

Dorney School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110220
Local Authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	378061
Inspection dates	1–2 December 2011
Reporting inspector	Paul Edwards

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	196
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alan Fleming
Headteacher	Helen Grove (Acting)
Date of previous school inspection	23 March 2009
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors observed eight teaching staff while visiting 14 lessons. Meetings were held with representatives of the governing body, senior leaders, teaching staff and groups of pupils. The inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation including: the school's self-evaluation, assessment and tracking information; minutes of governing body meetings; arrangements for safeguarding; and pupils' work. Staff and pupil questionnaires were also scrutinised, along with 97 completed by parents and carers.

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

- The attainment of boys at Key Stage 1 and whether they are achieving as well as they should.
- Why pupils appear to make less progress in mathematics than they do in English.
- The effectiveness of the school's procedures in narrowing the gap between boys' and girls' attainment and progress in both English and mathematics.

Information about the school

Dorney is a smaller than average primary school. Most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below the national average. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is similar to that seen nationally. The school has a variety of awards, including Healthy Schools status and Artsmark Gold.

The acting headteacher has been leading the school since September 2010. There have been a high number of staff changes since the previous inspection, including a new coordinator for special educational needs, Early Years leader, and new subject leaders. The appointment of five new teachers included four newly qualified teachers.

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

Dorney is a good school. There are a number of outstanding features, including the rich, vibrant curriculum which provides pupils with many stimulating activities that enthuse their learning. Parents and carers are rightly pleased with the quality of education the school provides and the views of one are typical when commenting, 'In the six years my daughter has been at this school, she has flourished and developed into a lovely all-round girl with good manners and sense of fair play. I put this down to the efforts made by the teachers and the headteacher who have always put the needs of children first.' Pupils say they feel really safe; they behave well and make an excellent contribution to the life of the school and the wider community.

Pupils achieve well, and make good progress in both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, so that by the end of Year 6, their attainment is above average in English and mathematics. The school acknowledges that occasionally, pupils, particularly those who are more able, do not always make the progress of which they are capable in their writing because work is not always matched to their interests. However, a range of strategies is narrowing the gap in progress between boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities have good support, enabling them to progress in line with their peers. Support is particularly effective for those pupils whose behaviour is challenging and those pupils who have more complex needs. Although there is a strong focus on improving pupils' basic skills, other areas of the curriculum are catered for very effectively. Many pupils learn to play musical instruments and take part in sporting events and there is a strong emphasis on promoting literacy and numeracy skills through subjects such as history, geography and science.

Children have a good start to their education in the Reception class. The learning environment is welcoming and inviting. Children settle readily to the good range of activities. Consistently good teaching ensures the children are well prepared for the next stage of learning. Throughout the rest of the school, teaching is mostly good. Teachers prepare work that is planned effectively for the range of abilities in their class and marking clearly identifies how they might improve their work. Occasionally, teachers spend too long explaining tasks and leave too little time for the pupils to carry them out. They also miss opportunities to allow more-able pupils to move on to more challenging activities sooner in lessons.

The acting headteacher, together with other leaders, has maintained the many good features identified at the time of the previous inspection. The acting headteacher,

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together with the senior leadership team, has been particularly effective in ensuring teachers new to the school have been supported well, enabling them to become effective members of the team. Senior leaders have a very clear picture of the school's effectiveness. Detailed tracking of pupils' progress has enabled them to react quickly to any underachievement. Senior leaders have been very effective in encouraging staff to provide pupils with a wide range of interesting enrichment activities. The rigour of self-evaluation, which effectively includes staff and governors, and consolidation of good teaching and learning since the last inspection show the school is well placed to sustain further improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate all pupils' progress in writing by ensuring activities are well matched to their interests.
- Improve teaching further so that it is consistently good or better throughout the school by:
 - ensuring that lesson introductions are not too long and that pupils are given sufficient time to complete tasks
 - allowing more-able pupils the opportunity to move on to more challenging work sooner.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Children's skills and abilities on entry to the school are similar to those expected for their age. They make good progress so that they are well placed for entry into Key Stage 1. The good progress observed in classes and analysis of assessment information show that most pupils are on track to attain above average levels in both English and mathematics by the end of Year 6. Pupils are provided with a very secure foundation in reading. For example, in an excellent Year 1 lesson, pupils' recognition of letter sounds (phonics) improved rapidly as they located and recorded words with 'igh' and 'ie' sounds inside and outside the classroom.

