

# Downsway Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	109896
<b>Local Authority</b>	West Berkshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	356650
<b>Inspection dates</b>	10–11 March 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Derek Aitken

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>	206
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Lorraine Doyle
<b>Headteacher</b>	Susan Cantwell
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	13 February 2008
<b>School address</b>	Warbreck Drive Berkshire RG31 6FE
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Thirteen lessons were observed and seven teachers were seen. A scrutiny of pupils' written work was carried out. Inspectors held discussions with members of the governing body, staff, groups of pupils, and a very few parents and carers. The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at documents, including policies and procedures relating to the safeguarding of pupils, self-evaluation records and assessment information. The inspectors analysed responses to questionnaires from 94 parents and carers, 102 pupils and 10 staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Inspectors examined how well pupils were developing their writing skills.
- They considered how well more-able pupils were challenged to do their best.
- They explored the quality of assessment opportunities provided by teachers and how well pupils use them to promote their learning and progress.
- They looked at how successful the school has been in improving outcomes for Reception children through recent modifications to the provision.

## Information about the school

Downsway is smaller than most primary schools. A large majority of the pupils come from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is low. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. Within this group the proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is larger than is usually the case. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in a single Reception class.

The school holds the Eco-schools Green Flag award.

**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**

**2**

## Main findings

Downsway is a satisfactory and improving school. This is due to senior leaders concertedly and effectively bringing about improvements in teaching, raising the attainment of more-able pupils and increasing the rates of progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Pupils are well cared for by the staff and they enjoy coming to school as reflected in their above average attendance. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress. This represents an improvement on their rate of progress at the last inspection. Pupils' attainment in Year 6 remains above average, but has improved in English in the last three years. The school has succeeded in increasing the proportion of pupils who attain the higher Level 5. School leaders have worked determinedly to raise attainment, for example, by improving pupils' literacy skills. Their efforts are bearing fruit, especially in Year 5 and Year 6, as evidenced in lessons and the scrutiny of pupils' work. Some weaknesses in tracking and assessment procedures in Key Stage 1 hold back the rate of progress of younger pupils. This shortfall is retrieved over Key Stage 2, where staffing has been more stable and systems are more effective in promoting pupils' progress. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory but improving securely, and this means that Downsway prepares pupils satisfactorily for the next stages of their lives.

Children get off to a satisfactory start in Reception. There is further work to do to strengthen the quality of planning and assessment practice and to ensure that the outdoor area is fully exploited to reinforce and extend children's learning. Due to regular monitoring by senior leaders, teaching across the school has improved since the last inspection and, while remaining satisfactory overall, the proportion of good lessons has risen significantly. Leaders have focused effectively on tackling weaker aspects of teaching, for example, through coaching. These initiatives have been effective in raising performance but have not yet had full impact across the school, due to some recent discontinuity in staffing in Key Stage 1.

The strengths of the curriculum and the care provided are reflected in several positive outcomes for pupils' personal development. Pupils behave considerately towards each other and they participate keenly in the wide range of sporting and musical activities provided. The school is implementing a new skills-based curriculum to enhance pupils' learning and to extend their awareness of the wider world. This useful initiative, together with other support programmes, is not fully embedded in the school's work and leaders have not yet developed purposefully the national and international strands of community cohesion.

Senior leaders and members of the governing body have an accurate picture of the school's key strengths and areas for improvement. Self-evaluation is supported well by a clearly-structured school development plan. Leaders' firm focus on tackling the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection has been translated into more effective

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actions in the last year. Given the improvements made since the last inspection in the quality of teaching, the introduction of a more robust pupil tracking system and the raising of the attainment of more-able pupils, particularly in English, the school's capacity to improve further is good.

Up to 40% of the 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?

