



# Netherbrook Primary School

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 103824  
**Local Authority** Dudley  
**Inspection number** 286777  
**Inspection dates** 6–7 March 2007  
**Reporting inspector** David Carrington

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Chester Road
<b>School category</b>	Community		Netherton
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11		Dudley DY2 9RZ
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01384 818415
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	485	<b>Fax number</b>	01384 818416
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	David Loftus
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Jennifer Atherton
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	18 November 2002		

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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## **Description of the school**

Netherbrook is much larger than most primary schools. Nearly all the pupils are from White British families. Very few have English as an additional language. One third of the pupils have learning difficulties or disabilities, which is above average. There is considerable social and economic hardship in the area around the school. A small number of pupils have significant personal, social or emotional needs when they start school. When children start in the Nursery their skill and knowledge levels are very low.

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

Netherbrook is an outstanding school that makes a tremendous difference for its pupils. They make consistently rapid progress from the time they start school to the time they leave. Standards are above average by the end of Year 6 and achievement is outstanding. Children in Nursery and Reception make a spirited start to their learning and highly imaginative provision leads to excellent achievement. Those with learning difficulties and disabilities are urged to make excellent progress, which they do. The pupils who are vulnerable because they have great personal, social or emotional needs are nurtured firmly and with great care. Outstanding leadership and management is the reason for the excellent achievement of all pupils, and the wonderfully rich and exciting education provided for them. The guiding light in the leadership and management of the school is the headteacher. Her ambition and vision for the school is shared by the strong staff team, which has ensured that priorities for development have been completed very effectively. At present the key area for development is the partnership with parents and carers. This has many strengths but could be enhanced to ensure every parent and carer knows the learning needs of their children. The school gives excellent value for money, and shows great potential for continued improvement. Very full and careful checks are made to ensure that the quality of education meets the high expectations of everyone in school. Teaching and learning quality have been improved particularly well over the last five years. They are consistent throughout the school and their outstanding quality is the main reason why the pupils do so well. The excellent curriculum is rich, inspiring and rewarding. Basic skills are its cornerstone, but it also provides ample opportunities for pupils to develop creativity, independence and teamwork. The provision for art and physical education shines out. The school is a showcase for high quality artwork and the school has a fully deserved reputation for pupils' achievement in sport, games and dance. Pupils develop especially well as people and their personal development and well-being are outstanding. This is linked to the excellent quality of care, guidance and support. The school nurtures pupils through any difficulties and provides them with strong personal and academic support. Consequently, pupils show great regard for each other, behave well and have very positive attitudes towards learning. As one parent commented, staff have, 'not only given my daughter a good education, but also life skills, manners and thought for others'. Pupils learn to respect their own and others' cultures in a very positive way, as shown when the Dance Troupe performed a splendid, innovative 'Bollywood Dance' in which pupils worked closely together.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure more parents and carers take an active role in partnership with the school, so that they are more aware of the learning needs of their children.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 1**

The results of the national assessments in 2006 followed the trend of good standards and rapid progress started several years ago. Standards in Year 6 remain at above-average levels this year. After the last national tests, school leaders focused on the rather slower progress of the boys and introduced a number of worthwhile improvements to accelerate their learning. Boys' achievement is rising well as a result. Children in Nursery and Reception settle very quickly to their work. Every opportunity is taken to extend their speaking and listening and to improve their mathematical skills. Registration, for example, is used to polish the children's counting skills. The low starting point is not a barrier to progress for these young children. They rapidly make up a lot of ground and by the time they join Year 1 their attainment has risen to below-average levels. Outstanding achievement is consistent throughout the school. An example of the rapid progress made by pupils was observed in a Year 5 lesson when a visiting writer urged the class to write in an adventurous style about 'Undiscovered Treasures'. The pupils showed great creativity by weaving in to their writing the special qualities of their characters. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make excellent progress. This is because their needs are recognised from an early age, and high quality support is provided both in and outside classes. Teaching assistants make an outstanding contribution to the progress of these pupils. The school is developing an effective programme to ensure pupils with gifts and talents are challenged to show their strengths.

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

### **Grade: 1**

Many pupils start school with extremely low personal and social skills and poor self-confidence. The school does a most effective job in developing the pupils as individuals and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils respect each other's differences and develop a strong sense of self-worth. Excellent personal development is also clear in the Foundation Stage, where children co-operate with staff very well. Pupils eat healthily in school and exercise very regularly. School leaders have timetabled extra lessons for physical education, which has improved pupils' overall motivation, especially the boys. Parents comment positively on these lessons, one saying that, 'physical education has transformed a reluctant girl with poor self-esteem to one now bursting with excitement'. Pupils say they feel safe and secure and are well aware of potential dangers outside school. They are proud of their awards for their personal and sporting team achievements. The school has worked hard to raise attendance to above average levels, and demonstrates pupils' huge enjoyment of school. Pupils' contribution to the immediate community is first rate. For example, they help to clean up the local area and decorate the local nature reserve with their art work to make it more attractive. The school organises frequent trips out to the wider community where pupils' work has strong impact, for example, through displays of dance. Pupils' acquisition of basic skills, including information and communication

technology (ICT), their skills in teamwork, involvement in the Young Enterprise initiative, and their good attendance bode very well for their future life.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 1**

