

Dove First School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124121
Local Authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	380808
Inspection dates	28–29 November 2011
Reporting inspector	David Driscoll

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	First
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	73
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Kesh Govan
Headteacher	Mrs Susan Wade
Date of previous school inspection	9 July 2009
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors, who observed nine lessons taught by four teachers. They held meetings with groups of pupils, parents and carers, staff and members of the governing body. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at records of pupils' attainment and progress, the school's development plan, records of checks on teaching and documents relating to the safeguarding of pupils. They also analysed responses to questionnaires completed by staff, pupils and 23 parents and carers.

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

- How well do teachers use assessment information to set challenging tasks for all groups of pupils?
- To what extent do leaders link their monitoring of what the school provides to its impact on pupils' outcomes?
- Is the school equally effective at supporting all pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, whatever their particular needs?

Information about the school

The school is much smaller than the average primary school. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities varies from year to year. Currently the proportion supported by the school is average, as is the proportion additionally supported by external professionals or with a statement of special educational needs, most of whom have physical disabilities or sight loss. An average proportion of pupils is known to be eligible for free school meals. Almost all pupils come from a White British background. A new headteacher took up post in January 2010.

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 school. Pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics is outstanding. They make good progress overall, and leave Year 4 with high levels of attainment, well prepared for the next stage of their education and later life. Teaching, the curriculum and the quality of care provided by the school are all good.

Progress is good in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Years 3 and 4. In these year groups teachers use information from assessments to accurately match tasks to pupils' prior attainment and challenge pupils of all abilities. Progress is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2, but the most able pupils do not make as much progress as in other year groups because the work they are given is sometimes too easy for them. Attainment levels vary between key subjects. They are high in mathematics and especially in English, but in information and communication technology (ICT) they are average. The school has recently upgraded its computer facilities and pupils make satisfactory progress when they learn in the new ICT suite. However, progress is no better than satisfactory because pupils are not given enough opportunities to apply and consolidate their ICT skills in other subjects.

All aspects of pupils' personal development are good. Parents, carers and pupils all say how safe the school is. Pupils feel safe because they know that there is always someone to turn to if they have a problem. They are also taught effectively about how to keep themselves safe. Pupils look out for one another, making sure that younger children and those with disabilities do not come to harm at playtime. Pupils with sight loss receive excellent support from qualified and experienced specialist support teachers. They play a full part in the life of the school and achieve equally as well as their peers.

The school has shown good improvement since it was last inspected. The headteacher's accurate evaluations of the school's main strengths and weaknesses have provided a clear focus for development. Well-thought-out plans are proving successful in raising attainment, accelerating progress and providing a better quality of education. The school has good capacity to continue such improvement. One of the biggest changes since the last inspection has been in the engagement of parents and carers. The improved communications, use of the learning platform and workshops have led to much greater involvement of parents and carers in the life of the school. Attendance has improved as a result, and achievement has risen as parents and carers are better equipped to help their children learn at home.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Provide pupils with a wide range of planned opportunities to practise their ICT skills in different subjects.
- Make better use of information from assessments to set more challenging tasks for the more-able pupils in Years 1 and 2.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Children join the Early Years Foundation Stage with the knowledge, skills and understanding expected for their age. The work and lessons seen during the inspection confirm that their good progress ensures they start Year 1 with above average attainment, which they maintain until the start of Year 3. Their progress accelerates in Years 3 and 4, and a high proportion exceed the levels expected by the end of Year 4. Over 25% of pupils in Year 4 typically reach the levels expected nationally by the end of Year 6. Progress is good for all groups of pupils. Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported, no matter what their particular needs may be. The school has a simple, clear and effective way of recording their achievements against their targets. This allows all staff concerned with supporting them to have up-to-date information on their progress and the next steps they need to take. A notable result is that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities who are supported by the school rapidly get to the point where they no longer require additional support.

Pupils are quick to settle to their work in lessons. They concentrate well and enjoy tackling problems. Pupils do not give up if they do not succeed first time, but persevere and try another method. They demonstrate a good degree of independence and cooperate well. For example, pupils turn to their friends for advice if they are unsure about what step to take next rather than going straight to their teacher. Behaviour is good, both in and out of lessons. Pupils get on well with one another and play happily together. They are polite and respectful to adults, and interested in their views. Pupils have a good understanding of the major world faiths and cultures different from their own. Their understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle starts in Reception, where they quickly learn the value of fruit and vegetables as part of a balanced diet. At breaktimes pupils are very active. They very much enjoy their physical education lessons and sports clubs. A very high proportion walk to school in the morning. Pupils are quick to reflect on weighty matters, such as the difference between rich and poor, and take such issues seriously. Pupils are diligent in carrying out their roles as monitors, play leaders and buddies. They also enjoy helping to keep the local community tidy and activities such as tree planting and performing for elderly residents. Further afield, pupils are keen to write to their pen-pals in Kenya and to organise charity fundraising events.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	1
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
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	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teachers and teaching assistants work very well as a team. They have high expectations of what the great majority of pupils will achieve. Any pupils who fall behind in their work are quickly identified and provided with extra lessons that are closely matched to their needs, so they can make up any ground lost and rejoin their class. Just occasionally, and particularly in Years 1 and 2, the most-able pupils do not benefit from such high expectations and are not challenged to reach their full potential. Lessons are paced and organised well to ensure time is not wasted. Teachers provide clear instructions and demonstrations so that all pupils know what they are to do, and how to go about it. Behaviour is managed consistently well, so disruptions to learning are very rare. Pupils' work is marked to ensure that it is accurate and that pupils know what they need to do to improve, although inappropriate presentation of sums is sometimes overlooked in mathematics books, so some pupils become confused when calculations are not laid out properly.

