

Donisthorpe Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119944
Local Authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	363912
Inspection dates	8–9 June 2011
Reporting inspector	Anthony O'Malley HMI

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	219
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Helen Gravett
Headteacher	Sylvie Newman
Date of previous school inspection	20 April 2010
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. They observed 16 lessons taught by 11 teachers. They held meetings with the Chair of the Governing Body, the senior leadership team, two groups of pupils and an officer from the local authority. Informal discussions were held with several parents. Inspectors looked at key documents including the school's plans for improvement and minutes of meetings of the governing body. They analysed questionnaires returned by 98 parents and carers, as well as questionnaires completed by pupils and members of staff.

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

- How successfully does teaching meet the needs of all pupils?
- How successfully does the school provide opportunities for pupils to show initiative and work independently?
- Has attainment in science risen sufficiently?
- Does the curriculum provide a stimulating and coherent set of activities?

Information about the school

Donisthorpe is an average-sized primary school. The proportions of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and with special educational needs and/or disabilities are close to the national averages. The overwhelming majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils who join the school after the Reception Year is much higher than usual. This is because a significant number of pupils join in Year 3 from a neighbouring infant school.

In April 2010, the school was judged to require significant improvement because it was performing significantly less well than in all circumstances it could be reasonably expected to perform. A monitoring inspection in November 2010, judged that the school had made good progress in tackling weaknesses identified in the earlier inspection. A new headteacher took up her post in June 2010 and a new deputy headteacher joined the school in January 2011.

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

3

Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

This is a satisfactory school that is improving rapidly. Through discussions with inspectors and comments made on their questionnaires, it is clear that most parents and carers are delighted with the improvements made in a little over one year. One commented, 'Since the recruitment of the new head the school has grown from strength to strength,' and another remarked that the ethos of the school 'is overwhelmingly positive - it has the feel of a school moving in great leaps in the right direction, due to the hard work of teachers and the leadership team.' Inspection evidence largely supports these views.

Provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good and they make good progress, particularly in their early reading and writing skills. Progress made by pupils by the time they leave school at the end of Year 6 is satisfactory and they reach average standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Teaching is satisfactory and improving, with an increasing proportion that is good. Pupils have more opportunities to work independently and show initiative than at the time of the previous inspection. However, pupils are not yet making good progress, as effective practice is not consistent throughout the school. Learning slows when teachers rely too much on worksheets that demand little of the pupils or plan lessons that focus more on what pupils are doing than on what they are learning. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive plenty of additional support and they make the same satisfactory progress as others. However, adults do not always use their knowledge of pupils' needs to make sure the activities they provide in lessons help individual pupils achieve their next steps in learning. This means that sometimes activities are too hard for pupils to achieve well while at other times expectations are low and the tasks set undemanding.

Pupils report that they feel safe and that staff deal effectively with any problems that arise. They have a good understanding of the importance of diet and exercise in a healthy lifestyle. The satisfactory curriculum provides a range of activities to meet their interests and develop their social skills and moral understanding. However, it provides limited opportunities for pupils to develop their wider cultural awareness, particularly of the range of faiths and cultures in the United Kingdom. Positions of responsibility, such as membership of the school council or the school choir, enable pupils to make a good contribution to the school and local community.

Lesson observations and reviews of work in pupils' books help to ensure that the school's self-evaluation is largely accurate and that action plans have clear and appropriate priorities for improvement. Significant improvements are underway, although the school recognises that there is much more to do. Challenging targets, combined with regular meetings with teachers to review pupils' progress, are helping to raise attainment in

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English, mathematics and science. However, the majority of senior and middle leaders in the school are new to their roles and the implementation of some policies introduced to secure improvements is inconsistent. Procedures for leaders to demonstrate and report on the impact of their roles on teaching and learning, and on outcomes for pupils, are at an early stage of development. Consequently, the school's capacity to sustain improvements is satisfactory.