Throughout the school, pupils' speaking skills develop very well, aided by teachers' effective questioning which give pupils the opportunity to respond at length. A clear, structured approach provides pupils with many opportunities to practise writing skills. For example, the letter-writing skills of pupils in Year 3 improve through their regular correspondence with a linked school. The school has rightly identified the need to ensure teachers consider pupils' interests more carefully so that all pupils are motivated well to write at greater length. Mathematical skills progress well. For example, in a good Year 6 lesson, pupils made good progress in their ability to interpret data and produce a line graph from the information. There are small differences in progress between boys and girls, due usually to differences in abilities between each year group, but the school is taking effective steps to close the gap. There are no significant differences in the attainment or progress of pupils from different ethnic backgrounds. The regular teaching of French to pupils helps them to develop good skills in this subject. Singing skills develop well, as was seen during

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assemblies, and pupils appreciate the opportunity to learn to play musical instruments.

Pupils say they feel exceptionally safe and know whom to turn to should they have any concerns. Pupils have a good understanding of the importance of exercise and a balanced diet and participate successfully in a regular 'Walk to School' programme. A good and increasing number of pupils enjoy the wide range of sporting and physical activities such as sports sessions from staff of Chelsea Football Club. Year 6 pupils are regular rowers at Dorney Lake, the venue for the 2012 Olympic Rowing events. The school council provides a forum for pupils' voices and pupils contribute to school life in other ways; for example, Year 6 are buddies for younger pupils. They make an excellent contribution to the local community such as identifying how the site by the local Jubilee River could be improved and made safer. Pupils have a good understanding of right and wrong and demonstrate good care for others through their fundraising activities. The school's recent Harvest Festival was used to support homeless teenagers in the Thames Valley area and has resulted in ongoing links with this charity. Pupils' good social development, good literacy and numeracy skills and above average attendance show they are well prepared for the next stage of education.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
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	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
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?

Good relationships between teachers and pupils help to create a calm and supportive learning environment. Teachers mark pupils' work well, clearly identifying how they

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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might improve, and pupils respond well to their comments. In the best lessons, pupils make good progress because teachers use assessment information effectively to pitch the work at the correct level, to challenge pupils' thinking and to encourage them to work independently. For example, in a good Year 6 history lesson, pupils constructed a range of research questions, enabling them to learn more about life in Victorian times. Teaching assistants provide good support for pupils in lessons, particularly for those who find difficulty concentrating or behaving well. Where lessons are less effective, teachers spend too long explaining tasks and do not provide sufficient challenge soon enough in lessons, particularly for more-able pupils.

Pupils have excellent opportunities to develop skills in information and communication technology, literacy and numeracy through other subjects. The curriculum is well planned to promote pupils' healthy lifestyles through drugs and sex education and through physical education. The Healthy School award is testament to this success. Pupils' creative skills are developed exceptionally well through a range of partnerships and opportunities. For example, pupils have the opportunity to take part in the Arts Award programme, which can give them a nationally recognised qualification. The school's own Artsmark is an indication of the quality of its provision in this area. Pupils benefit from links with a local secondary school, developing, for example, the pupils' mathematical skills. In addition to French, pupils are also taught Spanish. Links with other schools, in this country and internationally, are used very productively to provide pupils with a good and growing awareness of people from different backgrounds.

Pupils are treated with sensitivity and respect. The school provides very good help for pupils whose circumstances might make them vulnerable, and all staff are kept well informed about their particular needs. Case studies point to some well-developed partnerships with a range of educational, medical and social support agencies that have helped families overcome barriers to their children's learning. Parents or carers of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are involved at an early stage, enabling well-targeted interventions to take place. Pupils new to the school are well supported, enabling them to settle easily. Pupils' well-being is monitored carefully and well-judged support provided where necessary.

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	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

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How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and staff are ambitious for the school's development. They have established a very clear direction, based on a drive to provide pupils with a wide variety of interesting activities that help to accelerate progress and raise attainment. For example, their participation in the 'Tree of Light' project is enabling older pupils to perform in a musical and dance spectacular as part of the London 2012 Cultural Olympiad. Staff work exceptionally well together and are keen to improve their own performance. Monitoring by senior leaders is ensuring that most teaching is good and there is an accurate picture of where improvements can be made. Leaders have taken effective action to overcome past weaknesses in teaching but recognise there is still work to be done to achieve 'outstanding' status.

