

# Dean Valley Community Primary School

Inspection report

---

|                                |               |
|--------------------------------|---------------|
| <b>Unique Reference Number</b> | 111147        |
| <b>Local Authority</b>         | Cheshire      |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 310516        |
| <b>Inspection date</b>         | 6 May 2008    |
| <b>Reporting inspector</b>     | Kevin Johnson |

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

---

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Type of school</b>                     | Primary   |
| <b>School category</b>                    | Community   |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                | 4–11  |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                   | Mixed   |
| <b>Number on roll</b>                     | 188   |
| School                                    |   |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>              | The governing body  |
| <b>Chair</b>                              | Mr D Picken   |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                        | Mrs J Thorpe  |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b> | 10 February 2004  |
| <b>School address</b>                     | Albert Road<br>Bollington<br>Macclesfield<br>Cheshire<br>SK10 5HS |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                   | 01625 572767  |
| <b>Fax number</b>                         | 0   |

---

|                          |            |
|--------------------------|------------|
| <b>Age group</b>         | 4-11       |
| <b>Inspection date</b>   | 6 May 2008 |
| <b>Inspection number</b> | 310516     |

---

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

The inspection evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and the following aspects were investigated: the standards reached by pupils and the progress they make; the effectiveness of the Foundation Stage; pupils' personal development and the care, guidance and support they receive, and some aspects of leadership and management. Evidence was gathered from the school's self-evaluation, national published assessment data and the school's own assessment records, policies and minutes, observation of the school at work, discussion with staff, governors and pupils, and the parents' questionnaires. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest the school's own assessments, as given in the self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in the report.

## Description of the school

This is an average sized school. The large majority of pupils who attend are White British. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average. The school has achieved a number of nationally recognised awards including Artsmark. The school has recently gained the National Standard for Healthy Schools and is working towards being a Dyslexia Friendly School. Out of school care is provided before and after normal school hours.

## Key for inspection grades

|         |              |
|---------|--------------|
| Grade 1 | Outstanding  |
| Grade 2 | Good         |
| Grade 3 | Satisfactory |
| Grade 4 | Inadequate   |

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

The school provides an outstanding education for its pupils. Outstanding leadership and management at all levels ensure that teaching and learning are of an extremely high quality so that pupils make very rapid progress and receive excellent care. Teaching and learning have improved significantly since the previous inspection.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Cultural and spiritual development is made most meaningful to pupils through the school's active fund-raising and exchanges of information to help pupils in a school in Sri Lanka. Politeness and good manners are hallmarks of pupils' behaviour. Relationships are excellent and pupils maintain strongly that there is no bullying or racism. Attendance is consistently well above average. By the time they leave Dean Valley, pupils have very mature attitudes to work, are self-assured and eager to face new challenges. Maintaining a healthy lifestyle is very important to the pupils. They are fully aware of the benefits of a well balanced diet and lots of exercise. This has inspired the school's Eco-committee to lead the design of an eco-garden which includes a vegetable plot as part of their commitment to the Healthy Schools Award. Pupils thoroughly enjoy lessons and are enthusiastic learners, reaching high standards in all subjects because of the exciting range of enriching activities which the outstanding curriculum provides. The school council gives pupils an active voice in school improvements. Council members hold regular 'clinics' in order to elicit pupils' views and ideas. This allows pupils to demonstrate their strong skills for later life such as being able to recognise the worth and value of others' contribution to the community.

National test data for 2007 show that standards, which are significantly above national averages, have been maintained at both key stages over the past four years. Reliable monitoring of pupils' performance by the school indicates that, currently, all pupils in Year 6 are predicted to achieve at least the expected levels in the national tests. Significant numbers of them are working well above expectations for their age in all subjects. Standards in English, mathematics and science are expected to show considerable improvement over 2007. Given that pupils' abilities are in line with expectations for their age when they enter the school, this represents outstanding achievement. The rapid improvement in mathematics, the quality of writing throughout the school and in reading in Years 1 and 2, including pupils who have additional learning needs, is the result of the highly effective strategies put in place by school leaders. These include frequent and rigorous checks on pupils' progress to ensure targets are being achieved. Revised learning methods, such as those to promote independent learning have raised the quality and effectiveness of teaching to outstanding. There is always a clear purpose to what pupils do in lessons helping them to learn quickly. Often, there are nice surprises such as messages from 'caterpillars' or the chance to taste fresh fruits which captivate pupils' interest and give them ideas for their writing. In Year 6, laptops were put to excellent and purposeful use when pupils wrote letters to a donor to secure funding for the eco-garden which they planned.

