

# Dene House Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	114200
<b>Local Authority</b>	Durham
<b>Inspection number</b>	357495
<b>Inspection dates</b>	25–26 November 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Clive Petts

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>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	302
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Joan Temple
<b>Headteacher</b>	Paul Lonsdale
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Manor Way Peterlee County Durham SR8 5RL
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Inspectors visited 16 lessons and observed 11 class teachers. They held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils, analysed 59 questionnaire responses from parents and carers and looked at questionnaires from staff and pupils. The inspectors also looked at development plans, pupils' progress and attainment data, documents relating to the safeguarding of pupils, school policies and procedures, scrutinised pupils' current and past work and spoke to the School Improvement Partner.

- The quality of teaching and learning and its effectiveness in accelerating pupils' progress and raising achievement for all pupils in Years 1 to 6, particularly girls' mathematics and boys' writing.
- The extent to which leaders and managers at all levels are demonstrating the capacity to bring about and sustain a consistent pattern of improvement.

## Information about the school

This is larger than the average-sized primary school and serves the surrounding estates. All pupils are of White British heritage. The school is part of a national pilot scheme which enables all pupils to access a free school meal. One third of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities and a below-average proportion has a statement of special educational needs. The on-site Children's Centre provision for childcare and pre-school is subject to a separate inspection and will receive its own inspection report. The school has gained the Investing in Children and the Eco-School awards and participates in the Family Initiative Supporting Children's Health programme.

**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?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

This is a good and steadily-improving school in which well-organised arrangements for the care and support of pupils contribute to their good personal development. The headteacher's ambition and commitment, well supported by a governing body keen to improve the school and a motivated staff, has ensured continuous progress since the last inspection. Parents and carers are very positive in their support. One parent comment sums up their views, 'This is a happy school'.

Most pupils start school with skills which are frequently well below those expected for their age, especially in their listening, speech and language. They make rapid early progress settling into classroom routines. By the end of Year 6, attainment is broadly average. More consistent patterns of good progress have led to a clear trend of improvement. Writing skills, especially of boys, are much improved with more pupils reaching higher levels of attainment. Girls' mathematical skills are improving, although they remain a little below average. Pupils' achievement and enjoyment of their learning is good. This is because most teaching is stimulating, especially in those lessons where tasks are well-matched to abilities and interests and approaches are imaginative. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because their needs are accurately identified and intervention is well-targeted. In lessons where progress is slower, insufficient use is made of assessment information to plan activities and provide targets and prompts for improvement. Additionally, not enough opportunities are presented for pupils to find things out for themselves and to develop their independent learning skills. Pupils' enjoyment of school life is evident in the increasing proportion that attends regularly and is seldom absent. Pupils feel safe and display a good understanding of how to stay fit and healthy. They behave well and show a good grasp of the difference between right and wrong. Pupils gain much benefit from the good links the school builds with parents and carers, the local partnerships in sport and science and with support agencies. They are learning how to keep safe, for example, by sensibly using the Internet or developing their swimming skills.

The desire of senior leaders to build on the school's strong sense of purpose is evident in their determination to sustain the improvements made. Positive action to tackle underachievement is quickening the rate of pupils' progress, although pockets remain, such as in aspects of writing and girls' mathematical skills. Thorough whole-school progress checking systems are in place and inform planning well, although the information is not fully embedded and exploited to build upon and extend learning. The governing body holds the school to account in positive ways and has an accurate grasp of strengths and what needs to be improved. They contribute to strategic planning well. Strategies to evaluate the impact of action taken are proving increasingly effective. Consequently, there is a good capacity for continued improvement.

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## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement and further accelerate rates of progress, particularly in writing and girls' mathematics by:
  - ensuring the use of the progress checking system becomes fully embedded in the work of the school and that the information is always used to plan future learning for pupils of all abilities.
- Increase the proportion of teaching that is good and inspiring by:
  - ensuring there is a variety of activities and brisk pace in all lessons to stimulate learning
  - always using assessment information to give pupils clear guidance about the next steps they need to take to improve their work
  - ensuring there is more time for pupils to learn independently and achieve things by themselves.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**2**

Pupils respond well to the good teaching in which expectations of what they can achieve are high. They enjoy learning and work enthusiastically to ensure good achievement. Pupils were seen thoroughly absorbed in constructing a 'fractions wall' in a mathematics lesson, then justifying their decisions to classmates in the group. In a science lesson, pupils carefully examined a filter paper to find traces of salt deposits after allowing the water from a solution to evaporate. Information from tests, assessments and inspection evidence confirm the good and improving trend of progress that all pupils are making. For example, pupils' progress in developing their writing skills is quickening and more girls are applying their number skills confidently and successfully. Attainment at the end of Year 6 is broadly average and current information points to attainment rising further. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress, because their support is carefully matched to their needs, is well-directed and effective.

Pupils respond well to the expectations that staff set for them. Their good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is firmly focussed on respect and consideration for others, ensuring their good personal development. They enjoy taking decisions to help with school improvement, relating for example, to providing extra play and shelter facilities in the playground and in managing vegetable growing in the allotment. Behaviour is good in lessons and pupils are safety-conscious when using equipment in lessons. They are helpful and polite to visitors and happily work together, which, when added to their regular attendance, gives pupils a good preparation for later life.

