



Dial Park Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 106043
Local Authority Stockport
Inspection number 287394
Inspection dates 13–14 February 2007
Reporting inspector John Ashton

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Halfmoon Lane
School category	Community		Offerton, Stockport
Age range of pupils	3–11		Cheshire SK2 5LB
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0161 4831445
Number on roll (school)	264	Fax number	0161 4834106
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs K Southwick
		Headteacher	Mrs Jennifer Curzon
Date of previous school inspection	17 September 2001		

Age group 3–11	Inspection dates 13–14 February 2007	Inspection number 287394
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

A larger than average primary school serving a mixed catchment area of private and mainly council housing. A much higher than average proportion of pupils has learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Eligibility for free school meals is double the national average. A much lower than average proportion of pupils is from minority ethnic backgrounds, very few of whom are at an early stage of learning English. There are a small number of pupils in the care of the local authority. The school has experienced considerable upheaval in recent years due to a local reorganisation in which it accommodated large numbers of pupils from a closing school and then relocated into another building.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This school provides a good and improving standard of education. Over the past two years it has successfully integrated almost 150 pupils from another school, a large proportion of who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Children enter the Nursery and Reception classes with well below average attainment. They settle in rapidly and make good progress, raising their attainment much closer to, though still below, average by the time they enter Year 1. This good progress continues until they leave school at the end of Year 6. Standards at this stage, in the last two years, were well below average overall, having been above average in the previous year. This was due to a large influx of lower ability pupils who, nevertheless, made good progress from their respective starting points. Progress is particularly good in English but less so in mathematics at both key stages.

Pupils and parents are very supportive of the school. Pupils clearly understand how to maintain a healthy lifestyle, and how to keep safe and behave sensibly. They are heavily involved in fundraising for others less fortunate than themselves and their increasing ability to work productively together in pairs and groups as they move through the school bodes well for their future development. Their attendance is below average year-on-year.

Teaching and learning are generally good but teachers know that they need to make even more effective use of the very capable support staff. The good curriculum is understandably focused primarily on developing pupils' basic skills, with notable success in English. The school knows that mathematics needs more attention to bring it up to the same standard. Pupils would like to see more activities to help keep everyone busy in the playground and the school is working on this. Pupils are very well cared for and their academic progress is thoroughly monitored and tracked as they move through the school. A parent commented that, 'I cannot stress how much the school has changed our lives by picking up the causes of problems with my children that I had missed.'

The quality of leadership and management at all levels is particularly good, especially that of the senior leadership. The headteacher's resilience has been sorely tested but she maintains her optimism and determination and everyone connected with the school has enormous respect for her. Governors are knowledgeable, well led and much more involved in the school than they used to be. Improvement has been generally good since the last inspection. There is an accurate appreciation of what still needs to be done and the school certainly has a good capacity to bring about that improvement. It currently gives good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve attainment at both key stages, particularly in mathematics.
- Improve attendance.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils enter the school with well below average attainment but make good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes due to good organisation and well focused teaching. In 2006, fewer pupils than average achieved the expected skills for their age by the time they entered Year 1. However, the proportion was greater than the previous year and the standards represented good achievement from pupils' starting points on entry.

Pupils' progress continues to be good overall from Year 1 through to Year 6, due to the good standard of teaching they receive, especially at Key Stage 2. In 2006, Year 6 pupils left school with well below average standards but they had achieved well overall compared to their attainment at the end of Year 2. Progress in English was particularly strong in response to the school's determined and successful drive to improve standards in writing.

Vulnerable pupils, particularly those who are in the care of the local authority or who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities also make good progress, reflecting the good individual support they receive. The school usually meets, and has recently exceeded, its statutory targets for English, though not for mathematics.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The school takes great pride in the personal development and well-being of its pupils and rightly judges this to be good. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is also good. Behaviour, both inside and outside the classrooms, is a strength of the school. Pupils are well-mannered and relationships are positive at all levels. Pupils say that they really enjoy coming to school. 'We wish we could have a boarding school here', said one. Attendance, however, is below average and unauthorised absence is twice the national average, which is a concern the school is working hard to address.