Pupils are exceptionally well cared for. The school has the full confidence of parents, who agree that their children are in safe hands when in school. Some comment on the outstanding support given to help pupils overcome particular emotional difficulties. Many appreciate the way in which the school quickly helps new pupils to settle in and make rapid progress. Pupils' positive and mature attitudes are built on the outstanding relationships which are established with adults in the school. Procedures for safeguarding pupils meet requirements. The school also enlists the help of the fire, police and health services to further raise pupils' awareness of safety

issues. Pupils contribute to their safety and well-being in school by forming their own positive code of conduct and they are confident that adult arbitration is always on hand should it be needed. The school has very effective procedures to keep track of pupils' progress and raise achievement. Teachers use assessment information very well to identify faltering progress and swiftly match suitably challenging work to pupils' individual needs. This benefits especially those pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Staff have a very good understanding of how to provide for pupils' additional learning needs. These pupils are very well taught and their progress is closely monitored. As a result, they make excellent progress in relation to their individual goals.

The headteacher's calm and resolute leadership is a key factor in this outstanding school. She is very ably supported by an equally resolute and outstanding senior leadership team who share a pivotal role in monitoring and improving the school's performance. Subject leaders monitor quality and developments very effectively within their areas of responsibility. Their contribution to school improvement planning and the self-evaluation process ensures leaders have an accurate, though cautious, view of the school's work. Following a self-evaluation analysis with the local authority, the school has already begun to review former judgements. Issues identified in the previous inspection report have been successfully dealt with, and as seen in the Foundation Stage, for example, have continued to be improved. The school has formed excellent partnerships with businesses and local schools which have enriched and accelerated pupils' learning in science, French and sports skills. The school also works effectively with the local Carbon Revolution Group to increase pupils' awareness of environmental issues. The highly effective governing body helps to shape the direction of the school and drives improvements. Knowledgeable and well-informed governors actively support the school, monitor its work and challenge it to improve further. Finances are managed very efficiently to provide outstanding value for money. The school has outstanding capacity to maintain its current high quality and performance.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 1**

The Foundation Stage provides an outstanding setting for children to learn and develop new skills. Improvements to the outdoor area have significantly extended children's learning and skills. Children start in Reception with expected skills for their age in most areas of learning. Early writing skills and calculation skills are at a lower level than expected. They make rapid progress because of the quality of teaching and the exciting activities planned for them. Almost all achieve all of their expected targets and many exceed them by the time they enter Year 1. Teaching is outstanding. The teaching of sounds and letters is highly effective so children approach reading and writing confidently. For example, a child was able to read the story she had written accurately on a computer after illustrating the text with her own pictures. There is a very good balance between activities led by adults and those which children choose themselves. Activities challenge children's curiosity and their imagination, such as when a group took over the running of a 'mini beast cocktail bar' during water play. Children's learning is assessed rigorously in order to plan the next steps. Procedures for introducing children to Reception are very good and parents are made to feel very welcome. They appreciate the contact with staff and the chance to be involved in their children's progress. The outstanding Foundation Stage practice has been extended into Year 1. The confidence which pupils gain as a result is accelerating learning and achievement by the end of Year 2.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Leadership has clearly identified what needs to be done to sustain school improvement and is already taking measures to address those issues. Consequently, there are no further issues to add.

**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).**

## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

|   |                |
|---|----------------|
| Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate | School Overall |
|---|----------------|

### Overall effectiveness

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners? | 1   |
| Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection  | Yes |
| How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?   | 1   |
| The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage   | 1   |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements   | 1   |

### Achievement and standards

|  |   |
|--|---|
| How well do learners achieve?  | 1 |
| The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners   | 2 |
| How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners | 1 |
| How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress                              | 1 |

### Personal development and well-being

|   |   |
|---|---|
| How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?                                  | 1 |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development                                     | 1 |
| The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles   | 1 |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices   | 1 |
| How well learners enjoy their education   | 1 |
| The attendance of learners  | 1 |
| The behaviour of learners   | 1 |
| The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community                                    | 1 |
| How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being | 1 |

### The quality of provision

|  |   |
|--|---|
| How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?          | 1 |
| How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners? | 1 |
| How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?   | 1 |

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| <b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>                                       | 1   |
| How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education | 1   |
| How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards  | 1   |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation  | 1   |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can                     | 1   |
| How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money  | 1   |
| The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities  | 1   |
| Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?  | Yes |
| Does this school require special measures?   | No  |
| Does this school require a notice to improve?  | No  |

### **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

I am sure you will all remember that I inspected your school recently to find out how well you are learning. I certainly remember the wonderful welcome you gave me. I was extremely impressed by your politeness, good manners and excellent behaviour. I also noticed that your attendance at school is well above average. Well done! Keep that up because it is very important in helping you to learn and make progress. I enjoyed eating my lunch outside in the sunshine but decided not to try a 'fruity frog fizz' cocktail in Reception class. (I think it was only water really!)

You have an outstanding school and because of the excellent teaching, you all make excellent progress. Some of you mentioned that your teachers are outstanding and I agree with that. In fact, the reason why you achieve as well as you do and enjoy school so much is because all of the grown ups take extremely good care of you and do their very best for you.

When I looked around the school I noticed how good some of your work in art, and design and technology is, as well as the high standards you reach in mathematics and English. Your parents, teachers and school governors are very pleased and are doing the right things to make sure your outstanding achievement continues. You can help by continuing to work as hard and to be as happy as you already are.