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*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

## How effective is the provision?

Pupils benefit from good and occasionally inspiring teaching which absorbs them in their learning. In the best lessons, activities are varied and stimulating and work is briskly-paced and challenging. In other lessons, insufficient time is given for pupils to work on their own and to learn for themselves with staff checking on their learning by prompting and probing their thinking. The quality and accuracy of assessment is much improved since the last inspection, although assessment information is not always consistently well used to shape learning activities to meet individual needs and talents.

The good curriculum provides an interesting range of experiences for pupils to apply their skills and achieve well. For example, the imaginative use of hand-held computers during classroom registration enables pupils to improve their research skills and develop their personal interests. Good use is made of partnerships to enrich learning, such as using the science resources and expertise of the nearby secondary school. Pupils spoke animatedly about their involvement in sport, in dance and their residential experiences.

The good care, support and guidance are a developing strength of the school, helping pupils of all backgrounds to increase their self-belief, raise their aspirations and achieve success. Pupils from challenging circumstances or those potentially vulnerable are well cared for and good use is made of the expertise of support agencies and the on-site Children's Centre.

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*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

### **How effective are leadership and management?**

The year-on-year progress the school is making demonstrates the very capable leadership of the headteacher. Teaching and learning is sensitively managed and monitored and benefits from well thought-out professional development. Systematic checking of progress, accurate assessment and a curriculum increasingly used to engage the interests of pupils all support improvement well. The strengthening of middle management is adding to the quality of learning, underpinning the ambitions of the school. The school enjoys productive partnerships with parents and carers, although not all opportunities are taken to extend their involvement in their children's learning and development. The strong links with other schools support the pupils' induction on arrival and their transition to the next phase well. Safeguarding requirements are met, with good systems in place to protect children. All procedures are understood well by staff. The governing body has a good grasp of areas for improvement and is resolute in its desire to strengthen the trend for improvement. Community cohesion is carefully planned and promoted well with some lively first-hand experiences, such as watching Zulu dancers perform. The rising achievement of all pupils reflects the school's commitment to tackling discrimination and ensuring all achieve success equally well.

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*These are the grades for leadership and management*

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

## **Early Years Foundation Stage**

Children settle exceptionally quickly and confidently into routines, thoroughly enjoying their time in the calm, happy and stimulating atmosphere. This includes those who have had limited pre-school experience. Most children enter reception with skills which are frequently well below that typical for their age. Communication skills are especially weak. All make good progress working towards the level of skills expected of them by the time they reach Year 1. Listening and skills linking sounds and letters develop well, encouraging early writing, for example, with early mark making in the fresh snow. Staff expectations for what can be achieved are high and, coupled with imaginative approaches, ensure the quality of teaching and learning are at least good. This was seen, for example, with children taking remote control instructions from Buzz Lightyear when improving the accuracy of their underarm throwing. Staff place a strong emphasis on developing self-control, for example, by making certain all share, take turns and join in. As a consequence, children's personal development improves rapidly. Increasingly confident leadership has brought about distinct improvements and encouraged a clear vision and ambition for the future. For example, plans are in place to develop more opportunities for children to explore and investigate outdoors. Provision is enriched by the close collaboration with the on-site Children's Centre, for example, in planning family activities together. Welfare requirements exceed those required. Positive engagement with parents and carers enhances children's development, although there is scope to engage them even more in their children's learning.



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*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

## Views of parents and carers

The vast majority of parents and carers are pleased with the education the school provides. They appreciate the school's happy atmosphere and the good care, guidance and support their children receive. Inspectors entirely endorse these views. A few parents and carers expressed concerns about how the school deals with unacceptable behaviour. Inspectors judged behaviour to be good and observed teachers dealing with any inappropriate behaviour effectively.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Dene House 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 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 59 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 302 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	32	54	27	46	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	27	46	32	54	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	22	37	32	54	5	8	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	26	44	29	49	4	7	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	27	46	29	49	2	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	21	36	33	56	1	2	2	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	22	37	33	56	3	5	0	0
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)	19	32	35	59	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	22	37	32	54	1	2	2	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	24	41	26	44	6	10	2	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	20	34	30	51	4	7	2	3
The school is led and managed effectively	24	41	31	53	2	3	1	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	30	51	27	46	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 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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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:	<p>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.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



29 November 2010

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Dene House Primary School, Peterlee, SR8 5RL**

I want to thank you all for the friendly, cheerful welcome that you gave the inspectors when we visited your school. We really enjoyed our time talking to you all.

Dene House is a good school which is steadily improving. We were impressed by your good behaviour and the good care taken of you to keep you safe, well-supported and effectively protected. You obviously feel confident because of this. You really do understand the benefits of a healthy lifestyle. The good links the staff enjoy with your parents and carers adds to your learning. Some of you told us that your teachers make your learning interesting. As a result, your skills are improving, especially in writing. Your school is taking positive action to continue to improve as can be seen in rising standards, for example, in your writing and your attendance.

We have asked your headteacher, staff and the governing body to look at extra ways of helping you to achieve more, both as a class and by yourselves. We would like staff to use the information they have on how well you are doing to prepare activities which use imaginative approaches in lessons to inspire you all to achieve more. For example, we have asked them to make sure that your writing and the mathematical skills of girls continue to improve. We have also asked the school to provide you with clear targets and guidance on the next steps you need to take to improve your work. This will help you to progress at a faster rate.

You can play your part by working as hard as you can and continuing to attend regularly. Thank you for helping with this inspection.

Best wishes for your future.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Clive Petts

Lead Inspector

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