

Denton Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114433
Local Authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	357536
Inspection dates	9–10 June 2011
Reporting inspector	Clive Dunn

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	177
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sara Fletcher
Headteacher	Audrey Jarvis
Date of previous school inspection	29 January 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They saw parts of 15 lessons taught by eight staff. Inspectors spoke with pupils, parents and carers, staff and representatives of the governing body. They observed the school's work, and looked at planning, monitoring, a range of policy documents and records, the governing body minutes and a range of pupils' work. They also analysed 88 questionnaires returned by parents and carers, 94 from pupils and 30 from staff.

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

- To what extent learning and progress are improving securely and quickly.
- How well the school uses agreed assessment procedures to match work to the needs of different pupils, particularly in writing and mathematics.
- How effectively teachers adapt their teaching and the curriculum to meet the needs and aspirations of pupils, particularly boys, and the impact of additional interventions for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- To what extent leaders and managers at different levels are securing rapid-enough improvements in outcomes for pupils, and the rigour of the systems they use for this.

Information about the school

The number of pupils on roll at this school has fallen since the previous inspection and it is now smaller than average. Most pupils are of White British heritage and very few speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and the numbers with a statement of special educational needs are above average and rising. The governing body manages a nursery on-site for children from age three that was part of this inspection. In 2010, the school achieved 'Healthy Schools Plus Enhanced Status' and the 'Green Flag' Eco-school 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

3

Main findings

Denton Community Primary is an improving school that currently provides a satisfactory standard of education. The determined leadership of the headteacher has secured improvements in the quality of teaching to eradicate previous underachievement. Her firm, clear vision and ambition for the school, supported by the governing body, has ensured consistent application of strategies to accelerate progress. For example, teachers diligently apply the 'Marking to Improve' policy to ensure that pupils know their next steps. Staff understand what the school is trying to achieve, though they do not always feel their views and suggestions are taken into account when decisions about the best ways to achieve improvement are made. Most parents and carers are positive about most aspects of the school. However, a significant minority do not feel that the school listens to their views and suggestions. Leaders and the governing body have an accurate picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Senior leaders monitor individual pupil and group progress rigorously alongside the quality of provision, though they miss opportunities to use this to focus targets precisely enough in the school's plans for improvement. That said, there is a clear trend of improvement and attainment is rising strongly. Taking all of this into account, the school has a satisfactory capacity to secure further improvements.

Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. In the rest of the school, progress is at least satisfactory and accelerating. Actions taken by the school have been particularly effective in certain areas, such as improving reading and writing at Key Stage 2, where progress is now good. Consequently, current attainment in Years 5 and 6 is broadly average. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall because it has not secured consistently good achievement. For example, pupils make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1 and in mathematics across the school. In lessons where progress is slower, this is often because tasks and teaching do not have the right level of challenge to promote good achievement. However, the proportion of good teaching is increasing and much of the teaching seen during the inspection was good or better.

Pupils' good attitudes and engagement are an important factor underpinning their improving achievement. They respond well to the consistent encouragement of good 'learning behaviours', such as independently accessing resources or supportive displays, or making links with their own prior learning. Pupils are very clear about different things that make a 'good learner' and teachers seize opportunities to encourage this, celebrating and praising good examples during lessons. Combined with regular opportunities to review and improve their own and each other's work, this has had a particularly good impact in terms of accelerating progress in writing in Key Stage 2. Teachers sometimes miss opportunities to use this to best effect by spending too long on whole-class introductions, which limits time for pupils to work collaboratively or independently at their own level. Carefully selected topics interest, motivate and engage boys and girls equally. A programme of

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additional interventions and effective support from teaching assistants enables pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities to make progress in line with their peers.

While the focus has rightly been on raising attainment, good-quality care has also resulted in some areas of good personal development for pupils. Leaders prioritise this in their relentless drive for improvement to ensure that promotion of pupils' well-being is always part of their plans. The overwhelming majority of parents and carers feel that the school keeps their children safe. Pupils are confident that adults sort out any problems and appreciate things such as the 'Say no to bullying' week. They develop good habits towards adopting healthy lifestyles, reflected in the 'Healthy Schools Plus Enhanced Status' recently achieved.

