



Dove First School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 124121
LEA Staffordshire
Inspection number 281638
Inspection dates 14 June 2006 to 14 June 2006
Reporting inspector Gerald Griffin AI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Dove Lane
School category	Community		Rocester
Age range of pupils	4 to 9		Uttoxeter, Staffordshire ST14 5LA
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01889 590203
Number on roll	93	Fax number	01889 590203
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	
Date of previous inspection	20 November 2000	Headteacher	Mrs Barbara Mitchell

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
4 to 9	14 June 2006 - 14 June 2006	281638

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Dove First School is situated in the village of Rocester, near Uttoxeter. It is smaller than the average primary school. Children's standards on entry are below average. There are a few pupils from minority ethnic groups and the number of pupils with learning difficulties is below the national average. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is 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

Dove First is a good school. The headteacher's very good leadership is providing the school with clear purpose and direction. Leadership and management are good overall and the school has an accurate understanding of its qualities.

Children make good progress in the Reception class where the quality of provision is good. Good progress continues in each year and pupils leave for middle school with above average standards. This is because teaching is good overall, pupils are managed well and good use is made of resources. However, teachers' marking does not consistently tell pupils how they can make their work even better and, in a minority of lessons, teachers do not always fully engage pupils in learning.

The school places a strong emphasis on a learning environment in which pupils flourish. Their behaviour is outstanding and pupils develop very good relationships with one another and with adults. The outstanding curriculum supports this very well by providing a broad range of learning opportunities in an exceptionally stimulating environment.

Pupils enjoy school and talk enthusiastically about their lessons and the good variety of trips and clubs in which they take part. Parents are very happy with the school and rightly feel that pupils are well supported and cared for. The school has significantly improved since the previous inspection and the drive of leadership and management at all levels to further raise standards gives the school good capacity to make further improvements. The school provides good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure teachers' marking consistently shows pupils how they can improve their work further.
- Make sure teaching is always effective in engaging pupils in learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well and move on to middle school with standards that are above the national average. Children enter Reception with standards below those usually found. Good teaching, concentrating particularly on developing language and numeracy skills, enables children to make good progress and by the time they start Year 1, children have reached the expected national standards.

Pupils make good progress in Years 1 and 2, given their low starting point and as a result, standards at the end of Year 2 are above average. Pupils make best progress in reading and mathematics. Good progress continues in Years 3 and 4 for all groups of pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school met its challenging targets.

Standards in writing are a relative weakness and the school is working hard to improve these by providing extra individual support for pupils, and booster classes. As a result,

pupils' creative writing has improved because their work is more imaginative and they are using a broader range of vocabulary. Standards in information and communication technology have improved greatly since the last inspection and pupils' skills in using a wide range of software are above average.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good and this is reflected in their outstanding behaviour, very good relationships and positive attitudes to work. Pupils reflect sensitively on spiritual matters and pupils are developing a good understanding of living in a multicultural society.

Pupils enjoy school and describe being at school as 'fun-work'. They understand how to keep safe and feel secure in school. They are confident in approaching a member of the school's staff if they have a worry and say that staff deal quickly and effectively with their concerns. Pupils are proud of the work of the School Council, and describe excitedly how they have made many improvements to the play areas. A clear sense of responsibility for looking after each other and raising money for charity provides further good experience in taking responsibility and contributing to the community. Pupils' active involvement in such work and their good development of basic skills equip them well for later life. Pupils understand clearly the need to eat healthily and take exercise. They do their best to put this into practice in their choice of lunches, and in their enthusiastic participation in physical education lessons and games.

Attendance has greatly improved since the last inspection and is now broadly average. This is the result of rigorous procedures for improvement that include the wide use of rewards and help from outside agencies. The school is working hard to raise attendance further by reducing the casual absenteeism condoned by a few families.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good overall. Classes are well organised and orderly. Teachers plan their lessons thoroughly to ensure that work meets the needs of all pupils. Most lessons typically provide imaginative, stimulating and challenging work that excites and thoroughly interests pupils. As a result, pupils work very hard and make very brisk progress. In less effective lessons, teaching does not really grasp pupils' imagination. Because of this, pupils do not work with real enthusiasm and are not always involved in learning.

