certain mathematical statements were always, sometimes or never true. They found and were able to explain why it was true that all numbers in the four times table were even and that multiples of 4 only sometimes end in 4.

The headteacher has undertaken a detailed and accurate analysis of the assessment information. This is being used effectively to identify individuals and groups of pupils needing extra support. Scrutiny of the data suggests that while there are minor variations in attainment between the main ethnic groups, boys and girls, and pupils identified as having disabilities or special educational needs, there is no particular pattern over time. The emphasis placed on developing pupils' speaking and listening skills supports those with speech, language and communication needs appropriately. However, potential higher attainers do not make as much progress as their peers. This is because assessment information is not used effectively to plan work that provides appropriate challenge. New procedures for assessing and recording pupils' attainment and progress have very recently been introduced. Middle leaders and teachers have yet to develop their skills in using the programme.

Approximately half the parents and carers responded to the questionnaire. Of these nearly two thirds agreed and a third strongly agreed that their children are making good progress. A similar proportion considers that the school helps their children develop skills in communication, reading, writing and mathematics. Given the recent improvements in the school, these views appear reasonable, but progress is not yet consistent enough across the school to be good overall.

Quality of teaching

The majority of teaching is satisfactory. However, there are examples of good and outstanding teaching on which the school can build. In most lessons, pupils make at least the expected rate of progress and are developing their basic skills satisfactorily. Adult support is deployed suitably to assist individual and group learning. Lesson planning is satisfactory. There is an appropriate emphasis placed on developing subject-specific terminology. The purpose of the lesson is shared with pupils and they are increasingly asked to evaluate their own learning. However, pupils do not make accelerated progress because the work is not always well matched to their needs. This is because assessment information is not used consistently to plan the work and to challenge pupils of differing abilities. In the occasional lesson, there is sometimes a lack of pace, teacher-talk tends to dominate and pupils are passive learners. Initial questions are not regularly followed up to confirm or extend pupils' learning.

In contrast, in lessons where pupils make good progress, effective use is made of assessment information to plan work that builds on previous learning, captures pupils' imagination and is matched well to their needs and ability. Teachers use questioning skills effectively to probe the pupils' understanding and to challenge their thinking. The lessons proceed at a quick pace and pupils make a significant contribution to their learning. For example, in a Year 6 literacy lesson, pupils worked enthusiastically and discussed their thoughts on 'how to trap a ghost'. This was linked to one of the Harry Potter stories. The session captured their imagination and pupils came up with a range of imaginative ideas. The teacher ensured that the

pupils presented their thoughts in a sequential manner, using correct sentence structure and imaginative vocabulary.

Teachers work in year group teams to plan the lessons and to ensure a reasonable consistency of coverage in the theme-based topics. Teachers in upper Key Stage 2 work together effectively to make certain that pupils are placed into the appropriate groups for mathematics. However, throughout the school, opportunities to consolidate pupils' literacy and numeracy skills in other lessons are often missed.

Teachers act as good role models to promote the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Throughout the school, the relationships between teachers, support staff and pupils are good. This ensures that the pupils feel confident and secure. This is a particular strength in the Early Years Foundation Stage and helps the children settle quickly into school routines. However, the Early Years Foundation team has yet to make full use of the outdoor area as a natural extension of the classroom and to use assessment information to plan work that accelerates the children's learning. Systems for the recording and analysing of assessment information are at a relatively early stage of development.

In Years 1 to 6, pupils' work is marked regularly. There are some helpful next step comments. This practice enables pupils to make progress toward their literacy and numeracy targets. However, this is not routine in all classes.

Nearly all parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire either agreed or strongly agreed that their children are well taught at this school. Relationships among staff and pupils are warm and there is some good teaching in the school, but it is not yet consistent enough to enable all pupils to make good progress and achieve well.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils are proud of their school and take good care of its resources and the environment. In the large majority of lessons, they behave well and demonstrate a positive attitude towards learning. Attendance rates are improving and are above average. This is having a positive effect on pupils' progress. Pupils are welcoming, respectful, polite and courteous at all times. Racial harmony is good. Pupils show respect and understanding for one another. There are very few bullying or racist incidents. Poor behaviour is rare. There have been no fixed term or permanent exclusions since the last inspection. Nearly all parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire are convinced that behaviour is good and their children feel safe – and inspectors endorse their views.

