



Dorney School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 110220
LEA Buckinghamshire LEA
Inspection number 278384
Inspection dates 24 April 2006 to 25 April 2006
Reporting inspector Graham Lee AI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Harcourt Close
School category	Community		Dorney Reach
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Maidenhead SL6 0DY
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01628620871
Number on roll	199	Fax number	01628782073
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs Jo Webb
Date of previous inspection	19 June 2000	Headteacher	Miss Paula Allen

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
4 to 11	24 April 2006 - 25 April 2006	278384

© Crown copyright 2006

Website: 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 two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

Dorney School is a smaller than average primary school. About one in five pupils come from the village and the rest from further afield. The school caters for pupils from increasingly diverse social backgrounds but none are eligible for free school meals. The ethnic profile of the school has broadened in recent times and currently about one in ten pupils is of minority ethnic origin. No pupils speak English as an additional language. A lower than average proportion of pupils has learning difficulties. Attainment on entry varies from year to year but is generally above average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Dorney is a good and rapidly improving school. This is a view shared by inspectors, senior staff, governors and most parents. Over the past eighteen months the headteacher has provided inspirational leadership and created a very effective staff team. In all the school's work there is a relentless drive to improve pupils' achievement and the quality of education. This is underpinned by high quality care and a commitment to giving every pupil the best possible opportunity to succeed. As a result, pupils' personal development is outstanding. They are proud of their school and all it has to offer. The school provides good value for money.

Pupils of all ages and abilities are now achieving well and reach standards which are well above average by the time they leave the school. Children make a very positive start to their education in the Foundation Stage because of high quality teaching and a stimulating and welcoming environment. They reach good standards and are well prepared for Year 1. As they move through the school pupils continue to make good progress because of good teaching and an interesting curriculum, which engages and motivates them. In a few lessons, where teaching is satisfactory, pupils do not have enough opportunity to participate. There are good examples of improvements resulting from teachers' marking and pupils reviewing their work but these are not seen consistently in all classes.

The school is well placed to improve even further under its dynamic leadership. Issues from the last inspection have been addressed and rapid improvements have been made in a relatively short period of time.

What the school should do to improve further

- Share the best practice in the school to ensure that teachers fully engage all pupils and give them regular opportunities for participation in lessons.
- Improve the consistency of teachers' marking and pupils' evaluation of their own work to ensure that they are clear about what they have to do to make it even better.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well and standards are consistently well above average by the time they leave in Year 6. They make good progress because of good teaching based on very careful tracking of how they are getting on. Challenging targets are set and pupils usually meet them. Girls and boys, children from different ethnic groups and pupils of different abilities now all make similarly good progress.

Children get off to a flying start in the Foundation class and most exceed the expected standards by the time they go into Year 1. They continue to make good progress in Years 1 to 6. Standards are now above average by the end of Year 2, having declined to average in recent years. Last year, assessments in Year 2 showed that not enough

progress was made by the more able pupils, particularly in mathematics. Prompt action by the school has addressed this effectively, and all pupils are now achieving well. Similar action was taken to deal with weak assessment results in mathematics in Year 6 last year. Standards in the current Year 6 are very high, with over half the pupils likely reach above average levels in English, mathematics and science.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' social and moral development is outstanding. They thoroughly enjoy school and develop into mature, thoughtful and hardworking young people. Pupils in Year 6 emphasised how much fun their lessons are now, and what interesting things they get to do. Pupils work effectively both independently and collaboratively. They share equipment and ideas amicably, for example when a group of Foundation class children accurately sorted numbers into sets that were 'greater than 30' or 'less than 30', with no adult support. Pupils form excellent relationships with each other and with staff. They have a good understanding of a range of cultural traditions and their spiritual development is good.

Attendance is good. Pupils have very positive attitudes and join in enthusiastically with activities in lessons and in social settings. They are exceptionally well behaved, polite and are sensitive to the needs of others. Pupils take a full part in the life of the school and the wider community. They contribute their views through the School Council, and are proud of the differences they are able to make for each other's benefit, for example in improving the toilets. They show initiative, for instance when initiating and helping to organise charity fund-raising activities. They understand how to keep themselves safe and healthy, joining in physical education lessons or active games in the playground with enthusiasm. They are very well prepared for their future economic well-being because of their strong basic skills, ready facility with information and communication technology (ICT) and positive attitudes to work.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall and ensures that pupils achieve well as they move through the school. Teaching is outstanding in the Foundation Stage where all staff work well together to provide a good range of interesting and challenging activities which enthuse the children and make them eager learners. In Key Stages 1 and 2 teachers prepare thoroughly for lessons, provide well for pupils of different abilities and manage their classes effectively. As a result, pupils' behaviour is outstanding and they apply themselves diligently. There are examples of high quality teaching which adopt creative and interesting approaches. For example, in a Year 6 English lesson pupils were asked to develop characters based on a range of objects in order to present their stories on a 'television show'. The teacher's lively approach and

challenging questioning ensured that pupils were fully engaged and achieved imaginative results. In a few satisfactory lessons, teachers talk for too long and pupils are given insufficient opportunities to participate. As a result, these lessons lose momentum and some pupils lose concentration.