The quality of teaching has risen steadily over the last five years. Lessons are typically enjoyable, challenging, fun and practical. The pupils enjoy learning in an active way and teachers are very good at providing work to stimulate them to very brisk progress. The teaching of ICT has been improved well and pupils' achievement has accelerated as a result. Teachers share the targets for each lesson and set demanding time limits for the work. There are frequent opportunities for pupils to reflect on how successfully they are learning and their level of attainment. Although the work is demanding, and exceptionally well related to the needs of different groups, the challenge is not oppressive. Pupils relish the chance to rise to their teacher's high expectations. Children in Nursery and Reception show the same eagerness to learn. Their lessons are carefully planned to build on their level of skill and knowledge. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are taught with great expertise. Teaching assistants give excellent support to these pupils, which enables them to progress confidently.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 1**

The school has an outstanding curriculum with exciting learning opportunities in all subjects, much independent learning, and consequently it gives pupils huge enjoyment. The curriculum also gives a great boost to the personal development of pupils and to their self-esteem. Subject leaders are successfully introducing many new and original curricular opportunities, especially to encourage the learning of boys. The numerous practical and physical learning challenges have proved to be particularly effective. The improvement in boys' motivation has a direct bearing on achievement, which is very good in subjects other than English. The many awards to the school, such as High Impact Dance, Young Enterprise, Silver Artsmark and Activemark, are indicative of the school's continual search for excellence. The school's public areas are ablaze with colourful examples of pupils' work, such as 'Cat' masks and poetry, Egyptian necklaces, art deco plates and a wonderful bronze sculpture of the autumn fall of leaves. Visits to local places of interest, such as the local Royal Air Force base, further enhance the curriculum. Regular productions, such as 'Disney Dazzle', give opportunities for pupils to develop drama, singing and dance skills. There are a great many out-of-school clubs, including guitar, the engineering club 'Imagineering', and the gardening club 'Dig for Victory', which are joined enthusiastically by many pupils. Spanish has been introduced into Year 5, bringing further benefits for pupils' communication skills.

## Care, guidance and support

### Grade: 1

A high quality of care filters through school. Staff skilfully support and care for pupils, some of whom have a wide range of personal, social and learning difficulties. Occasionally a few pupils do not respond well enough to this outstanding level of care and their behaviour does not meet the standards set by the vast majority of other pupils. The school is working successfully to settle these few pupils to effective learning. Those with learning difficulties and disabilities, or who are vulnerable, receive well-informed and sensitive support from teaching assistants and external agencies. Every effort is made to ensure pupils are safe and secure and strong procedures are fully in place for child protection and for vetting staff. Risk assessments are thorough. Provision at lunchtime is very good and pupils say they feel perfectly safe on the playground. School leaders' use of the very detailed records of pupils' progress to set future targets is proving effective in raising standards still further. Teachers' guidance on how pupils could improve their work is excellent and pupils can explain precisely what they need to do to improve further.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 1

A highly effective management structure has been created which ensures that the achievement and care of pupils are particular strengths throughout every phase of the school. Striving for improvement is evident in all the school does. The school never stands still, and has an outstanding record in identifying and dealing effectively with areas identified for development. Recently these have included raising standards in writing, developing further the provision for physical education and for ICT. These initiatives have led to considerable improvement in standards and achievement. School leaders fulfil their responsibilities with diligence, consistency and enthusiasm. Consequently, for example, the monitoring of teaching and learning is maintained at a rigorous, but supportive level, so that all staff have a clear understanding of the school's expectations. This robust approach results in consistently high standards of teaching and achievement. This begins in the vibrant and lively Nursery and Reception, where leadership and management are outstanding. The school is totally inclusive and all groups of pupils are given an exciting and enjoyable education. The role of teaching assistants is vital in this, and they make a consistently outstanding contribution to the learning and care of all. The governors also make an excellent contribution. They do not hesitate to challenge school managers, and have a very well-developed knowledge of the school's strengths and needs. They are highly supportive of staff, and have a very successful track record in identifying and winning funding for the school.

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## Inspection judgements

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

### Achievement and standards

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

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
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

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

<sup>1</sup> 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.

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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**

- I want to thank you for the very enjoyable time that we had when we visited your school. We were impressed with the warm and friendly welcome you gave us and the way that you invited us to watch you as you played and learned. In our report we have written about the outstanding education that you receive and the excellence of your school. We hope some of you will read our full report. If you do, you will find we point out many other brilliant things.
- You make rapid progress and reach above-average standards.
- You work and play happily together, behave well and enjoy school.
- You are taught really well and work very hard in lessons.
- You learn about lots of exciting and enjoyable new things.
- You are looked after excellently and helped to do well.
- Your school is extremely well run.
- Your headteacher knows how to get the best out of you and your staff. Not many schools are as good as Netherbrook. We know that your staff are keen to make things even better and we suggest that they work on one thing in particular.
- Join with your parents and carers so everyone can help you learn well from the moment you start school. We are sure that you will all join your staff in making this improvement. We are also sure that you have a bright future.