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?

- Raise achievement to good by ensuring pupils make consistently good progress, particularly at Key Stage 1 and in mathematics across the school.
- Improve teaching so that it is good overall, by January 2012, by:
 - using assessment information to ensure all tasks are matched carefully to the needs of different groups
 - reducing the proportion of the lesson spent in whole-class introductions.
- Secure a better capacity to improve by:
 - fully involving staff at all levels in evaluating the school's effectiveness and planning necessary improvements
 - regularly asking parents and carers for their views and ensuring these are used to inform important decisions about whole-school matters.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Attainment has fluctuated in recent years, with results in 2010 dipping significantly below average in English and mathematics. School tracking data show that the attainment of pupils currently in Years 5 and 6 is average. The quality of work in pupils' books provides convincing confirmation of this. Pupils in Year 5 are already attaining levels comparable to Year 6 in reading and writing, indicating that this is a strongly improving trend. From starting points in Nursery and Reception Year that are below expected levels, rates of progress are at least satisfactory and improving because pupils are effectively engaged in their learning. For example, pupils in Year 1 were able to explain not only what they were doing when learning about the life cycle of a frog, but also why they were doing it, and how this had built on from previous lessons. In an English lesson in Year 5, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities made good progress in line with their peers, motivated and enabled to work with enough independence while benefiting from useful prompts and support from the teaching assistant. Where tasks do not have quite the right level of challenge to sustain good achievement for different groups, this often, though not exclusively, includes extending the more able.

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Across the school, pupils make good use of 'learning walls' which provide helpful prompts to support them in their tasks. Pupils know what steps they need to take to improve their work and are often involved in identifying these for themselves or their peers. Consequently, they are supportive of each other, for example bursting into spontaneous applause after a Year 6 pupil read aloud their writing in a lesson exploring Shakespeare's Hamlet. The teacher took the opportunity to deepen pupils' understanding by following up with questions to prompt reflection of why the writing was so effective. In a mathematics lesson in Year 4, pupils were able to select and apply their own methods to solve worded number problems. However, the school has correctly identified through its own monitoring that progress in mathematics is satisfactory because pupils across the school are not able to do use and apply their skills consistently well enough.

Behaviour, both in lessons and around school, is mostly good and sometimes outstanding. Pupils show respect for each other, mix well and demonstrate a clear understanding of right and wrong. They respond positively to a range of cultural opportunities, for example through art and music. Their understanding of other cultures and religions is satisfactory, because there are too few opportunities to engage with groups not represented in the immediate community. Pupils know and understand many of the factors that promote their health and are keen to take action to do so. They take on a range of responsibilities within school, including the school council, and as 'eco-warriors', contributing to the successful achievement of the 'Green Flag' eco-school status. There are some opportunities for pupils to engage in the wider community, for example working with the parish council to develop the local playground. However, the school is aware that this aspect of its work is at an early stage of development, and pupils are unsure about their involvement beyond the school. Though pupils understand the next steps in their learning well, their average attendance and basic skills levels mean they are satisfactorily prepared for the next stage of their education and life beyond.

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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	3
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?

Strong relationships with adults at all levels effectively support pupils' improving achievement and well-being. A good range of effective partnerships with other agencies and professionals help the school to break down possible barriers to engagement for pupils whose contexts may make them potentially vulnerable, including support for pupils with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. The strong focus on 'behaviour for learning' has raised the overall quality of pupils' behaviour from satisfactory to good. The broad, balanced curriculum provides effectively for pupils' personal, social, health and emotional development, including through additional small-group sessions, where necessary. Transition arrangements between the Nursery, Reception Year and Year 1 are good, and the school enjoys good links with local secondary schools, which also enhances the sports curriculum. Though it has much strength, the curriculum is satisfactory overall because teachers do not adjust it sufficiently well to meet the needs of different groups. Teachers sometimes try to adapt work for different groups by adjusting the quantity required or providing additional support, rather than making sure the task itself has precisely the right level of challenge.

