



Dovecotes Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 104350
LEA Wolverhampton
Inspection number 277139
Inspection dates 7 March 2006 to 8 March 2006
Reporting inspector Tony Dobell AI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Ryefield
School category	Community		Dovecotes Estate Pendeford
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		Wolverhampton, West Midlands WV8 1TX
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01902 558284
Number on roll	221	Fax number	01902 558288
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs Maureen A Lloyd
Date of previous inspection	14 February 2000	Headteacher	Miss Gill Beddow

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Dovecotes is an average-sized school serving an area on the north-western outskirts of Wolverhampton. The area experiences high levels of social and economic disadvantage. Children enter the Nursery with levels of understanding which are well below average. The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and of pupils who speak English as an additional language are above average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is broadly average, but the proportion eligible for free school meals is well above average. The turnover of pupils during the year is higher than in most schools.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school with some good features. It provides satisfactory value for money. However, evidence from the inspection is that the school sometimes over-evaluates its performance. Children make good progress in the Foundation Stage. However, because they start from such a low base, their standards are below average at the end of the reception. In Years 1 to 6, pupils achieve well. However, pupils' progress in English, and particularly in writing, is less good and they make too many careless errors. Teaching is satisfactory and sometimes better. The school is strongly committed to equality of opportunity. It has good provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, together with those who speak English as an additional language. The quality of care is good and pupils' awareness that they are valued in the school is a major reason for their outstanding behaviour and good personal development. Children and parents rightly appreciate the school's high quality of care. Leadership and management are satisfactory, with some good features. There has been sound improvement since the last inspection, and good improvement in information and communication technology (ICT). The school has a good capacity to improve further. The headteacher and her colleagues recognise that improving standards in English, helping pupils with investigative and problemsolving skills, and improving attendance are high priorities.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in English by helping pupils to write accurately and convey exactly what they mean.
- Develop pupils' problem-solving and investigative skills by giving them more opportunities to experiment and to manage their own work.
- Improve attendance by working with parents to create a better understanding of the importance of regular attendance and uninterrupted learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Although pupils make good progress from very low starting points, standards throughout the school remain below average, particularly in English. Children enter the Nursery with very low levels of understanding and learning skills, particularly in language, number and awareness of the world. A secure learning environment and good teaching help them to make good progress, but their standards are below the expected levels when they leave reception, except in mathematics, where they meet expectations. In Years 1 to 6, pupils make good progress. In English, they do not improve the accuracy of their writing quickly enough so that it remains below average. Too often, effective writing is spoilt by careless errors. There is scope for greater challenge for more able pupils in some classes. The school's provision for pupils who speak English as an additional language is good and they make good progress. Similarly, the provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is good and they achieve well. The school enables all pupils to make good progress if they attend

regularly. In 2005, standards in the national tests at the end of Years 2 and 6 dipped markedly after three years of improvement. There are clear reasons for this, including a high proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, high levels of social and personal difficulties, and a high turnover of pupils in the year group. Evidence from the inspection and from the school's records is that standards are likely to improve well in 2006 in mathematics and science, where challenging targets have been set, but less well in English.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The personal development and well-being of pupils is good throughout the school. Behaviour is excellent. Pupils across the school are polite, listen well and enjoy their education. Members of the school council believe that behaviour is very good because of clear rules and the example set by the headteacher who they admire greatly. Older pupils take their responsibilities as peer support workers and playground buddies very seriously. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Even the youngest children are keen to care for the school environment and look after everyone within the school community. The school council is well run and gives pupils a strong voice. The commitment of all staff to nurture and respect pupils ensures that pupils' confidence develops well. Most pupils like coming to school. Staff work very hard to ensure that pupils attend school regularly but attendance remains well below average for some pupils. The school encourages pupils to develop healthy lifestyles and to choose a wellbalanced diet. Planned playground activities, yoga and salsa classes are some of the many activities that help children to understand the importance of regular exercise. They are soundly prepared for life after school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching is satisfactory. There are examples of good and, occasionally, outstanding teaching. For example, in an outstanding mathematics lesson in Year 6, highly effective teaching enabled all pupils to make very good progress. Effective levels of challenge for different groups enabled pupils to build well on their current understanding, resulting in high achievement. Similarly, in a good English lesson in Year 2, a range of activities maintained pupils' interest. Their clear enjoyment meant that they tried hard and so achieved well. Where teaching is satisfactory, the pace slackens and more able pupils are not challenged sufficiently. On occasions, pupils are expected to sit passively on the carpet for too long. Very good relationships between pupils and adults underpin secure learning. Teachers use interactive whiteboards well in lessons and these help pupils to develop sound ICT skills. However, in discussion with inspectors, pupils said that they did not have many opportunities to manage their own learning and to investigate independently. Sensitive and purposeful teaching in the Foundation Stage enables children to settle quickly into the school and make good