Assessment has been an important focus for the school recently. All pupils know their targets and are clear about how they will help them to improve. There are some good examples of pupils assessing their own learning but this is not firmly embedded in all classes. Similarly, whilst work is marked regularly and sometimes gives pupils clear pointers about how they might improve, this is not consistent.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and helps pupils to achieve well. A major review has been undertaken which ensures that the curriculum caters for pupils' personal as well as academic needs. For example, in the Foundation Stage there is now much more emphasis on play and discovery activities. The new curriculum allows pupils to be more creative and apply their knowledge and understanding in practical situations. Pupils with learning difficulties achieve well because their needs are met through good levels of support both in small groups and in classroom situations. There is a strong emphasis on personal and social education and this contributes to pupils' outstanding personal development. The curriculum is enriched effectively in a variety of ways. During the school day a sports coach and music teacher use their specialist skills to provide high quality support in these areas. Pupils have access to an impressive range of additional activities as diverse as cooking, ICT, and Spanish. There is also a wide range of sporting clubs including golf and rowing as well as the more traditional activities. There are a number of visits and visitors as well as residential visits in Years 5 and 6. All of these activities enhance pupils' experiences and contribute hugely to their enjoyment of their education.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

This aspect of the school's work is outstanding and is largely responsible for the quality of pupil's personal development. The school tracks pupils' academic progress very carefully, uses this to set challenging individual targets, and provides a range of intervention programmes to help any who fall behind. This strongly supports good achievement across the school. Pupils' pastoral needs are also well understood and parents praise the ways in which they and their children have been helped to deal with difficult situations. One parent commented: 'all the staff are dedicated and caring'.

Systems to keep children safe are well established and thorough. Child protection procedures are securely in place. Pupils are confident that if they have problems the staff will sort them out. Very effective use is made of the 'worry box' for pupils to raise concerns, and the staff are meticulous in following up and resolving any issues. Pupils are given a good understanding of how to keep healthy, and there are lots of

good opportunities for exercise in both physical education lessons and after-school clubs.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. Much has been achieved in the past eighteen months under the outstanding leadership of a new headteacher. She has given an enthusiastic management team the scope to develop their skills and established a dedicated and committed staff team. Governors are knowledgeable and involved, and provide an appropriate balance of challenge and support. At the heart of the school's work is a commitment to giving all pupils the best possible opportunities, supported by a relentless drive for improvement.

The school knows itself well and has a very accurate picture of its strengths and weaknesses. A rigorous system has been put in place for following pupils' progress, and teaching and learning are monitored regularly. Where weaknesses are identified swift action is taken to address them. For example, standards in mathematics had declined in recent years. In response the leadership team introduced a new curriculum and resources, placing greater emphasis on investigative work. This was supported by thorough staff training. As a result, standards have improved significantly and pupils are much more enthusiastic about the subject. Although much has been done to raise achievement and improve teaching and learning, further work is needed in order to achieve consistency. Parents and pupils are fully consulted about the school's plans for improvement and have the opportunity to express their views.

The school has very good capacity to make further improvements. Although issues from the last inspection had been addressed pupils' achievement had declined in recent years. This trend has now been reversed and the improvements of the last eighteen months give inspectors confidence that the school will continue to improve.

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
--	-----------------------	--------------

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?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	1	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	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?	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	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	1	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?	1	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	1	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	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

Pupils

I am writing to thank you all for making us so welcome when we visited the school earlier this week. We enjoyed our time at Dorney and you all helped us by being so friendly. We thought you would like to know what we found out.

You are rightly proud of your school because it is a good school which has a very good atmosphere and you are all well looked after. We were very impressed by your enthusiasm for learning and by your behaviour. Teachers make work interesting and help you to improve. You are very lucky because there are lots of fun and interesting things for you to do outside the school day. When you first come to school you make a good start because the staff help you to settle down well in the Foundation class. As you get older teachers help you to learn more and more. Some of you had not been doing quite as well in maths but the school has helped everybody to improve. By the time you leave the school you are doing very well and are well prepared for secondary school. Those of you who find things a bit more difficult get lots of help. The headteacher has worked very hard with the staff to make many improvements over the last two years and they have got lots of plans to make things even better for you.

There are a couple of things we have asked the school to make things even better. You really enjoy talking about your ideas and we have asked the teachers to make sure this happens in all lessons. In some classes we have also asked them to make it clearer to you what you need to do to make your work better.

Yours truly

Graham Lee

Lead Inspector