Carefully planned interventions, targeted to address particular areas of need, help ensure pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, or those at risk of underachieving, make at least satisfactory progress. The most effective of these have a sharp focus and a brisk, purposeful pace, resulting in good progress, though this is not consistent. Teachers

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ensure pupils have a clear understanding of what they are supposed to be learning and identify precisely the different things required to be successful. Pupils use and respond to the teachers' marking effectively, sometimes adding their own comments about their learning. Teaching is more consistently good or better at Key Stage 2. Tasks are not always open ended enough and some present pupils with too few opportunities to make their own choices in their learning to promote better achievement, particularly in Key Stage 1.

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?

The senior leadership team provides a purposeful direction for improvement. Clear expectations have secured improvements to the quality of teaching, removing inadequacies identified by the school that were contributing to past underachievement. However, other leaders and staff at different levels are not sufficiently involved in planning improvements and evaluating how effective their actions are to secure further improvements more rapidly. The governing body fulfils its statutory duties. It also has a number of good features that support the improvements seen. For example, regular monitoring visits and careful consideration of reports and information give it a good insight to the performance of the school. Members of the governing body use this to ask challenging questions of school leaders to hold them to account. It recognises the need to explore different mechanisms to improve its ability to seek and respond to the views of parents and carers.

The good range of partnerships not only contributes effectively to pupils' well-being, but also to the improving achievement. For example, links with a literacy specialist over an extended period successfully introduced effective teaching of reading through guided groups, resulting in the good progress now seen in this area at Key Stage 2. The school is also proactive in engaging with other schools to support professional development for staff. Clear and effective systems to track pupils' progress enable the school to analyse the performance of different groups and respond to any variations. Leaders have used these well to eradicate underperformance, but do not always use the information to set sharp and precise enough targets to even out inconsistencies in progress between different subjects. The school does not tolerate discrimination of any kind and there have been no recorded incidents of racist behaviour in recent years. The school meets statutory requirements relating to safeguarding. Staff understand the school's policies and procedures, and training relevant to role is provided and logged. Leaders carefully monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of its work relating to pupils whose contexts may make them potentially vulnerable. The school operates as a largely cohesive community.

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However, plans to reach out to groups not represented in the immediate community, a need identified in the school's audit, are at an early stage. Considering outcomes, the school provides satisfactory value for money.

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	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
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

Recent changes to the leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage have resulted in a more consistent approach across Nursery and Reception, and better links between Nursery and the rest of the school. The early years welfare requirements are met. A combination of separate and shared indoor space, and the shared outdoor area, promotes opportunities for pupils to engage in all six areas of learning and enables the sharing of good practice between adults. However, children do not have continuous access to the outdoor area when selecting their own activities, which limits their choices. Available space outside is used creatively and adults make good use of the adjoining playground to promote children's physical development. Different topics and themes, carefully selected to interest and engage the children, effectively link the various areas. As part of the current 'sea' theme, children were making good use of the outdoor 'Sea-Life Centre', promoting development of a range of social, literacy and number skills.

Children make good progress in their learning. Adults are responsive to identified areas for improvement in the rest of the school. For example, to support the drive to raise literacy levels, the early years' environment and teaching promote the different aspects of communication, language and literacy particularly well. Children achieved well with their writing during a well-focused teacher-led session in Reception. Procedures for assessment are robust and effective, enabling adults to build a detailed picture of the capabilities and progress of each child in order to be able to plan their next steps. Adults judge well when to observe, and when to interact to extend learning. For example, a small group of boys

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demonstrated a range of skills and qualities working together to organise materials and equipment to create a pattern on a large roll of paper, solving the problem of how to keep it flat. As it reached the stage that the activity was not developing any further and seemed to be ending, the teaching assistant intervened at precisely the right time. A short while later, the boys proudly shared the treasure maps they had created with the paper, linked to the 'sea' theme.