Up to 40% of 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 the quality and consistency of teaching by:
 - ensuring that objectives for lessons focus on what pupils will learn rather than what they will do
 - reducing the use of undemanding worksheets
 - always providing activities for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities that match their needs and so lead to good and better progress.
- Ensure that strategies for improvement are implemented consistently by:
 - providing necessary training and support for leaders at all levels
 - requiring all leaders to report on the impact of their leadership on the quality of teaching and learning, and on outcomes for pupils.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Children enter the Reception Year with expected skills and experiences in most areas. Their reading and writing skills are slightly below those expected. School data and current work show that attainment at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 is average. This is an improvement on the low attainment reported in the previous inspection. Attainment in science is also now in line with other schools because of the higher priority given to the subject in the revised curriculum. These improvements reflect satisfactory progress and achievement by all groups of pupils including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Pupils' progress was good in lessons observed during the inspection where practical or creative activities engaged their interest. For example in a lesson in Year 1, pupils worked effectively in pairs and groups. The lesson explored how adjectives help us describe the world around us. Pupils benefited from the opportunity to study a variety of plants and discuss with their partners ways of describing leaves, stalks and flowers. The teacher planned carefully for groups and individuals. Targeted questioning and opportunities for active learning ensured that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and boys enjoyed the work and were well prepared for writing their poems. Throughout the school, teachers are aware of the need to plan activities that take account of earlier learning. However, in a small minority of lessons, the activities set for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities did not match their needs. For example, in two English lessons pupils practised drawing, cutting and pasting skills at the expense of developing or consolidating literacy skills.

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In all classes, pupils show positive attitudes to learning and get on well together. They offer a polite and friendly welcome to visitors and report that they feel safe, secure and valued by the adults at the school. The school is particularly successful at supporting the personal development of pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable and those with significant learning, medical and behavioural needs. Pupils have good opportunities to contribute to the life of the school. They take on a number of responsibilities such as playground friends, house captains and library monitors, and are consulted about site security and staff appointments. These roles contribute positively to the school's friendly and purposeful atmosphere.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
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	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

¹ 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?

The school's most effective teaching is lively, challenging and makes pupils think. There are high expectations of pupils' ability to work cooperatively and to learn independently. In turn, pupils are well motivated and demonstrate a capacity for perseverance, resourcefulness and self-reliance. However, this quality of teaching and learning is not yet evident throughout the school. There is also variation in how well teachers use information about pupils' earlier learning to ensure that their work offers the right level of challenge. For example, texts in a guided reading group were too difficult for a number of pupils to read fluently, and worksheets provided for lower-attaining pupils during a literacy lesson were similarly ill matched.

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The school rightly focuses on developing literacy and numeracy skills. It is now successfully promoting writing in other areas of the curriculum through themes such as 'Chocolate' and 'Egyptian Gods'. These themes begin with 'Inspiration Days' that engage pupils and provide stimulating and well-planned activities. They encourage practical and investigative activities and so contribute well to the pupils' personal development. Conversations with pupils indicate that the quality of provision for learning and applying information and communication technology skills varies between classes and that provision for religious education is patchy.

The school can point to many examples of good care and support for individuals and families. The learning mentor and other school staff work closely with local agencies, including social services, to ensure that children receive appropriate and prompt support when necessary. These effective partnerships have led to improved attendance, behaviour and academic progress. They have also, on a number of occasions, secured the safety and well-being of children.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

Strong leadership from the headteacher has motivated the whole school community to work together to raise achievement. Satisfactory support from local authority officers and links with staff from other schools have helped develop the skills of other members of the leadership team who are now increasingly taking on responsibility for driving improvement. Currently they have limited experience of conducting lesson observations. A largely accurate analysis of the school's performance has resulted in appropriate actions to improve provision. As a result, teaching and learning are securely satisfactory and improving.

The governing body fulfils its duties satisfactorily. Named governors are linked to key aspects of the school's work and subject leaders communicate directly with governors about attainment and achievement. Governors accompany subject leaders on visits to classrooms to observe practice. All required policies are in place, but because a number of these have only recently been adopted, their impact is still to be reviewed.

