



# Darley Dale Primary School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 112591  
**LEA** DERBYSHIRE LEA  
**Inspection number** 278970  
**Inspection dates** 10 January 2006 to 11 January 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Mr. Colin Humphreys LI

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Greenaway Lane
<b>School category</b>	Community		DE4 2QB
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 12		
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01629732226
<b>Number on roll</b>	184	<b>Fax number</b>	01629 733285
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mrs.Diane Peet
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	11 September 2000	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr. Peter Hughes

<b>Age group</b> 4 to 12	<b>Inspection dates</b> 10 January 2006 - 11 January 2006	<b>Inspection number</b> 278970
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one HMI and one Additional Inspector over a period of two days.

## Description of the school

Darley Dale Primary School is slightly smaller than average for a primary school, and is situated on the edge of the Peak District. Most pupils come from local privately owned housing but some are bussed in from Matlock. Virtually all the pupils are white and generally come from homes that are socially and economically advantaged. About 8 % are entitled to free school meals, which is well below average, and 11% have been identified as having learning difficulties, which is below average.

## 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 views itself as a good school but inspectors judge it to be outstanding. Children receive a very good start to their education in the reception class. As they move through the school, most pupils make consistently excellent progress and many reach well above average standards. Nonetheless, there is scope to extend their writing skills even more. Pupils' personal development is outstanding and the school looks after them extremely well. There is a wonderful, happy atmosphere in the school, where pupils are eager to do well and work with enthusiasm and interest. They are exceptionally well behaved and the positive relationships they have with adults is a strength of the school's work. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent overall, although more could be done to improve spiritual development even further. Teaching and learning are also outstanding, and help pupils to achieve well in all aspects of their development. Teaching is exciting and expectations are high. Lessons are challenging and great fun. The curriculum is exceptionally good and encourages the pupils to think creatively and to become confident and competent learners. Resources are used excellently. However, the access to outdoor provision for reception children needs improving. Since he has been at Darley Dale the headteacher has skilfully transformed the school and is always looking to make further improvements. He is well supported by a dynamic deputy headteacher and the whole staff are a committed and dedicated team. The school has a strong capacity for making continuous improvement and provides excellent value for money.

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

To improve the school even more, the governors, headteacher and staff should: - Extend standards in writing so they are always as high as those in other areas of the curriculum. - Improve the access that reception children have to an outdoor play area in order to improve their learning further. - Improve the pupils' spiritual development so that it is as outstanding as their moral, social and cultural development.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 1**

When the children start in the reception class they have broadly average skills, although their social and speaking skills are often good. By the time they leave the reception class they are working at a level which is above average, reflecting the good quality of the teaching. Standards in the infant classes are also above average, and in the tests for seven-year-olds a good proportion of the pupils reach the higher Level 3. Standards continue to be above average as pupils move through the junior classes and in recent years many have gained the higher Level 5 in the tests for eleven-year-olds, reaching the challenging targets the school set them. Although the test results for writing in 2005 were lower than previous years, work in their books showed these pupils to be working at a high standard. Nonetheless, there is scope to extend pupils' writing skills even more. Most pupils make consistently excellent progress as they

move through the school because they are excited by and interested in their work. In recent years the amount of progress they made between the ages of seven and eleven was very high, compared with all other primary schools. Pupils with learning difficulties make good progress.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. They respond exceptionally well to the school's caring atmosphere and the exciting teaching, making excellent progress in developing responsibility, co-operation and initiative. The school is very effective in helping pupils to be well-rounded young people. The positive relationships they have with adults and each other are a strength of the school's work. Pupils are exceptionally well-behaved, and follow the school's lead in caring for each other. Older pupils, for example, support the younger pupils well. There is a wonderful, happy atmosphere in the school, where pupils are eager to do well and work with enthusiasm and interest. The pupils' attendance is above average. The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent overall, although more could be done to improve pupils' spiritual development. Pupils are sensitive to the feelings of others. They have a strong appreciation of different cultures and beliefs through activities that include their 'India Week' and fundraising for projects in the developing world. They get enthusiastically involved in improving the school through the school and class councils, where their views are taken seriously. As a result of the emphasis given by the school, pupils have a very clear understanding of how to adopt a healthy lifestyle, for example, through regular exercise, knowing about good eating habits and taking care to behave safely. Pupils follow the school's routines well and act very sensibly and safely when at work and play. Pupils' economic awareness is excellent: the high standards they achieve prepares them well for their later life, and special projects, such as running a small business that sells healthy food, teaches them exceptionally well about enterprise and the world of work.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 1**

