



Dropmore Infant School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 110223
LEA Buckinghamshire LEA
Inspection number 278385
Inspection dates 5 July 2006 to 5 July 2006
Reporting inspector Nicola Davies AI

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

Type of school	Infant	School address	Littleworth Road
School category	Community		Dropmore
Age range of pupils	4 to 7		Burnham, Slough SL1 8PF
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01753 644403
Number on roll	47	Fax number	01753 644403
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Ian Hill
Date of previous inspection	6 March 2000	Headteacher	Mrs Hazel Watt

Age group 4 to 7	Inspection dates 5 July 2006 - 5 July 2006	Inspection number 278385
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a much smaller than average rural infant school which draws its pupils from a number of nearby towns and villages. Most pupils are of White British heritage but approximately a quarter are from a range of other ethnic backgrounds. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties is below average. The school's 47 pupils are educated in three classes, including a reception class.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Parents overwhelmingly recognise the good quality of education that this small school provides. As one wrote 'I would recommend this school to my friends and family'. One of the particular strengths of this effective school is the way it makes the most of partnerships to improve the education and enjoyment of all its pupils. The school has developed a first class partnership with parents which can be seen, not only in the high levels of parental satisfaction but also in the support which parents provide through fund raising, and through their involvement as volunteer helpers. The inspector agrees with parents and the school's own judgement that it is an effective school which provides good value for money.

Teaching across the Foundation Stage and the school is consistently good which means that all pupils make good progress and achieve well. However, pupils do not always have opportunities to evaluate and share their ideas or to reflect on their work to improve it further. Similarly, the impact of different teaching strategies on pupils' learning are not always fully evaluated and shared between staff. The outstanding curriculum stimulates pupils to develop and apply their skills in all subjects as well as providing opportunities for them to develop their creative and physical skills alongside their academic ones. It includes engaging local topics which enable pupils to make an outstanding contribution to the local community. As a result, pupils enjoy school and make good gains in their learning and self confidence during their time there. The school evaluates its strengths and weaknesses well. Good leadership encourages strong team work which continues to improve the quality of education that the school provides. The school's prompt and thorough action on the issues identified in the previous inspection, including planned and completed improvements to the physical environment for pupils, indicates a strong capacity to build further upon its current success.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide consistent opportunities for pupils to discuss, evaluate and reflect on their learning to improve it further.
- Provide opportunities for teachers to evaluate the impact of different teaching strategies on pupils' learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good. Pupils attain above average standards because they make good progress throughout the school. Children who join the Foundation Stage have average skills for their age which they develop through the good range of opportunities they have to learn. As a result they make good progress and nearly all achieve or exceed most of the expected early learning goals by the end of their time in the Reception class. Standards at the end of Year 2 are consistently above average and a high percentage of pupils achieve at higher levels. The school tracks pupils' progress well from their starting points to set challenging targets and to ensure that all pupils make

equally good progress, which they do. For example, boys and girls at the school do equally well and pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress from their starting points.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development is good. From their earliest days, they feel secure in school and as a result, enjoy school and attend very regularly. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They trust adults to help them and develop a clear sense of right and wrong which helps them to behave well in lessons and around the school. As one child in the Reception class explained 'We don't push, we don't climb the big tree and we listen to the teachers'.

Pupils are well aware of how they can keep safe and develop a very good understanding of keeping healthy. They join in enthusiastically with the varied extra-curricular programme of sports and arts and make the most of the many different opportunities they have to try out their physical skills at playtime, lunchtimes and in lessons. They also enjoy the responsibilities they have around the school such as being playground monitors. The outstanding curriculum means that pupils are able to make an excellent contribution to the local community. For example, they have taken an active part in designing posters and sending letters to support the school's campaign to have the speed limit reduced outside the school and regularly visit a local centre for older people. Such opportunities also help them begin to develop an understanding of the needs of others. Parents recognise that their children's good academic skills, growing self confidence and developing personal skills provide them with a solid foundation for the next phase of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Teachers know their pupils well and this means they are able to use questions effectively to probe and build on pupils' previous learning. As a result, work is well matched to pupils' interests and all teachers plan for the different needs of pupils in their classes. Teachers use a range of resources successfully to stimulate pupils' enthusiasm for learning and to provide them with opportunities to undertake additional and challenging tasks. For example, the good use of computer programs allows pupils to choose to do tasks with a higher level of challenge once they have completed their set tasks. This, combined with pupils' good attitudes and behaviour, results in good progress. Pupils learn enthusiastically because of skilled teaching and effective support by teaching assistants. Although teachers often question individual pupils well, opportunities are sometimes missed for pupils to discuss, evaluate and share their ideas or to reflect on their work to improve it further. Marking helps

