



Daylesford Infant School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 104043
Local Authority Solihull
Inspection number 286839
Inspection date 31 January 2007
Reporting inspector Linda Rockey HMI

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

Type of school	Infant	School address	Lyndon Road
School category	Community		Solihull
Age range of pupils	3-7		B92 7QW
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0121 7432290
Number on roll (school)	270	Fax number	0121 7420408
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Debbie Higham
		Headteacher	Sue Nolan
Date of previous school inspection	10 February 2003		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools.

Description of the school

Daylesford is a large infant school with a nursery. It serves a mixed community, taking children from a much wider area than its immediate catchment. The number of children eligible for a free school meal is well below average. There are more boys than girls, except in the Nursery. The majority of children are from White British backgrounds. However, an increasing number of children are from minority ethnic groups. Few children are at the early stages of learning English. The proportion of children with learning difficulties and disabilities is lower than that found nationally, as is the proportion with a statement of special educational need. Children join the Nursery with broadly average attainment. The school offers an on-site before and after-school club. This was inspected separately in June 2006.

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 led by an effective headteacher. The school considers itself to be satisfactory overall but the inspector judges it to be better than this. It has a number of significant strengths as well as some areas to improve. It is a welcoming, harmonious community. Parents are very positive and several wrote letters to the inspector praising the school. One parent summed up the majority view, 'It has a caring, welcoming atmosphere that nurtures children, giving them confidence and self-esteem... staff are approachable, hardworking and dedicated.'

The school places a high priority on developing children's personal, social and emotional skills. As a result, children's personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good. Children enjoy coming to school and their attendance is good. They are well prepared for their next school and have a good understanding of the importance of making good choices. Children know how to stay safe. During the inspection, they explained the importance of choosing to have a healthy lifestyle, exercising, eating fruit and drinking water.

Children start in the Nursery with the skills and knowledge expected for their age and make satisfactory progress as they move through Nursery and Reception (Foundation Stage). The headteacher recently instigated a review of the Foundation Stage curriculum as well as a change in the way children's learning is assessed. This has resulted in a more appropriate learning programme for the youngest learners and a more precise assessment of their learning. In Key Stage 1, children make good progress and reach above-average standards at the end of Year 2. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics have been consistently above the national average for the past few years, and in 2006 they were exceptionally high.

The quality of teaching is good. Talking to children, looking at their work and hearing them read confirmed they clearly enjoy school and are motivated to learn. The curriculum is good overall, with a range of well-planned enrichment activities which add enjoyment to children's learning. There are more boys than girls and staff work hard to ensure the needs of boys are met. Inspection evidence shows boys are engaged effectively in learning and achieve well. The support given to children with learning difficulties and disabilities and to those children at an early stage of learning English is effective and enables them to make good progress. They are included in all school activities. Work is carefully marked and this helps children to identify the next steps so they know how they can improve.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher has developed a strong team approach and everyone knows they share responsibility for school improvement. School improvement planning is detailed and comprehensive. However, success criteria are not sufficiently measurable. Recognising that in the past, self-evaluation has not been sufficiently rigorous, good improvements are in place. Phase leaders and subject leaders are involved in regular monitoring activities to check how well children learn. That said, the monitoring of classroom practice does not always focus sufficiently on children's learning or evaluate the impact of new initiatives.

The school has rightly identified the need to develop a more systematic and rigorous approach to tracking children's progress over time. Not enough is done to track the performance of groups of children, and minority ethnic children in particular. Governors are supportive and well informed but they do not hold the school sufficiently to account. Recent significant improvements in reading and writing results demonstrate the school's capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make better use of individual performance data in order to track children's long-term progress and identify any trends in the performance of groups of children.
- Sharpen school improvement planning to include measurable outcomes so that governors can develop in their role as critical friends and hold the school to account more effectively.
- Improve monitoring and evaluation activities to ensure the impact of new initiatives on children's learning is evaluated well.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children settle well in the Nursery and make sound progress from their starting points to the end of Reception. By the end of Year 2, children reach above- average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Although this is a very positive picture, some boys do not do as well as they could in writing. The school has identified this and has put into place some effective strategies to help them to do better and this has led to improvement. Children do well in Years 1 and 2 as a result of well-planned activities matched to individual needs, careful, positive marking and clear targets for improvement.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

