

Dalton School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131849
Local authority	Kirklees
Inspection number	381414
Inspection dates	14–15 June 2012
Lead inspector	Louise Murphy

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	514
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Michelle Malik
Headteacher	Gillian Lindop
Date of previous school inspection	16 September 2008
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Introduction

Inspection team

Louise Murphy
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Additional inspector
Additional inspector
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 20 lessons taught by 19 teachers. These included short sessions on learning letters and the sounds they make. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, members of the governing body and staff. Inspectors observed the school's work and listened to children read. Work in pupils' books and displays around the school were examined. Documents looked at included the school's self-evaluation, the school improvement plan, data of pupils' progress and policies and documents relating to the safeguarding of pupils. Questionnaires received from 110 parents and carers were scrutinised in addition to those received from pupils and staff.

Information about the school

Dalton is much larger than the average-sized primary school. An average proportion of pupils is known to be eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is above the national average, although the proportion of pupils speaking English as an additional language is below. The proportion of pupils supported at School Action Plus or having a statement of special educational needs is below average. An additionally-resourced facility for visually-impaired pupils currently caters for 7 pupils. The provision is to become a centre of excellence for the area. The school meets the current floor standard, the minimum standard for pupils' achievement expected by the government.

The school has achieved gold standard Healthy Schools status, the Activemark, the Quality Assurance Mark for the work of the pupil mentoring team and the Quality Inclusion 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	3
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	3

Key Findings

- Dalton is a satisfactory school. It is not yet good because pupils’ achievement and teaching are satisfactory and the monitoring by school leaders, including governors, sometimes lacks rigour. Schools’ whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.
- The school provides a welcoming environment. Children come into the Early Years Foundation Stage broadly at age-related expectations, although this varies year on year. Pupils attain broadly average standards by the time they leave, although they generally make better progress in mathematics than in reading and writing.
- Teaching is satisfactory overall with some variations between year groups. It is better in the Nursery than in the Reception classes. In upper Key Stage 2, teaching is of good quality, with examples of outstanding practice. Overall, most pupils make at least satisfactory progress and pupils with a visual impairment make good progress.
- Behaviour, both in class and around school, is good. Pupils clearly enjoy their time at school and have positive attitude towards learning. Relationships between pupils and staff are positive. Pupils are polite and courteous. Attendance is average and the school’s pastoral team works hard to improve attendance and punctuality. Pupils feel safe in school and are confident that if they have any concerns, there is an adult available to talk to.
- School leaders are putting a range of interventions in place to improve teaching and pupils’ rate of progress. Staff are now being held more closely to account for the progress of pupils in their class. However, these measures are not yet monitored rigorously enough to ensure that there is always a positive impact on pupils’ learning. Well-promoted spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' achievement, particularly in reading and writing by:
 - consistently using assessment data to plan for next steps in learning.
- Increase the quality of teaching that is good or better by:
 - ensuring that tasks are accurately matched to pupil ability so that all pupils can build on prior learning in every lesson
 - providing more opportunities for teachers to observe outstanding practice.
- Strengthen leadership and management by:
 - developing the role of senior leaders in rigorously monitoring any actions taken to improve teaching and learning and ensure that these interventions always have a positive impact on pupils' learning
 - ensuring that the governing body challenges senior leaders regarding weaker aspects of the school's performance in order to secure improvement.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Pupils' learning in lessons is satisfactory overall. They are interested in the activities provided and make better progress when practical activities are provided. For example, in a Year 6 science lesson pupils really enjoyed designing their own investigations to separate salt from water. Children enter Early Years Foundation Stage with a range of skills that vary year on year. Last year the school participated in a pre-school project to ensure that children were developmentally ready to start nursery. This had a positive impact and an increased number of children started nursery in 2011 with age-related expectations. Pupils enter Key Stage 1 at the expected level and this year attainment at the end of the Key Stage 1 has risen and is broadly average. Attainment at the end of Year 6 has also improved over time and is broadly in line with national averages. Achievement overall is satisfactory, but there are inconsistencies in rates of progress between classes due to variations in the quality of teaching. Progress is fastest in the Early Years Foundation Stage and upper Key Stage 2.

Achievement in mathematics is stronger than in reading and writing. An emphasis on developing problem-solving strategies and improving teacher assessment has successfully boosted attainment in mathematics. In 2011 the proportion of Key Stage 2 pupils attaining the higher level in mathematics was above the national average for the first time. Reading at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 is broadly average.

Pupils with special educational needs, those who may be vulnerable and those who join the school part-way through the year make satisfactory progress. This is because their individual and additional learning needs are met. Pupils with a visual impairment make good progress. These pupils are particularly well supported, both when they work together in their class base and when they join age-appropriate mainstream classes. Assessment data is used to plan their next steps in learning more effectively than it is for some other pupils in school.

Most parents and carers responding to the questionnaire consider that their children make good progress. Inspectors found that progress is not consistently good across all classes and judge progress as satisfactory.

Quality of teaching

Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and consider that, 'teachers make lessons fun.' Well-promoted spiritual, moral, social and cultural development underpins good behaviour and good relations between pupils and teachers. An overwhelming majority of parents and carers believe that their children are taught well. Inspectors found that teaching is satisfactory overall because the quality is not consistent across the school.