The school is keen to involve all stakeholders in promoting good behaviour. The recent behaviour and anti-bullying policies were written in consultation with pupils, staff, parents and governors. The school council drafted the school rules and the anti-bullying charter. As a result, all parties know, understand and subscribe to the approach adopted within the school. Pupils say they enjoy school, feel safe and are confident that issues raised are dealt with promptly. The curriculum provides pupils with many opportunities to understand how they can keep themselves safe. Pupils are very aware of potential on-site dangers with the extensive building work

currently being undertaken. Pupils' good and, at times, exemplary behaviour contributes significantly to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Leadership and management

The school has moved forward since the last inspection and has the capacity for further improvement. The governing body has appointed an experienced and successful headteacher, ensured that the former infant and junior schools have come together as one and started a major building refurbishment programme. The governing body has supported the headteacher in recently starting a breakfast club. This is developing well. Pupils enjoy attending and this provides them with a calm start to the school day. Links with the on-site children's centre and the pre-school are established and are used suitably to support pupils' development and links with the community. The governing body ensures that pupils are well cared for and that the latest government requirements on safeguarding are met. The school promotes equality and any rare incident of discrimination is investigated quickly. The governing body is monitoring performance and is increasingly holding senior leaders to account. They, in turn, ask staff to explain if any pupil has not made the expected progress.

The headteacher has brought drive and direction to the school and is working effectively with the governing body to bring about school improvement. She has quickly gained the confidence of staff, pupils and parents and carers. Based on an accurate self evaluation, senior leaders have accurately identified the school's strengths and weaknesses. The school development plan is detailed and clearly focused on raising attainment and accelerating pupils' progress. Within a relatively short time there has been a sharp focus on improving the consistency and quality of teaching, updating assessment procedures and reviewing the roles and responsibilities of middle leaders. A systematic programme for sharing good practice in teaching is in the process of being developed. Middle leaders are enthusiastic and keen to take on board the new initiatives. They are working closely with the headteacher and a number of external consultants to develop their expertise in monitoring the quality of teaching and using assessment information to accelerate pupils' learning.

The curriculum is broad, balanced and meets statutory requirements. It is supported effectively by a range of extra-curricular activities, visits and visitors to the school. Senior leaders have recently introduced a programme to support pupils' literacy development and refined the approach to common-ability grouping in mathematics. Other subjects are brought together through a theme or topic approach. However, literacy and numeracy skills are not systematically reinforced in these lessons. There are relative weaknesses in the promotion of children's early literacy and numeracy skills in the Early Years Foundation Stage. However, the curriculum supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all 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	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



16 January 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Denbigh Primary School, Luton LU3 1NS

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school and for completing the questionnaire. We enjoyed our visit and talking to you. You told us that you enjoy school and feel safe because the staff look after you well. You know that you can turn to them if you are worried. We saw that you behave well and show respect for each other. There are lots of interesting things going on around you, especially with all the building refurbishments. I am sure there are exciting times ahead.

Your school provides you with a satisfactory education. By the end of Year 6 your achievement and progress are satisfactory, although in some year groups, for example in Years 4 and 6, you make better progress than in others. By the end of Year 2 and Year 6 your attainment is broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics.

We have asked your school to do these things to help you make better progress and reach higher standards.

- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, teachers should make better use of the indoor and outdoor areas to plan work, based on their assessment of your needs, that will help you learn faster and give you more opportunities to practise your reading, writing and number skills.
- Improve the consistency in the quality of teaching and learning by sharing good ideas, making certain that the work planned is just right for you and that you are given clear guidance on how to improve your work and reach your literacy and numeracy targets.
- Develop the skills of middle and year-group leaders in using assessment information and checking how teaching improves your rate of progress.

Please remember that to make your school better you must play your part by always continuing to try your best in the way you do now.

Yours sincerely

David Wynford-Jones
Lead inspector

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