

Days Lane Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101428
Local Authority	Bexley
Inspection number	286056
Inspection dates	26–27 April 2007
Reporting inspector	Margaret Coussins

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	678
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr R Kelly
Headteacher	Mr N Lake
Date of previous school inspection	14 January 2002
School address	Days Lane Sidcup DA15 8JU
Telephone number	020 8300 1697
Fax number	020 8300 2544

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by four Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is much larger than the average primary school. It serves an area where the majority of pupils come from favourable backgrounds. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average as is the proportion with learning difficulties or disabilities. The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well below that found nationally.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school with some outstanding features. The overriding impression is that of a calm, friendly yet purposeful environment in which meeting the needs of all pupils and helping them to do the very best they can are of the utmost importance. Pupils are justifiably very proud of the school and really enjoy their time in a place where they feel safe and very happy. The school is highly regarded by parents who are overwhelmingly positive about what the school offers and the ways in which it involves them. One parent commented that the school, '...always has a friendly and welcoming atmosphere and as a parent I am always made to feel a valued and important part of my child's education.' Excellent relationships permeate the whole school. As a result of this and the good care, guidance and support they receive, pupils' personal development is outstanding. They have an excellent awareness of the need to live healthy lifestyles and stay safe. Pupils' very good basic skills, their self-confidence and ability to collaborate and negotiate, prepare them exceptionally well for later life.

From their average starting points pupils' achievement is good and they reach well above average standards in English, mathematics and science by the time they leave. However, the school is not complacent in what it achieves. There are many initiatives in place to improve the quality of pupils' writing as standards in writing, particularly for boys, are not as high as those in reading. Children get a good start to their education. They make good progress in the Foundation Stage because of the good quality of the provision. Throughout the school, effective systems identify and support pupils who are at risk of underachieving, including those with learning difficulties or disabilities and those who are more able, enabling them all to make good progress.

Good teaching, an interesting curriculum and the school's tracking systems all contribute to pupils' good progress and their well-being. The excellent range and variety of clubs stimulates pupils and has a strong impact on their excellent personal skills. In many lessons opportunities for pupils to make decisions and assume responsibility and independence help them engage most effectively in their learning and increase their motivation. On occasion, teachers do not give pupils enough opportunities to learn in this way and as a result, pupils are not so motivated or excited by their learning. Leadership and management are good. The headteacher, senior managers, subject leaders and governors are fully involved in accurately evaluating and improving the school's work. The headteacher has a clear view of the school's strengths and what it needs to do to improve further. Issues from the previous inspection have been dealt with effectively. This is shown by the improvements in the policy and procedures for monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching, improved provision for more able pupils and an agreed homework policy. These successes demonstrate that the capacity to improve further is good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing by sustaining improvements in boys' achievement and their opportunities for writing for a specific audience and purpose.
- Provide more opportunities for pupils to learn through making decisions, working together to solve problems and taking responsibility for their learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good and standards are well above average. Pupils enter the school with average skills. They get off to a good start in the Nursery and Reception years. In the 2006 national tests at the end of Year 2, standards were significantly above average and had improved from the previous year in reading and mathematics and remained static in writing. Pupils meet and often exceed challenging targets set for them. By the end of Year 6 the percentage of pupils who attained the higher level 5 in the 2006 national tests exceeded the national figure in English and mathematics and was particularly impressive in science. The focus is currently on writing throughout the school as, although standards are high, achievement is not as strong as in other areas. The school's analysis identified writing for a specific audience and purpose and the attainment of boys as areas to improve. Planning, target setting and marking are all having an impact on the quality of writing. Boys' writing is improving as a result of focused activities such as devising antics for "Horrid Henry" and his friends. Pupils make good progress especially in those lessons where the teachers have high expectations and build admirably on the very positive attitudes which pupils bring to their learning. Throughout the school pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. There are strengths in their moral and social awareness as the calm and happy atmosphere throughout the school and their high level of concern and support for each other shows. Pupils work and play very well together and feel safe and free from bullying. In the Nursery and Reception classes, children settle well into school routines and rapidly become confident and enthusiastic about all they do. Pupils enthusiastically and skilfully take on responsibilities within the school community including play pals, prefects and monitors. The school council feels strongly that its voice is heard. It ensures that others' views are fairly represented. Its work in promoting clubs and activities is an excellent example of pupils' involvement and care for the school community. Pupils adopt healthy lifestyles and show this by participating enthusiastically in the wide range of physical activities provided and knowing the benefits of healthy eating. Even the youngest children know that fruit and vegetables are good for you because as one child said, 'Fruit gives you energy, makes your bones strong and stops your teeth falling out.' Attendance is satisfactory and the school rightly challenges some requests for absences during term time.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Pupils gave the use of interactive whiteboards and drama activities a huge vote of confidence for helping to make learning fun and enjoyable. Pupils' outstanding behaviour and attitudes help them learn well as do the excellent relationships between children and their ability to work well together which supports their good achievement. One child said, 'It's great when we get to be involved and give our opinions because those lessons are fun and it helps us learn.' The organisation of the junior classes into ability groups for mathematics is a successful strategy, which ensures teachers pitch work at appropriate