Pupils are aware of the need to eat and drink healthily. They are also aware of the needs of others, as evident in the enthusiastic fundraising for good causes. Even the Foundation Stage children are involved by baking biscuits to raise money to fund the education of the Indian girl they sponsor and have met. One of the most notable ways in which pupils serve their school community is as Peer Mentors. Their work has been a significant factor in the successful welding together of the two school communities during the recent reorganisation.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Good quality teaching and learning help pupils to achieve well. The quality is particularly good in the Foundation Stage where pupils get off to a good start, quickly learning new routines and becoming aware of the needs of others. It is especially good also towards the end of Key Stage 2. The teaching in the rest of the school is notable for its strong emphasis on literacy and numeracy. It is well planned, makes effective use of information and communication technology (ICT) and generates enthusiasm, enjoyment and good working relationships. Collaborative planning among the four separate teams of teachers reaps benefits in terms of consistency of approach. The teaching also generates good collaborative work amongst the pupils. Consequently, learning is good across most areas of the school. On occasions, the teachers spend too long on the initial parts of their lessons. This delays the pupils becoming actively involved and does not make the best use of the invaluable support staff. When successfully deployed the support staff are able to demonstrate just how capable they can be. Teachers' assessment of learning is generally good though not always consistently so. This is an area of current development in the school.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy the good quality curriculum. It meets the needs of all learners and primarily focuses on well planned lessons that teach pupils the basic skills. ICT is used well in lessons to provide pupils with access to a range of new resources. The school offers a good range of extra-curricular activities, local and residential visits and school clubs, although these are mostly (with the notable exception of the very well attended breakfast club) limited to pupils in Key Stage 2. The school provides good support for its most able pupils, including offering them the opportunity to attend a summer school. Good quality individual education plans and strengthening home/school links support well pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school council provides pupils with an effective school voice and confidently encourages them to express their opinions.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school knows its pupils well and is very committed to their welfare and care. Positive and valued relationships exist at all levels. Pupils feel safe in school and are aware of whom to turn to in the event of any form of bullying or anti-social behaviour. The need to promote punctuality and regular attendance has been identified, and the valuable work of the learning mentor and the very popular breakfast club are just two of the resources the school deploys to help with this. The school satisfies all legal requirements regarding the safeguarding of pupils. Pupils with learning difficulties

and/or disabilities make good progress with classroom support assistants making a significant contribution in supporting their learning and behaviour. Pupils' attainment and progress are tracked closely, allowing teachers to match and focus work towards individual pupils' needs. However, not all teachers guide their pupils effectively enough towards the next step in their learning or show them often enough how to help themselves to improve. The school has successfully raised pupil awareness of the importance of exercise and a healthy diet to maintain a healthy lifestyle.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school is well led and managed by a very well organised and quietly determined headteacher, effectively supported by a capable deputy headteacher and increasingly effective teams of middle leaders. Together, they have skilfully steered the school through a very challenging period of change, such that the two populations of staff and pupils are now thoroughly integrated and think of themselves as one school - a huge achievement in such a short period of time.

There is a strong sense of common purpose to ensure that all pupils can achieve their full potential. The school rightly focuses on promoting their personal development and raising standards. The school's self-evaluation is accurate. Its original modesty meant that some revision was necessary once the latest information became available, showing how well the influx of new pupils had achieved compared to their starting points. The resulting follow-up actions to this self-evaluation demonstrate the school's good capacity to improve. For example, the monitoring of teaching and learning has improved practice in the upper juniors and pupils in Years 5 and 6 are now making better progress than at the time of the last inspection. Governors have a good working knowledge of the school and challenge it as well as support it. They are much more involved in the monitoring of its work than they were.

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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	3
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	4
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	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

Mrs Sadler, Mr Rigby and I thoroughly enjoyed our visit to your school this last week. Thank you for being so helpful, making us feel so welcome and telling us all about the school. A particular thank you should go to those children who gave up some of their lunch time to talk with us.

You told us so many good things about your school and we agree with you that your teachers are friendly and helpful, that you are safe and well cared for in school and that the school offers a lot of interesting activities outside lesson times, including an excellent breakfast club. It was obvious to us in lessons how much you enjoy being at school and how hard you work. We were particularly impressed by the quality and accuracy of some of the writing and the interesting science experiments we saw. We also think that you are well taught and your school is especially well led and managed.

To help you even more we have asked Mrs Curzon and the school governors to take action to raise standards higher across the school, especially in mathematics. You can all help to improve things by making sure that you continue to work as hard as you do, and some of you need to make regular attendance at school a higher priority.

We wish every one of you well for the future.