- Improve outcomes for Reception children by:
  - sharpening the quality of assessment and planning to ensure children's progress is closely monitored and that work is matched precisely to their needs
  - ensuring better use is made of the outdoor area to reinforce and extend children's learning
- Accelerate pupils' progress by:
  - further strengthening the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good across the school
  - improving the use of assessment procedures and tracking information in Key Stage 1.
- Develop the effectiveness of the curriculum by:
  - ensuring that new initiatives are closely monitored and fully embedded into the school's work to ensure maximum impact on outcomes for pupils
  - implementing the national and international strands of community cohesion more purposefully.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**3**

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Their skills when they join Year 1 are generally above average. Currently the attainment of pupils in Year 6 is above average in both English and mathematics. More-able pupils make satisfactory but securely improving progress. The rate of pupils' progress varies across the year groups, but picks up pace in upper Key Stage 2. By Year 6, pupils' achieve the same levels in writing as they do in reading. In a Year 6 lesson pupils showed they understood the basic principles of formal writing, for example, in composing a complaint letter. All pupils clearly identified structural points and the need to edit their work while more-able pupils emphasised that tone and balance were important components of persuasive writing. Younger pupils develop their writing skills satisfactorily. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities also made good progress in this lesson as they were fully involved in brainstorming discussions and referred to 'picture plans' to help them express their ideas clearly. Pupils of all abilities have accurate calculation skills. However, only more-able pupils in Year 4 could use this knowledge securely in problem-solving exercises.

Pupils have very positive attitudes to their learning. Their good relationships embody the spirit of the school's 'values' education. They demonstrate by their good behaviour that they understand the impact of their actions on others. Pupils are well aware of how to keep themselves and others safe, for example while taking part in vigorous play outside.

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They enjoy their healthy school dinners. Pupils make effective use of opportunities to exercise responsibility, for example, as school councillors and 'red hats'. They contribute to the local community usefully through collaborative projects and in competitions with pupils from other schools. They demonstrate a clear understanding of ecological matters such as oil pollution as reflected in the Eco-schools Green Flag award.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	2
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	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>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<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?

Teaching includes some strengths. Lessons get off to a good start because teachers manage pupils well and classroom routines are clearly established. Teachers usually make clear links with what pupils already know to set new learning in context. Teachers question pupils carefully and this promotes pupils' listening and speaking skills well. In the better lessons, learning objectives and success criteria are shared very effectively with pupils. There are good opportunities for pupils of all abilities to understand and reflect on their learning and they use this information wisely to improve their skills. On these occasions pupils respond energetically to the brisk pace of learning and demonstrate well-developed collaborative skills. These good features are not yet commonplace across the school and sometimes work is not closely matched to pupils' needs to enable all groups, including the more-able, to be supported or challenged to best effect. This inconsistency is also reflected in the variable quality of opportunities teachers provide through their

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marking in helping pupils to take greater responsibility for evaluating and improving their work.

The curriculum makes a very effective contribution to pupils' moral development and pupils are well informed about personal safety through road safety training and safer internet days. The wide-ranging extra-curricular programme includes provision for judo enthusiasts, eco-representatives and instrumentalists. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported through skilled questioning by teaching assistants and resources such as the 'talking tins' which jog their memory and help them express key ideas. Recent improvements to tracking systems have underpinned useful modifications to the curriculum in Key Stage 2. These initiatives have not yet had time to have had full impact on pupils' progress.

Good pastoral arrangements exist to support pupils' well-being. Pupils feel safe at school because the site is secure and good relationships with the staff encourage a spirit of close cooperation. Pupils say that bullying is very rare and is quickly sorted out by the staff. Pupils are closely supervised at play and minor incidents are clearly recorded. Procedures for pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable are appropriately documented and close links have been established with outside agencies to provide pupils with individual help, for example, in speech and language development. Close attention is paid to attendance matters and, as a result, the attendance of the vast majority of pupils has remained consistently above average.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</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>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