progress. Good support from teaching assistants helps pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, together with those who speak English as an additional language, to achieve well and to have full access to all that the school offers. Pupils' work is marked regularly but marking does not consistently help pupils to improve. For example, incorrect spellings are not consistently corrected. Assessment systems tracking pupils' progress with a view to promoting their further progress are most effective in mathematics. The school recognises the need to develop these in other subjects.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is good in the Foundation Stage. It is focused effectively on the development of basic language and number skills and personal and social skills. There is a good balance of teacher-led activities and opportunities for individual choice. The curriculum in Years 1 to 6 is satisfactory. However, occasionally, the work planned is not hard enough for some of the more able children and they say that they find the work too easy. The school provides a very good range of extra-curricular activities, which are well supported by pupils. There are residential opportunities for all pupils from Years 1 to 6 and these are a key element in developing pupils' confidence.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides good care, guidance and support for all its pupils. The procedures for child protection and health and safety are very effective. The school works very well with outside agencies. For example, the family support worker knows pupils, families and carers well and operates in a strong climate of trust and respect. Pupils' achievements are celebrated regularly. All pupils are coaxed into making the right choices. Pupils value the school's rewards and expectations for good behaviour. Systems to monitor pupils' progress are satisfactory and vulnerable groups are supported well. Staff give good support to pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, enabling them to grow in confidence and make good progress. Parents are very supportive of the school, but there is scope for their role as partners in their children's learning to be developed further.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory, with some good features. The headteacher is a regular and reassuring presence around the school. She has a clear vision for the school and, well supported by her deputy, works tirelessly to move the school forward. She knows that her pupils will not make progress unless they feel safe and secure. She strives to provide a secure learning environment in which pupils can flourish. This enables their self-confidence to develop well. However, raising standards is an on-going challenge. The headteacher, fully supported by her colleagues, is committed to enabling pupils to reach their potential. Standards and achievement are rising slowly although,

in some years, for particular reasons, they fall back. The school is perceptive about its own performance, but sometimes judges it too highly. Subject management is satisfactory. There is a need for subject leaders to have a clearer understanding of the rate at which pupils are progressing so that they can be helped to make further progress. The provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, together with those who speak English as an additional language, is managed well. Governors have a secure understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. Many governors are in school regularly and are alert for the school to deploy its resources for the benefit of all pupils. In this, they succeed, and they appreciate the care provided for pupils before and after school and, where needed, at lunchtime. The school is valued in the community and by parents for its high quality care which helps pupils to make good progress.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Dear Pupils Thank you for welcoming us into your school, being so friendly and polite, and talking to us about your learning and your lives in the school. We think that your school has many good points:

- You are cared for very well by all adults who work in the school and you feel confident and happy.
- You are all treated equally and valued for what you can do.
- You make good progress because teachers work hard to plan your learning.
- Relationships in the school are very good and your behaviour is excellent.
- You know that it is important to eat healthily and to exercise regularly.
- Your headteacher cares very deeply about you and plans to make the school even better.

All these things mean that you grow into confident young people, happy to say what you think in class and in assemblies. We think that three things would improve your school further:

- Your writing is sometimes spoilt by careless errors. You could help by being very careful with your spelling and punctuation.
- You could be given more chances to organise your own learning.
- Some of you do not attend regularly enough to make good progress. You could help by making sure that you come to school every day.

We enjoyed our two days in your school very much and wish you well for the future. Best wishes Mr A J Dobell (Lead inspector)