When teaching is good or better, lessons run at a brisk pace. Pupils are given time to discuss their ideas in response to effective teacher questioning. Marking indicates what pupils need to do to achieve their targets. Information and communication technology (ICT) supports learning and teaching assistants offer skilled support to meet the needs of the pupils that they are working with. In one Year 6 class the pupils worked in groups as members of the city council to develop a bid to host the 2016 Olympic Games. Pupils confidently used netbook computers to research what their chosen city could offer as a venue for the games and were then able to use this information to prepare their group presentations.

Although there is some good and outstanding teaching practice, some of the teaching is not as effective. Where teaching is satisfactory, teachers do not have sufficiently high expectations of pupils. Learning activities are not as well-matched to meet individual pupils' needs and so pupils are not always able to build on their prior learning. There are not enough opportunities to share the best teaching practice within school and with other schools in order to raise the quality of all teaching to that of the best.

Pupils with additional and special educational needs are supported individually and in small groups so they are able to achieve as well as others in school. Pupils with a visual impairment are very well supported. Consequently they grow in confidence and make a valuable contribution to the school as a whole. For example, Oak class pupils delivered an inspirational assembly that included an Olympic torch bearer who was previously a member of the class.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage children enjoy learning in the improved outdoor area. Although most children make satisfactory or better progress in adult-led sessions, progress can slow a little during independent activities because they can sometimes lack focus. Younger pupils enjoy the teaching of letters and the sounds that they make, which helps them with their reading and their spelling. Most of the older pupils questioned say that they enjoy reading and that adults in school help them to improve.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Most parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire believe that pupils are safe and well cared for and that behaviour is good. A minority of parents and carers believes that some lessons are disrupted by poor behaviour. Pupils feel that any minor incidents of poorer behaviour are dealt with quickly and effectively and that behaviour in class and around the school is good. This was confirmed during the inspection visit.

Pupils are aware of different forms of bullying, such as cyber-bullying, but did not feel that this was an issue for them. They felt that any incidents of unkind behaviour, such as name-calling, were dealt with swiftly and effectively by class teachers and the headteacher. The curriculum helps pupils learn how to stay safe. For example, pupils visit Huddersfield Fire Station to learn of fire safety and the school nurse teaches pupils to be drugs aware. Pupils feel safe around the school as they know that unsafe Internet sites are blocked and that the building is secure.

Pupils feel that they are listened to by staff at the school. The Eco-Council, Sports Council and School Council ensure that the views of pupils are shared with staff. Pupils have been involved in choosing equipment that is used in the playground. In every class rules are displayed and teachers refer to them when necessary to remind pupils of their high expectations for behaviour. In the Early Years Foundation Stage visual prompts are used and children respond quickly when the teacher points to these.

The inclusion team based in Honeysuckle provides sensitive support for pupils and families. The team works hard to encourage good attendance. Attendance is broadly average but improving over time as families take fewer term-time holidays.

Leadership and management

The school provides a positive and caring learning environment. The headteacher is supported by a committed governing body and an able deputy headteacher. The role of middle leadership is developing and the mathematics leaders in particular are driving improvements in their subject. The school improvement plan identifies appropriate priorities and improvements made since the last inspection indicates that the school has the capacity to improve. Improved assessment and tracking procedures are providing teachers with more information about pupils' progress, but this information is not always used successfully to precisely match work to pupils' ability. New initiatives have been introduced to raise standards in reading and writing, but these are not monitored with sufficient rigour to enable their impact to be measured. A number of governors are relatively new to the role and while the governing body as a whole is supportive they are not always sufficiently questioning of the headteacher to ensure that pupils' always benefit from new initiatives. Safeguarding arrangements meet all statutory requirements. Effective procedures and policies put in place are having a positive impact upon overall safety of pupils.

Teaching is mostly monitored by senior leaders. Where support is required it is often provided from within school. However there are few opportunities to observe outstanding practice. The curriculum is improving and more closely meets the needs of pupils. It has recently been redesigned. A number of opportunities to use relevant real life events such as the Jubilee and the Olympics has been included, which add interest and enjoyment to pupils' learning. A range of activities, such as through circle time and assemblies, promotes pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school is committed to promoting equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination. Gaps between the relative performance of different groups are narrowing, with all groups making satisfactory or better progress.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data 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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



18 June 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Dalton School, Huddersfield, HD5 9HN

Thank you for the warm welcome when we inspected your school. We enjoyed talking with you, watching you learn in lessons and listening to some of you read. It was good to see the interest you showed in your work on the Olympics. Year 6 produced some interesting ideas for presentations and the Oak class assembly, which included a torch bearer who used to attend your school, was wonderful.

Your behaviour is good, both in the classroom and outside. We were impressed to see how well you play together at break time. We saw you having fun and were pleased to hear you say that your teachers made learning fun. You work hard and reach broadly average standards by the end of Year 6.

Your teachers are keen to help you make better progress, especially in reading and writing activities. We have asked them to make sure that teaching is always of good quality and that your work is challenging. Your headteacher, staff and governors look after you well. We have asked them to check regularly that the work they do to improve your school is helping you to learn as well as you can.

You have told us that you are happy in your school and that you feel safe. We know your school is very proud of you. Remember always to do your best and help your teachers.

Thank you for helping us.

Yours sincerely,

Louise Murphy
Lead Inspector

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