



Dalton School Junior Infant and Nursery

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 131849
LEA Kirklees
Inspection number 282270
Inspection dates 18 January 2006 to 19 January 2006
Reporting inspector Mr Roger Gill CfBT Lead Inspector

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Mayfield Avenue
School category	Community		Dalton
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		Huddersfield, West Yorkshire HD5 9HN
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01484 226577
Number on roll	492	Fax number	01484 226578
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr C Walder
Date of previous inspection	25 September 2000	Headteacher	Mr Stephen Englefield

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This large primary school in Huddersfield is situated within an area of average socio-economic characteristics. Most children are of white British heritage, but there is a sizeable minority from other heritages; a few are learning English as an additional language. An average proportion of children has learning difficulties and/or disabilities, but more than is usual have statements of special educational needs, including those in the unit for visual impairment. Most children start school with skills and knowledge below those typical for their age. Since the school was last inspected, there has been a change of headteacher and deputy headteacher. Furthermore, there has been a substantial turnover in staff.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school is satisfactory with many good features. Since the last inspection, it has survived significant disruption, particularly caused by constant staff turnover. Children's progress became erratic because teaching lacked continuity. This is emphatically not the case now. The thoughtful and ambitious headteacher has weathered the storm well and improved achievement. Lost ground is being recovered: learning and achievement are sound and back on track because teaching is satisfactory and improving fast. Children make good progress in the Foundation Stage to reach the nationally expected levels by the end of Reception. The school knows that achievement is satisfactory, but judges itself to be good, partly because the head of steam generated makes it a little optimistic.

Leadership and management are satisfactory, but the work done to rescue the school has been good. The school's distinctive character, valued by parents, children and governors, is one of strong teamwork. It is back on track with a strong capacity for further improvement; the school now provides satisfactory value for money. A positive ethos results in good personal development among pupils. Their enthusiasm for learning is nourished well. As one child justifiably declared on the school's website, 'I think Dalton School is a brilliant place in which to learn.' Children's progress is tracked, test results are analysed and teaching is evaluated soundly in the main. A great deal of information is gathered, but the use of it is not yet fully effective in terms of accelerating children's progress throughout the school and making all teaching at least good.

What the school should do to improve further

Build on recent improvements in children's achievements to accelerate them even further by:

- improving the analysis and use of information about children's progress to set clearer and more ambitious targets for success; and
- monitoring the effect of teaching on children's progress and achievement to ensure that all teaching is of at least a good standard.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement is satisfactory and improving. Children gain knowledge, skills and understanding at a good rate in the nursery and Reception classes. In 2005, standards in Year 2 were low, unusually, because there were considerably more pupils than in previous years with learning difficulties. Moreover, these children had not escaped the disruption caused by staff changes. Nevertheless, progress by the end of Year 2 is currently satisfactory with writing advancing at a fast pace. By the end of Year 6, standards are below average owing to the gaps in children's knowledge, but they are achieving soundly. In some cases their progress is rapid: writing is romping ahead

owing to the school's successful methods. Children generally fulfil their teachers' expectations. However, targets are not closely enough matched to pupils' needs in all classes to produce even better results. There are differences in achievement between pupils: boys could be doing better because some lessons lack enough practical activity, but the school is tackling this with resolve. Children with learning difficulties and the few who are learning English as an additional language progress satisfactorily, like their classmates, but visually impaired children and those with specific disabilities such as autism achieve well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being is good with some outstanding features. In some lessons personal development is first rate because children are so confident and collaborate so well. Relationships throughout school are positive. One pupil expressed a view, held by many, that, 'our school is a place filled with fun and laughter'. Pupils enjoy school and want to learn, which is reflected in the satisfactory and improving attendance. Behaviour is consistently good; older pupils develop mature attitudes and take on responsibilities well. They act as 'befrienders', playground leaders and share reading with younger pupils. Pupils know that their views matter because the school council has a strong voice in the school.