Senior leaders, including members of the governing body, have worked effectively to motivate staff and bring about improvements. Expectations for the performance of staff and pupils alike have risen. Although the impact of the hard work undertaken has not yet secured good achievement for all pupils, outcomes for pupils are improving strongly. A more robust tracking system for pupils in Key Stage 2 has been implemented. This has enabled leaders to identify pupils who are at risk of falling behind and take corrective action more quickly. A wide range of actions is undertaken to monitor provision, and this informs the school development plan that provides the school with a clear steer for the future. Governance is good. Members of the governing body question school leaders closely about pupils' progress. They have clear oversight of the school's good arrangements for safeguarding, which include some particular strengths in systems for ensuring pupils' health and safety. Parents and carers commend the school's successful efforts to engage them in their children's learning. Effective partnerships with outside

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agencies and other educational establishments, including the local special school, have promoted good progress for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school promotes equality satisfactorily, as reflected in the fact that almost all groups make satisfactory but steadily improving progress. The school makes a satisfactory contribution to community cohesion, but the quality of its work is stronger in the local area than in the national or international contexts.

*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	3
<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>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter the school from a considerable number of pre-school settings. They make satisfactory progress in Reception and by the time they join Year 1 their learning and development exceeds the expectations for their age in most areas of learning. Reception children are settled, they make some choices about the activities they engage in and, on occasion, share responsibility for decisions. They behave well, relate well to adults and show care and consideration for each other. Adults ensure welfare requirements are met. Effective steps are taken to safeguard children. Some aspects of planning and assessment lack the necessary detail, focus and structure to ensure that activities provide children with challenging experiences. The outdoor play space is readily accessible and has good facilities but these are not yet utilised to best effect to reinforce indoor learning and promote children's independence. Strengths of the setting include effective links with outside agencies to support children with a statement of special educational needs. Parents and carers are usefully involved in supporting their children's reading skills, for example, through book bags. Satisfactory leadership and management have identified areas for development, but monitoring and tracking procedures lack the necessary sharpness to ensure rapid improvement in outcomes.



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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>3</b>
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

The proportion of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire was above average. The statistical responses, as reflected in the table below, and the tone of the comments received, indicate that the large majority of parents and carers have a very positive view of the school's work. They commend the effective ways in which the school seeks to promote pupils' personal development and the 'open lines of communication'. Inspection findings endorse these strengths in the school's work.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Downsway 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 94 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 206 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	59	63	29	31	4	4	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	59	63	34	36	1	1	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	40	43	49	52	3	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	47	50	44	47	3	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	50	53	41	44	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	44	47	46	49	2	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	43	46	49	52	1	1	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)	37	39	43	46	2	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	50	53	40	43	4	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	32	34	52	55	5	5	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	37	39	52	55	5	5	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	48	51	41	44	5	5	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	57	61	34	36	2	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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

## 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.**



14 March 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Downsway Primary School, Reading RG31 6FE**

I would like to thank you for your help when the inspection team visited your school recently. This is what we found. Yours is a satisfactory school but there are several good things about it.

- The staff take good care of you and you know how to act safely in school.
- You enjoy school and get on well with the staff and each other. You behave well.
- You have a good understanding of how to live healthily, you care for your environment and you carry out a number of useful tasks, for example, as 'red hats' and councillors.

When you leave school at the end of Year 6 your attainment in English and mathematics is above average and you have made satisfactory progress. To help you make faster progress and learn better, there are some things we have asked the school to do.

- Keep a more careful check on how well Reception children are doing, so that planning for their work and play both indoors and outdoors can be improved.
- Make sure teaching is good in all years so that all of you are stretched to do your best.
- Keep a more careful check on how well pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 are doing.
- Make sure that recent changes to the curriculum and new plans for it help your learning even more.
- Provide you with better chances to gain first-hand experiences of the lives of people in other parts of the United Kingdom and the wider world.

You can help by trying your best at all times and by continuing to attend school very regularly.

Yours sincerely

Derek Aitken

Lead inspector

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