As soon as they start in Nursery, children are welcomed into an inclusive atmosphere where all are valued and well cared for by a team of committed staff. They say they feel happy and safe. They trust adults and know there is someone to turn to if they have a concern. Their behaviour and attitudes to learning are good. They are cooperative and very polite. Children are keen to tell why they enjoy school. They mention lessons, teachers and friends. They show respect for each other's cultures, faiths and traditions. The school has recognised the need to develop a smoother transition for children between Reception and Year 1 and have started work on this.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching is good and leads to effective learning. Lessons are planned well and teachers aim to make learning fun. For example, in a Year 1 class, children were busy writing a traditional tale when Little Red Riding Hood appeared at the door. She asked for help to find her way to grandma's house. Children were keen to join her in the outside classroom to show her the way and discuss the story. In a Reception class, children were engrossed in a talk by an older friend of the school about toys in the past. Good relationships between adults and children encourage positive attitudes and a willingness to take an active part in lessons. Teaching assistants are usually well deployed to support children's learning but more could be done to make more of their expertise in whole class sessions.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum meets children's needs well. Children in the Foundation Stage are benefiting from the revised curriculum which makes good use of the outdoor areas and provides exciting opportunities for active learning. Boys are well catered for; for instance, in the Nursery they were delighted to be able to go on a spider hunt in the grounds. Additional resources have been purchased to engage them well in learning, including a range of attractive non-fiction reading books.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. The school's procedures for safeguarding children, some aspects of which are undergoing review, are secure. These carefully documented procedures help to ensure children are kept safe. The school keeps detailed records of individual children's progress and uses these effectively to guide children's learning by careful, targeted marking, with adults explaining the next steps to aim for. Work has started to develop children's self-assessment.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Good leadership and management are driving the school forward. Under the effective leadership of the headteacher, well supported by the deputy headteacher, the senior team have become increasingly effective over the past eighteen months as they have taken on more leadership responsibility for different aspects of the school's work. Growing in confidence, the team have nevertheless taken a cautious approach to school self-evaluation and judged some aspects of the school's work more severely than

inspection evidence found merited. It is clear they have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas to develop. Teachers are held accountable for children's performance and the progress they make. As a result of specific performance targets, there has been an improvement in writing, especially in that of boys. Although relatively new and inexperienced, governors are keen to support the work of the school. The governing body is well organised and governors are becoming increasingly involved in the life of the school. An example is the newly formed parent-teacher association and also the computer club which has been organised by two of the governors.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

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.

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	3
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	3
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

Thank you for helping me when I visited your school. I enjoyed talking with you and finding out about your school. I am writing this letter to tell you what I found out. I know your parents think the school is good and I agree.

What I liked most

? Everyone is important and valued for who they are. ? Adults care for you well. ? You enjoy school and come regularly. ? I was impressed by your writing, especially some of the Year 2 boys' writing I saw. ? Your headteacher is a good leader of the staff team. ? Adults are helping you all to make good choices every day and this is preparing you well for the future. ? You behave well in lessons and around the school. ? Teachers work hard to make learning interesting. Some of you were having lots of fun looking for spiders and others enjoyed making bread for a pretend Shabbat meal. ? You know a lot about how to keep healthy and which foods are good for you.

The adults are working hard together to improve the school. I have asked them to do some things to make Daylesford even better.

- I have asked the teachers to keep a better check on how well you do from Nursery to when you leave for your next school.
- I want the governors to check to make sure all the plans the adults make to improve the school are making a difference.
- I have asked Mrs Nolan and the teachers to keep an eye on what goes on in lessons to make sure you are all learning as well as you should.

You can all help to make the school even better!