



Didsbury CofE Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 105506
LEA Manchester
Inspection number 277366
Inspection dates 13 September 2005 to 14 September 2005
Reporting inspector Mr Anthony Painter CfBT Lead Inspector

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Elm Grove
School category	Voluntary aided		Didsbury
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		Manchester, Lancashire M20 6RL
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0161 445 7144
Number on roll	227	Fax number	0161 445 7144
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Paul Blackburn
Date of previous inspection	14 February 2000	Headteacher	Mr Matt Whitehead

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This average sized Church of England voluntary aided school is located in a residential area in South Manchester, although many pupils come from further afield. Pupils' backgrounds are mostly socially and economically above average and the proportion with special educational needs is low. Most pupils are white British but the proportion of those from minority ethnic backgrounds has been increasing and is now similar to the national average. Few pupils come from families where English is not the first language and none are at an early stage of learning English. Children join the nursery with above average skills. Although the school has enjoyed considerable stability of staff and pupils over time, there have been recent staff changes including a new headteacher in January 2005.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The inspectors agree with the school's overall evaluation of its effectiveness; this is a good school providing good value for money. Successful action has been taken on issues raised in the last inspection report and the school has the will and capacity to improve further. It has strong links with parents and other agencies that contribute to good care for all pupils. As a result, pupils' personal development is good, they enjoy school and their attendance is outstanding. A wide range of interesting activities brings interest and enjoyment to their learning. Well-planned provision ensures children achieve well in the Foundation Stage. Pupils elsewhere in the school reach above average standards and achieve well overall. Although teaching and learning are good, more opportunities should be provided to extend and challenge pupils further, particularly in their writing. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are supported well and make good progress.

The school's leadership and management are good. The new headteacher has introduced strong systems to encourage staff and governors to work together to improve. The improvement plan identifies the right areas for development but does not yet focus closely enough on the details of improvements, for instance in teaching and learning. The contribution of the enthusiastic subject co-ordinators is restricted by the limited time they have available to monitor teaching.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise levels of challenge, especially in writing, to further improve achievement.
- Focus planning more closely on aspects of teaching and learning that can bring about improvements in standards and achievement.
- Make greater use of subject co-ordinators to identify and support developments in their subjects.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children begin school with above average skills and make good progress overall, with no significant differences in the achievement of pupils with different backgrounds and abilities. The 2004 Year 6 test results showed only satisfactory achievement, but the school has acted successfully to improve these. The 2005 results are higher and pupils' individual records show that many made better than expected progress from Year 2. Standards in English, mathematics and science are all high by the time pupils leave the school with significant numbers of pupils achieving the higher level 5 in all subjects. Despite these positive moves, the school is aware that the quality of pupils' writing continues to lag behind their reading, a characteristic of the school's standards for some time.

Pupils' progress in lessons is mostly good. Children make consistently good progress in the nursery and reception classes because teachers work closely together. As a

result, most children exceed the standards expected by the time they begin Year 1. Throughout the school, teachers are making increasing use of assessment information to set more challenging targets for pupils. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities are given work that is tailored carefully to their needs to help them to achieve well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being are good and pupils clearly enjoy school. This is shown in their attendance, which is outstanding and remains consistently high. They are enthusiastic in lessons; most work hard and co-operate well with each other and adults. Their behaviour, both in lessons and around the school, is good. Pupils accept and enjoy taking responsibility and they are cheerful and helpful. The school council has been influential in bringing improvement into school life. For example, they have sought the introduction of friendship benches into the playground. School council members represent their classmates effectively.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is good. They gain knowledge and understanding of world religions and cultures through lessons and visits. Christian values are promoted through weekly visits from local clergy. Pupils' acquisition of basic skills is good, which will aid the pupils when they leave school. Pupils are very strongly encouraged to adopt safe and healthy lifestyles, food choices are healthy and regular sports activities contribute well to pupils' fitness. The school has received the Healthy School Silver Award and is seeking to gain the Gold Award.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good overall, reflecting the school's own evaluation. Relationships are good and help form a secure foundation to enable pupils to reach above average standards. Throughout the school, teachers have well-managed classrooms and organise lessons well. Their explanations and instructions make clear what pupils need to do. Even early in the new school year, they have established clear routines that pupils follow well and this ensures that little time is lost. Many have introduced effective rewards to encourage good behaviour and attention.