Resources are well used by teachers. For example, the interactive whiteboards are used effectively to develop ideas with a class. Teachers ensure that pupils use the good supply of computers regularly for research and presenting their work. Teaching assistants are used very effectively to support pupils' learning and ensure all can fully take part in lessons.

Marking is regular and praises pupils' good work but there is a lack of consistency in its effectiveness in showing pupils how to raise the standard of their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The outstanding curriculum contributes to good achievement by building successfully on pupils' prior attainment and experience. It meets the needs of pupils extremely well. The exciting learning environment that the school provides really fascinates and excites pupils. The wealth of displays, artefacts and video loops engenders in them a quest for knowledge. The well-used library provides a good range of books for individual and class use. There are many examples of activities that greatly broaden and enrich pupils' social and cultural awareness and make a significant contribution to their growing confidence. These include popular residential holidays, visits to museums and places of worship, corresponding with children in an African school, and ballroom dancing classes that explore the styles of different countries. Visitors to school are skilfully used to support learning. For example, a professional author regularly comes into school to help pupils develop their imaginative writing. The curriculum is a significant factor in pupils' good personal development, ensuring that they have a clear understanding of topics such as keeping safe and healthy living.

The many extra-curricular activities are well supported and extend pupils' interests and aspirations well. Pupils' eager participation in sports clubs is greatly assisting their pursuit of a healthy lifestyle.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support of pupils are good. Sensitive support and care is provided for pupils with learning difficulties or medical problems. This enables all pupils to fully participate in lessons and make good progress. The school makes good use of external agencies and specialists to promote care when the need arises. Child protection procedures are secure and health and safety arrangements are robust. Assessment and tracking procedures are good. Pupils are set challenging targets and the school regularly monitors their progress towards achieving them. When progress falters, effective action is taken to remedy the problem. Pupils know their targets well and get regular feedback from their teachers on their progress towards them but they are not always told precisely enough how they can achieve more.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The good leadership and management of the school have been instrumental in establishing a successful and happy school with rising standards. The headteacher's very good leadership has been central to this. Her vision and determination has raised standards over recent years and she is setting challenging targets for further

improvement. She has established a strong school community in which all pupils are valued and included. Effective middle managers and subject leaders ably assist her.

The school's monitoring and evaluation of performance in most aspects are good and have led to improvements. For example, identified weaknesses in pupils' writing skills and attendance have been addressed and action taken has led to improvement in both areas. However, the school's arrangements to measure the effectiveness of teaching and learning are not yet bringing about consistently good teaching across the school.

The school seeks, and responds well to, the views of parents and pupils. For example, the school has changed the school uniform, following parents' concerns about changing for physical education. Pupils are very interested in environmental issues and the school is supporting them through its application for Green Flag status as an eco-friendly school.

The governing body provides the headteacher with good support. Governors provide valuable links to the local community. Through their developing understanding of data, governors are now in a strong position to challenge the school in order to further raise standards.

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	1	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	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	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

Dear Pupils

Thank you for welcoming us to your school and being so friendly. We enjoyed our conversations with you about your work and the other things that you do at school.

What we liked most about your school:

you are polite and extremely well behaved

the teaching is good; you enjoy your learning, work hard and make good progress

the exciting curriculum and lively environment you work in and the good number of extra-curricular activities the school provides

all of the staff care for you well

you have a good understanding of the importance of keeping safe, eating healthily and taking exercise

your headteacher is a very good leader of the school.

What we have asked your school to do now:

to really stretch you by making sure that when your books are marked, you are told how you can make your work even better

to ensure that you are helped to be more involved in your learning.

Best wishes for your future and the future of the school.

Yours sincerely

Gerald Griffin

Lead Inspector