The promotion of equality of opportunity is at the heart of the headteacher's vision for the school. The careful analysis of assessment and other data is used effectively to establish plans to improve the achievement of pupils in each year group, and also to spot if any gaps are emerging between different groups. As a consequence of action taken, gaps between boys and girls are narrowing.

The governing body ensures that statutory requirements are met, and that everyone is kept safe in school through the rigorous implementation of policies and by carefully vetting all those who work in the school. The governing body plays a significant role in evaluating the work of the school. Regular visits enable governors to keep fully up to date with all aspects of the school's progress and they have been effective in supporting senior leaders during a time of considerable staffing changes. The determination to tackle discrimination and promote harmony has led to a highly cohesive and happy school community. The provision for community cohesion is planned by the school and evaluated effectively by both the staff and the governors, who consider carefully how to engage with the local community through developing links with a range of local groups. Strong links with a school in Sri Lanka provide pupils with a good awareness of the lives of children further afield. Staff, with the support of governors, provide excellent support for parents by advising them how to support their children at home.

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	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and	2

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tackles discrimination	
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children settle quickly to school life, as a result of excellent links with parents and carers. This, coupled with good leadership, a drive for improvement and good teaching, supports children's good progress and their improving attainment, ensuring they are well prepared for the next stage of education. Children feel secure because of the good attention paid to ensuring their safety.

Adults have a very clear understanding of how to support children's learning and plan activities that move them forward in all areas of learning. A good focus on developing language skills allows the children to grow in confidence. Relationships are very constructive and children are happy to engage with adults as they learn. Adults are skilled at questioning the children and knowing when to intervene to move learning forward. Children work effectively in groups and independently. Behaviour is good and children cooperate well with each other. For example, they really enjoyed working in the 'post office', addressing and posting letters to develop their early writing and social skills. Adults make learning enjoyable through, for example, choosing interesting materials and activities.

Staff know the children well and assess their progress effectively, and information contributes to the children's learning journal. Those who need additional help are identified early and additional support put in place to aid their learning effectively.

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

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Views of parents and carers

The proportion of parents and carers responding to the questionnaire was above that seen nationally. Almost all expressed their considerable satisfaction with all aspects of the school's provision. They were unanimous in saying that their children enjoyed school and were kept safe and that they were kept informed about the progress of their children. A very small minority expressed concerns about how poor behaviour was dealt with. The inspection team found pupils' behaviour to be good and the school has very effective strategies to ensure this remained so.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Dorney 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 97 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 196 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	83	86	14	14	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	75	77	22	23	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	64	66	32	33	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	53	55	38	39	2	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	60	62	35	36	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	59	61	35	36	2	2	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	59	61	34	35	3	3	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)	63	65	28	29	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	60	62	32	33	3	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	49	51	42	43	3	3	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	50	52	41	42	2	2	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	65	67	30	31	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	69	71	28	29	0	0	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 08 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.

3 December 2011

Dear Pupils



Inspection of Dorney School, Maidenhead, SL6 0DY

Thank you very much for welcoming us when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed talking to you, looking at your work and watching you learn. This letter is to tell you what we found out about your school and what we have asked the school to do to become even better.

- Your school is a good one. It provides you with a good education. You make good progress and your attainment is above average.
- You say you really enjoy school and we saw that in your enthusiasm for learning. You make an excellent contribution to the local community.
- Your behaviour is good and you attend school regularly.
- You have a good understanding of what you need to do to keep yourselves healthy and fit.
- There is an outstanding curriculum with a wide range of clubs, activities, visits and visitors that make your work so much more interesting.
- The headteacher, teachers and staff look after you well. They give those of you who find learning difficult, or who have difficulties, considerable help and support.
- Those in charge of the school are working hard to help it improve.

In order to make your school even better, we have asked your headteacher and staff to do the following.

- Make sure that all pupils, particularly those of you who can do harder work, make better progress in their writing.
- Make sure that teachers do not spend too long explaining tasks and that more able pupils can move on to more challenging work sooner in lessons.

You can all help by telling your teachers if you find work a little easy.

Yours sincerely

Paul Edwards
Lead inspector

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