Teachers assess pupils' progress regularly and establish targets, although some could be more challenging. In many lessons, different tasks are given to pupils of different abilities, helping each of them to achieve well. Teaching assistants often support groups and individuals effectively so that they make good progress. However, teachers sometimes miss opportunities to add extra challenge to bring out the very best in pupils' work. For example, there could be more opportunities for pupils to apply what they have learned to more extended and challenging writing tasks across the curriculum. When pupils are given such challenges, for instance when asked to draw upon their own experiences, they respond with enthusiasm and show potential to do even better.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum matches the needs of all pupils well. It is broad and balanced, and all statutory requirements are met. Work in the classrooms is enriched by many positive opportunities to take part in educational visits and other activities. At the time of the inspection, pupils were looking forward to their forthcoming residential visit to Ghyll Head, where a good range of activities is planned to support learning in different subjects. There are good examples of the school extending pupils' skills and creativity through links with outside agencies. The impressive hangings displayed in the hall were produced in partnership with the Whitworth Art Gallery and pupils were looking forward to visiting Manchester Cathedral to see the display of altar fronts they had designed and made. There is a broad range of activities available to the pupils after school including sports, French and Spanish. There are good links with many local organisations, and pupils take part in many community activities, such as the Didsbury Festival.

The school has worked very hard to provide its pupils with clean and healthy facilities, in spite of the age of the building. Pupils are encouraged to adopt healthy and safe lifestyles and the recently introduced personal, social and health education programme is developing this further.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school takes good care of its pupils. Pupils trust staff and know who to turn to if they need help. There is good support for them when they are troubled or upset, including strong links with members of the church. There are good relationships with parents and carers who feel welcome in school and are encouraged to be involved in their children's education. The children say they feel safe in school because any rare instances of bullying are dealt with swiftly and effectively by the staff. Good, targeted help is provided for some pupils who find their learning hard. The arrangements for settling new children into school and for pupils' transfer to secondary school are good. Regular links with the secondary school are strong; this was seen when Year 6 visited the secondary school to boost their skills and knowledge in ICT. Child protection and health and safety procedures are well established and there are good links with outside agencies, offering a range of help to those pupils who require it.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The leadership and management of the school are good, ensuring the school's continuing capacity to improve further. Positive action has been taken on the issues identified in the last report, particularly in improving the ways that nursery and reception teachers work together.

The new headteacher's monitoring has given him an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. His examination of school data, for example, allowed him to identify where the school's contribution to pupils' achievement was less than good. Monitoring of teaching is accurate and purposeful, contributing well to performance management and school improvement. A good range of data on pupils' standards and progress is contributing to target setting and sharpening teaching. Although some targets are not yet as challenging as they could be, review systems have been introduced to ensure that there is continued monitoring and progress.

The headteacher has successfully established an effective system for identifying what the school needs to do next. This involves staff and governors and draws on their knowledge and experiences. As a result, there is a strong feeling of teamwork and a shared recognition of ways to improve the school. The school improvement plan identifies suitable areas for development, but does not yet focus sharply on the detail of what needs to be done, particularly in identifying changes in teaching and learning to bring about improvements. Subject co-ordinators are enthusiastic and contribute to school improvement through their action plans. Their overall contribution is restricted, however, by the limited time they have available for monitoring and sharing good teaching.

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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?	2	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	2	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?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	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	2	NA
The attendance of learners	1	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	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	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?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	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	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	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

Thank you very much for being so welcoming, polite and friendly while we were visiting the school.

We were pleased with the way good teaching in your school is helping you to do well. Your teachers give you many interesting things to do, especially the visits and links with places like art galleries. We liked seeing how you enjoyed lessons and were very impressed at how little school time you miss. Teachers make sure that you are looked after and you know where to turn if there are problems.

All the adults in the school work together well to keep improving it. They know what needs to be done but we have also suggested some ways for them to make sure new ideas are successful. In particular, we have asked the teachers to give you better opportunities to help you to improve your writing.

We enjoyed talking with you and your teachers as well as watching you learn in the lessons we saw. We wish you and the school the very best for the future.