levels to challenge all pupils. Detailed planning and good resources support teaching well and generally ensure the needs of individuals are met. A few teachers do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to take responsibility and make decisions in their lessons and this reduces pupils' excitement and motivation to learn. Through their tracking systems, teachers have a good understanding of where their pupils are and what they need to do to improve. They mark work regularly and it is usually helpful, indicating how pupils can improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. It is broad, balanced and tailored successfully to meet the needs of all pupils. The Foundation Stage curriculum is well planned. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used well by teachers and pupils to support many areas of the curriculum. Multimedia presentations created by pupils were of a high quality. Events such as the themed festivals, opportunities to learn Spanish, visits, visitors and residential trips very successfully add to the richness of the curriculum. One parent commented, 'My children have both benefited from a very varied, informative and exciting curriculum full of different and exciting lessons, trips and out of school clubs and activities.' Curriculum planning has not yet fully established how teachers link learning across different subjects or how creative learning opportunities are built into the curriculum. There is an excellent range of popular, well-attended clubs which broaden pupils' personal experiences. These aspects strongly promote pupils' enjoyment of learning and develop social skills important to their future life.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school is a caring community. Health and safety and risk assessment procedures are firmly in place. Child protection checks are completed and improved procedures are being put in place. Support for pupils with learning difficulties, particularly from teaching support staff, is good and enables them to achieve as well as others. Comprehensive and useful systems record pupils' academic achievement and older pupils clearly know their challenging targets and understand how they can improve. These systems are being refined for younger pupils who are sometimes unsure of their goals for learning. The school has an excellent system to record pupils' personal development. As a result any pupil experiencing difficulties or at risk of underachieving, is identified and supported by staff who know the children well. Parents are very happy with the care provided. One parent said, 'One thing which has impressed me most has been how well her teachers have known her and how this knowledge has been used to develop her learning in all areas.'

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher's dedicated and successful leadership provides clear educational direction to the school and an accurate view of its strengths and areas for development. This is based on comprehensive systems of monitoring, evaluation and review involving staff, governors, parents and pupils. Staff with specific responsibilities have a significant impact on the work of the school and the standards pupils achieve. Good teamwork and communication at all levels ensure that all pupils benefit from the well-identified improvements introduced by the school. The equality of opportunity provided is robust in its contribution to the progress made by the pupils.

The school has taken effective action to address the issues raised at the last inspection and has good development plans for further and a more rapid pace of improvement. The school has a good capacity to improve. The governing body is supportive and challenging as it holds the school to account well for its performance.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall
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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

10 May 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Days Lane Primary School, Days Lane, Sidcup, DA15 8JU

I am writing to let you know how much my colleagues and I enjoyed our visit to your school and what we found out. Thank you all for making us so welcome, for talking to us about your work and telling us what you think about your school.

We found out that yours is a good school and here are the reasons why.

- You really enjoy being at the school and get on really well with each other and all of the staff.
- Your behaviour is excellent and helps you learn well in your lessons.
- You achieve well in your English, mathematics and science work.
- By the time you leave Days Lane, the standards you achieve, and your confidence, mean you are very well prepared to move on to your next school.
- Your teachers provide excellent opportunities for exciting activities outside of lessons.
- Everyone in the school looks after you well and helps you succeed.

You told us that you enjoy your learning most when you make decisions, work together to solve problems and take responsibility for yourselves. You are very good at doing this and we have asked your teachers to give you more opportunities to learn in this way. You are working really hard to improve your writing and we saw some lovely examples of your work on display around the school. We want the school to carry on helping you so that the quality of your writing gets even better.

Thank you again for all your help and for being so friendly, polite and interesting to talk to.

Yours sincerely

Margaret CoussinsLead inspector