teachers to assess pupils' understanding and to set targets for them, and parents are encouraged to help their children meet them.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum which pupils enjoy is outstanding. Careful development of pupils' skills in English, mathematics and information and communication technology is combined with stimulating opportunities to apply these skills in other subjects and to express themselves creatively. This approach works particularly well where local themes or activities provide pupils with opportunities to develop their understanding through real experiences or investigating in depth. For example, the school's rich 200 year history is used as a starting point for some of their work. Similarly, a recent science-based project involved the release of butterflies in the school grounds. The longer term impact of such projects can be seen at lunchtime where knowledgeable pupils investigating the school's 'wild' area discuss the differences between crickets and grasshoppers. This broad approach to the curriculum and learning is also evident in the very good use the school makes of: partnerships; the specialist skills of teachers and visitors; local visits and the range of well attended clubs which include football, French, music, dance and a 'messy monsters' art club.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

This inclusive school cares for, guides and supports its pupils well. This begins with effective induction procedures which enable the youngest children to settle quickly into school life and the school takes considerable care to ensure that its pupils are well prepared to take changes in their stride. For example, when pupils move from Year 1 to Year 2, older pupils are on hand to advise the younger ones what is expected of them and how they can do well. This careful concern has a good impact on pupils' confidence and independence which is noted and appreciated by parents. Staff and governors work well together to ensure that procedures for protecting children are robust and effective. Good procedures for tracking pupils' progress help the school to identify areas where pupils may need extra help. Pupils know how well they are doing through teachers' comments and helpful marking although they are not routinely involved in assessing their own progress. Support from parents, additional staff and external agencies provide well for the needs of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities who make good progress as a result.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school is well led and managed. The effective headteacher is very well liked and respected by staff, governors, parents and pupils and successfully combines her teaching role with the strong leadership of this small school. One of the strengths of the school is the quality of teamwork that this has produced which means that everyone plays

their part in identifying areas for improvement and moving the school forward. The school's self evaluation is clear and accurate and includes the perspectives of governors and parents. The school benefits from the enthusiasm and expertise of teachers who lead thoughtful developments in particular curriculum areas although they do not always systematically evaluate the impact of initiatives on learning in their subject areas.

Capable and committed administrative and support staff ensure the school runs smoothly. The well informed governing body supports the school's efforts well, including the careful management of the school's budget. Parents are fully involved in the life of the school both through the voluntary help which many provide and through the regular sampling of their opinions. The school has tackled the development issues identified in the previous inspection and has taken further steps to enhance the quality of education that it provides. For example, governors now have a good understanding of standards enhanced by their regular visits to classrooms. This successful track record indicates the school has a strong capacity to build further upon its current success.

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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?	1	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	2	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	1	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?	1	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

Pupils

I enjoyed visiting your school recently. Watching you work and talking to you helped me find out why your teachers and your parents believe you go to a good school. I saw that: * you learn a lot and do well * your teachers help you do really interesting things which means you want to learn even more * all the adults in the school take good care of you * everyone gets along well and works together

The adults in the school have lots of really good ideas about how they can make the school better, but they are always looking for more. So I have asked your teachers to help you to think and talk about what you have learned and how you could learn even more. I have also asked them to see if the new things they do in lessons are helping you to learn even better and if they are, to tell everyone else about it.

I was sorry to have missed the release of the butterflies which many of you told me about. I wonder how they will get on in Dropmore school grounds. Perhaps I can come back this time next year to see if they return.

With best wishes

Ms Davies

Lead Inspector