Good provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has a significant effect on the way pupils think and behave. As a result, asylum seekers are welcomed warmly into the fold. Moreover, pupils with a visual impairment are included fully in school life. Healthy living is promoted well: pupils understand the need to eat healthy food and take regular exercise. Year 6 pupils make a splendid job of selling fruit and vegetables at break time; good financial acumen is demonstrated by the way they record their sales and balance the books.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Lessons are planned carefully and good organisation is a strong feature of most lessons. Successful teaching is lively from the start; children's interest is captured and held throughout. Furthermore, activities provide challenging work for all. This made learning outstanding in a Year 2 mathematics lesson: children loved solving problems. The entire class, from those with learning difficulties to the gifted, prospered in a goldmine of a classroom that contained excellent visual prompts and a superb array of resources. In less successful lessons, introductions are too long and children lack time to practise their skills. Moreover, some tasks are either too easy or too hard, so progress slows. Teaching assistants contribute well to children's learning, but in a few lessons they are underemployed at times.

The assessment of children's work is sound and developing fast. Teachers are generally aware about what pupils can do and set appropriate targets. The marking of work is positive and helpful. Learning is guided well in writing, owing to the elaborate system of assessment used. Formal assessments keep a track of children's attainment over time, but this information is not always examined closely enough to pinpoint where progress could be even better.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. Although much improved, it is too soon for it to have had a full influence on pupils' achievement. Lessons are well planned and organised. Good provision in the arts, physical education and the Foundation Stage is rightly recognised by national awards. There has been significant improvement in ICT provision since the last inspection. Pupils also enjoy lessons in elementary philosophy. Extra curricular activities are very good, well attended, and appreciated by the children. Education for personal development works very well: essential elements of health, safety, drugs awareness, sex education and citizenship are all woven together successfully. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties is sound, and good for visually impaired children and those with autism. The curriculum also caters for children with particular gifts and talents. It is designed to help them generate their own ideas, learn how to think laterally and solve demanding problems in teams: a very useful preparation for the world of work.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Parents, children and the school assert that care and support are strengths of the school and inspectors agree. Year 6 pupils state, proudly, that they would recommend the school to others because of the care provided. All children receive very well coordinated support from the entire team. Pupils who find it difficult to learn are well supported and, as a result, they make the same progress as others. The school provides well for the health and safety of pupils and risk assessments are conducted regularly. Child protection procedures are in place and adults know what to do if they have a concern. Pupils feel safe and know who to turn to for help. The school takes swift action if bullying occurs. Attendance is well monitored and absences followed up rigorously. Staff are knowledgeable about children's personal development. The guidance given to children about their academic progress is satisfactory and improving.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The school has recovered well from the negative effect of staffing changes. The headteacher, deputy headteacher and staff are dedicated to raising achievement. They are improving standards, ensuring that

children's personal development is promoted well. The school is well placed to improve even further. All children are included well: visually impaired children feel completely at

home, as do asylum seekers.

Governors give good support and fulfil their responsibilities satisfactorily. Their commitment is not yet informed by a system for monitoring and evaluating academic progress. Subject leaders support their colleagues well by offering advice and arranging training. Staff confidence has risen as a result, for example, in teaching mathematics, writing and ICT. However, the scrutiny of information about children's learning in subjects lacks sufficient evaluation to reveal where progress is not as fast as it could be.

Thus, for example, the school estimates that progress in writing outpaces that in mathematics, but lacks hard evidence to prove it.

Nevertheless, the school knows itself reasonably well. It judges its qualities accurately except that, without evidence to judge the impact of its actions, it overestimates the school's effectiveness. The quality of teaching is monitored regularly, but methods are

not yet fully effective in pinpointing how children's progress can be improved more quickly. Outstanding teaching exists alongside satisfactory lessons. Coaching, whereby teachers work together in pairs, has been established to tackle this uneven profile, but it

is too soon to see many results from this potentially useful initiative.

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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?	3	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	3	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?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	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	3	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?	3	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?	3	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	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	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 for your help when we inspected your school. We thoroughly enjoyed our visit because everyone was so helpful and friendly. We would like to share with you what we thought.

These are some of the things that we particularly enjoyed:

- the way that all children get on so well together and enjoy lessons
- the sense of teamwork that exists throughout the whole school
- the way that your school has coped with the frequent changes of teachers in the last few years
- the good start given in the nursery and Reception classes
- the pride that you all have in your school building and the work on display.

We know everyone wants to do even better and we have suggested a couple of things that we think will help:

- we would like your teachers to look even closer at the progress you are making and always set you clear and ambitious targets to reach
- we would like your headteacher to develop, even further, the observation of lessons to decide how your progress could be even better.