Pupils very much enjoy the new approach to the curriculum, where subjects are combined into short topics that last two weeks. This provides them with memorable experiences that help them to recall what they have learnt in the past, including trips to a local academy to use specialist facilities, such as the 3D room where pupils could 'travel' deep into the solar system. A very high proportion of pupils take part in extra clubs and activities, including a braille club where pupils are writing braille books for other schools.

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

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The school provides a very welcoming environment for parents, carers and pupils. It has improved the procedures for promoting good attendance and this, together with encouraging better partnerships with parents and carers, has been very successful. Attendance is now above average as parents and carers are less likely to keep their children at home with only very minor ailments. All staff have a good knowledge of pupils and their home backgrounds. They keep a close eye on those who circumstances may leave them vulnerable and are quick to provide extra support and guidance when needed. Good partnerships are maintained with specialist services, especially for the pupils with sight loss.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The school is being driven forward under the strong leadership of the headteacher. Her vision is supported by all staff and morale is high. The role played by other managers, such as subject coordinators, has improved significantly since the previous inspection and is now good. Data are analysed well to identify strengths and weaknesses in pupils' progress. The results are compared with the outcomes from other sources of monitoring, such as lesson observations, to ensure a good understanding of the link between what the school provides and its impact on pupils' outcomes. This has helped to ensure good equality of opportunity. There are no significant gaps in the performance of different groups and the involvement of individuals is carefully monitored to ensure all play a part in the life of the school. The emphasis on teaching respect for all is a particularly successful element in tackling discrimination.

Members of the governing body are knowledgeable about the school and provide a good degree of challenge. They have taken the lead on developing community cohesion by setting up a specific sub-committee to drive through improvements. A detailed audit has been carried out and an effective plan drawn up to address deficiencies. Pupils gain a good understanding of how others live through their links with a Kenyan school and many visitors representing a range of cultures. Plans are now being put forward to twin with an inner city school so that exchange visits can be arranged. The governing body also maintains a rigorous oversight of safeguarding arrangements. It ensures that all related requirements are met, and the school is particularly effective in its support for pupils whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

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

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children settle quickly and happily into school life because routines are clear and consistent. Children register themselves in the morning, for example, according to how they are feeling. Any who are sad are quickly noted by a member of staff, who immediately talks to them and finds out what can be done to stop them worrying. This is typical of the good level of individual care that is provided. Children are polite and behave well. They enjoy the good range of activities available. There is a good balance between activities led by the teacher and those the children themselves can initiate. Access to a large outdoor area is restricted at certain times during the day as it doubles as the playground, and this limits the opportunities for children to move freely between the indoor classroom and outside.

Children make good progress in almost all areas of learning. Progress in literacy is particularly good. Staff take every opportunity to encourage children to speak and explain their thinking. They correct grammar in a sensitive way, so children learn from their mistakes and do not repeat errors. The way children are taught to link letters with the sounds that they make is effective; it is systematic and children are carefully grouped according to what they already know and can do. Progress in number work is satisfactory, but the leader is in the process of implementing plans to improve this aspect, and they are already proving successful in accelerating learning. Provision continues to go from strength to strength as links with parents and carers are improved. Assessment practices are extremely thorough, and the results are analysed well to identify the next steps in learning for each individual as well as trends in overall performance for the class.

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Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

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 parents and carers who returned questionnaires are very positive about the school. They hold views that are similar to the inspection findings and particularly praised the improvements made by the headteacher, especially in relation to helping them support their children's learning at home. The quality of teaching and support provided by all staff in meeting pupils' individual needs was also highly praised. A very small number of parents and carers felt that behaviour was not managed well enough. Inspectors spoke to pupils and observed how behaviour was managed, with a particular focus on pupils whose special educational needs relate to behaviour. They found that procedures were consistently applied and effective.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Dove First 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 23 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 73 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	15	65	7	30	1	4	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	17	74	6	26	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	12	52	10	43	1	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	12	52	9	39	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	14	61	7	30	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	16	70	5	22	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	14	61	7	30	0	0	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)	17	74	3	13	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	11	48	8	35	1	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	13	57	5	22	2	9	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	11	48	6	26	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	18	78	5	22	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	15	65	7	30	1	4	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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 8 April 2011 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.



30 November 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Dove First School, Uttoxeter, ST14 5LA

Thank you for all the help you gave us when we visited your school. You, and your parents and carers, can be very proud of your good manners and behaviour. We found that you go to a good school where you make good progress in most of your subjects. By the time you leave Year 4 you are very good indeed at reading, writing and mathematics. You do not make as much progress in using computers. We have asked your teachers to give you more opportunities to use computers in your topic lessons. You could help by deciding when working on a computer would help you learn more quickly, and telling your teachers about your ideas.

You work hard and concentrate well in lessons. You enjoy tackling difficult problems and are quick to help each other if you get stuck. Some of you who find the work a little easy at times could be given even harder tasks. We have asked your teachers to make sure that you all get work that is just hard enough for you to do if you try your hardest.

You told us how safe you feel at school and how much you like all the teachers. We agree that they all make sure that you are well looked after. You help too, because you watch out for each other and make sure that no-one comes to any harm in the playground. Any of you who need extra help to learn are given support just when you need it most, so that you can make as much progress as others. You are now coming to school more frequently. Well done.

Your school is getting better and better every year. Your parents and carers are very pleased because they are more involved. The headteacher knows what works well in school, and what still needs to be improved. All the teachers help her in trying to make sure you all get the best possible education.

With all best wishes for your future.

Yours sincerely

David Driscoll
Lead inspector

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