Appropriate training ensures that staff have the skills required for keeping pupils safe. All requirements regarding safeguarding are in place. The security of everyone on the school site has benefited from improvements to fencing and the procedures for welcoming visitors to the school.

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Detailed monitoring of how well pupils are performing shows that all groups benefit equally from provision and make satisfactory progress. The school is an inclusive community and acts decisively if there is any evidence of discrimination. It knows the proportions of pupils from groups, such as those known to be eligible for free school meals and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, who participate in school clubs. However, it does not use this information in its equalities action plan to set targets for greater participation of any group that is under-represented. The parents' forum meets half-termly and provides good opportunities for parents and carers to share their views on matters such as school reports and school uniform. The promotion of community cohesion is satisfactory. The pupils have strong links with the local community and but are less aware of the diverse cultures in the United Kingdom and the wider world.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make good progress from their starting points. By the time they enter Year 1, their personal and numeracy skills are above average, and their reading and writing skills have improved from slightly below expectations to be in line with national averages. These gains are the result of good induction procedures that help children quickly settle into the daily routines, and skilled staff who take every opportunity to extend the children's learning. For example, at the start of the day, counting songs and carefully targeted questions consolidate number skills while the class teacher checks and celebrates work done at home. Children enjoy their learning because relationships are positive. They work confidently with their peers and enjoy developing their language skills through activities such as retelling the 'Three Little Pigs' story with stick puppets. Parents and carers are particularly pleased with the feedback they get on their children's progress through the 'Learning Journey' books.

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The recently appointed deputy headteacher leads the Early Years Foundation Stage team effectively. All staff are appropriately trained, and planning and assessment procedures are used effectively to monitor children's progress and identify areas for development. For example, plans are in place to improve the outdoor learning area which currently lacks the resources to promote the six areas of learning as successfully as the indoor area.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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

An above-average proportion of parents and carers returned questionnaires. Most of those who responded have very positive views on most aspects featured in the questionnaire. For example, all felt that the school keeps their children safe. Written comments were also mostly positive. A few did outline concerns, for example, regarding the progress that their children were making, parking problems and supervision at lunchtime. All of the written comments made were shared with the headteacher without compromising confidentiality. The headteacher assured the inspectors that she would take account of the individual concerns raised.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Donisthorpe 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 98 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 219 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	47	48	45	46	5	5	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	55	56	43	44	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	22	22	63	64	11	11	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	19	19	61	62	13	13	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	31	32	59	60	4	4	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	22	22	61	62	11	11	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	35	36	56	57	4	4	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)	36	37	53	54	4	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	31	32	57	58	7	7	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	23	23	59	60	9	9	2	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	33	34	53	54	5	5	2	2
The school is led and managed effectively	50	51	41	42	4	4	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	46	47	40	41	5	5	1	1

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	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 2010 to 31 December 2010 and 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.

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">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.



10 June 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Donisthorpe Primary School, Swadlincote, DE12 7QF

You may remember that I recently visited your school with two other inspectors. I would like to thank all of you for making us so welcome and being so polite and helpful. We had the chance to talk with many of you and it was pleasing to hear how much you enjoy school. You like your teachers and helpers, and you always try to do your best.

Your school has made many improvements since its previous inspection. It is satisfactory and improving all the time. These are some of our main findings.

Your headteacher is leading the school well.

The standards of your work are rising and you are making better progress.

You feel safe in school and have a good awareness of healthy living.

You are well cared for at school.

The children in the Reception class make a good start to their time in school.

In order to help the school continue to improve, I have asked the school's leaders and managers to work with staff to increase the amount of good teaching, for example, by making sure that any worksheets they hand out help you make good progress. I have also asked subject leaders to check carefully that their plans for improvement are helping you reach higher standards.

Your headteacher, the staff and the governing body want the school to continue to improve. All of you can help too by continuing to behave well and by making sure you come to school as often as possible.

Thank you once again for being so helpful.

Yours sincerely

Anthony O'Malley

Her Majesty's Inspector

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