Teaching and learning are outstanding and help pupils to achieve well in all aspects of their development. Across the school, teaching is imaginative and captures pupils' interest and enthusiasm. Year 2 pupils say that 'Work here is fun!' Drama and problem-solving techniques are very well used to bring topics to life and make them memorable. Relationships between teachers and pupils are exceptionally strong. Because of the trust they have in their teachers, pupils feel confident to try out new things, and are excited by their work. Pupils also work very well together, listening carefully to each others' contributions and building on their ideas. They persevere when tasks are difficult; one Year 6 pupil, when asked about a challenging mathematical problem, said 'It's better being hard than too easy, because you learn more.' Planning

is thorough, and builds very well on what pupils already know and can do. The teachers' expectations of pupils are high and they make accurate assessments of the pupils' progress. They help the pupils understand where they can make improvements to their work. Teaching assistants play an important part in pupils' learning. The work set for pupils with learning difficulties helps to ensure that their learning is taken forward at the right pace and teaching assistants further support these pupils well.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 1**

The curriculum is exceptionally good. The school recently gave careful thought to how the curriculum might be improved further, and is now successfully providing the pupils with a wide range of activities that encourage them to think more creatively, to solve problems, to think for themselves, to learn the value of working together, to encourage enterprise and to be confident and competent young people. There is a very strong focus on enjoyment and achievement. All subjects of the national curriculum are well covered but are taught in a way that excites and captivates the pupils' enthusiasm. Much greater emphasis is given to active learning. Resources are used excellently well, although the outdoor provision for reception children needs improving. There is a rich and comprehensive range of special projects and events that greatly enhance the curriculum further. This includes specially themed weeks, for example, on the environment or on music and movement. The school makes effective use of visiting performers or groups, and there is a good range of well-supported extra-curricular activities.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

Staff care exceptionally well for their pupils. They are very sensitive to their needs, friendly and supportive. This helps to create a highly secure environment where pupils feel safe and are keen to learn. Staff are fully aware of the procedures for the protection of children and those to ensure their health and safety. New children are very carefully helped to settle into the reception class, and make a very good start in school. Teachers take great care to make sure that pupils are supported well by talking to them about their work and how they might make improvements. Those who find their learning hard are given specific additional help. Pupils know they are expected to work hard and talk about their targets and how they can improve. Parents' views are overwhelmingly positive and confirm that their children are keen to go to school and enjoy their learning. Parents are highly pleased with the work of the school.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 1**

In the few years he has been at Darley Dale the headteacher has transformed the school. He has won the confidence of parents, teachers and governors. The pupils speak very highly of him. Under his leadership the school has significantly improved

on all fronts, including raising standards and improving the progress that all pupils make. He has established an excellent sense of collective teamwork and ensured the staff have a shared vision and sense of purpose. He has successfully developed leadership at all levels and as a result there is a strong staff morale and enthusiasm for making continuous improvement. He is supported very effectively by a talented and dynamic deputy headteacher, who has made a significant contribution to the school's work, particularly in making the curriculum more creative and exciting. The subject leaders provide very good leadership in their areas of responsibility. They are firmly focused on the need to raise standards and work hard to ensure that all pupils make the progress they should, by identifying where further work is needed and working with teachers to make improvements. The school has excellent systems for monitoring the quality of education and its self-evaluation is thorough and incisive, leading to well-considered plans for further school improvement. The school has also carefully sought the views and support of the parents and takes good account of any significant comments they raise. The work of the governors is good, although newer governors are still growing into their role. Governors rightly question the school on what it is doing and make an effective contribution to the school's work. Given the high quality of leadership and management the school has a strong capacity for making continuous improvement and provides excellent value for money.

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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>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	1	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	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

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

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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	1	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	1	NA

### The quality of provision

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

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	1	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	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	1	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

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
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 for making us feel welcome when we visited your school a few weeks ago, and thank you for helping us with the inspection. We were very impressed with your excellent behaviour and very good manners, as well as with the standards of the work we saw in your books. You go to a school that is outstandingly good. When we spoke to you, you thought it was wonderful too. We thought that you worked very hard in your lessons and everyone made good progress. Many of you reach very high standards in your work. Learning at your school is exciting and fun because your teachers work very hard to make the lessons interesting. You should be very proud of your teachers and consider yourself lucky to have them. Everyone in your school is very friendly and kind to each other, like one big happy family. Mr Hughes is a wonderful headteacher who has improved the school in lots of ways, helped by all the other adults in the school. We have told the school where we think some improvements should be made. For example, we think that it should be easier than it is at the moment for the reception children to play outdoors. We also think that more work could be done to strengthen your writing, even though it's good already. Of course, you must continue to work hard if you want to do well at school, and to make everyone proud of you. Good luck in the future.