Children mix well and their confidence and willingness to engage reflect their feelings of safety. They conduct themselves well, both inside and out, and are very responsive to adults. Children in Nursery get into good habits and sit, listen and join-in well during sessions all together on the carpet. Later, they confidently selected their own toys to go in the water as they explored which could or could not 'swim' in their own floating experiment. However, some missed opportunities prevent further development of independence across early years, such as using a system that allows children to 'self-register' when they arrive to enable immediate engagement in activities rather than sitting on the carpet, or organising their own snack at a time that suits them.

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

The proportion of parents and carers that completed the questionnaire was well above average. The overwhelming majority of parents and carers agree that their children enjoy school and it keeps them safe. Most parents and carers responded positively to the large majority of questions. A small minority do not agree that the school is well led and managed, takes account of their views and suggestions or deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour. However, a small minority of parents and carers were also in strong agreement that the school does these aspects well.

A number of questionnaires also contained written comments, mostly to explain areas of concern. The most common area related to parents and carers feeling that the school does not take account of their views and suggestions, and related concerns regarding communication, and leadership and management. During this inspection, the inspection team found that the effectiveness of engagement with parents and carers is satisfactory, using typically expected methods including annual reports, individual parent and carer consultation evenings or appointments, and newsletters. We have asked the school to improve their engagement with parents and carers by regularly seeking their views and taking account of those expressed.

A number of parents and carers also wrote comments expressing concerns around the school's effectiveness dealing with unacceptable behaviour. Taking the full range of

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evidence into account, the overall quality of behaviour is good, which represents an improvement since the previous inspection. The quality of care, guidance and support, including support for individuals with identified behavioural, emotional or social difficulties, is also good.

Positive comments identified a range of different features of the school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Denton Community 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 88 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 177 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	40	45	45	51	3	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	44	50	42	48	2	2	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	40	45	38	43	8	9	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	39	44	34	39	11	13	4	5
The teaching is good at this school	43	49	35	40	6	7	3	3
The school helps me to support my child's learning	41	47	38	43	9	10	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	37	42	44	50	3	3	2	2
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)	21	24	47	53	8	9	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	26	30	48	55	8	9	4	5
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	21	24	42	48	15	17	8	9
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	22	25	38	43	16	18	7	8
The school is led and managed effectively	20	23	35	40	21	24	6	7
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	35	40	42	48	6	7	4	5

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.



13 June 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Denton Community Primary School, Denton BN9 0QJ

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school recently. We really enjoyed talking to you. We are very grateful for how you helped us to find out all about your school and to those of you who answered our questionnaire. We have judged your school to be satisfactory, which means it does some things well, but there are things it can do better. Here are some of the things we found out.

- You enjoy school and feel safe when you are here.
- The progress that you are making and the quality of teaching are at an acceptable level and getting better.
- You make good progress in reading and writing in Key Stage 2.
- When you leave Denton, your work is at the right level expected of children across the country.
- Your behaviour is good and we were particularly impressed with your 'good learning behaviours' that are really helping you achieve more.
- Your understanding of healthy lifestyles is good and you are keen to take action to be healthy.
- Your school has good links with other schools and professionals.
- Children in the Nursery and Reception classes are doing well.

Those responsible for running the school have made suitable plans to make it better for you. To help them with this, we have asked them to make sure you make at least as much progress in Key Stage 1 overall and in mathematics across the school as you do in other areas. To do this, we have asked your teachers to make sure that the work they give you is not too easy or too hard, and to give you more time in lessons to work independently or together. We also want your school to make sure it listens to the ideas of all of the adults that work there, and to ask your parents and carers more often for their views and use these to help too.

You can all help by continuing to work hard at your good 'learning behaviours' and always trying your very hardest, particularly when set a task to do by yourselves or with a partner or in a small group.

Yours sincerely

Clive Dunn

Lead inspector

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