



Dinnington Village First School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 108437
Local Authority Newcastle upon Tyne
Inspection number 288098
Inspection date 8 March 2007
Reporting inspector Gianna Ulyatt

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

Type of school	First	School address	Sycamore Avenue
School category	Community		Dinnington Village, Newcastle upon Tyne
Age range of pupils	3-9		Tyne and Wear, NE13 7JY
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01661 822457
Number on roll (school)	159	Fax number	01661 820322
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Colin Ord
		Headteacher	Mrs Allyson Farrar
Date of previous school inspection	1 May 2001		

Age group	Inspection date	Inspection number
3-9	8 March 2007	288098

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average school, situated in the village of Dinnington on the western outskirts of Newcastle-upon-Tyne. Pupils who attend the school come from the village and the surrounding area. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. A small number are from minority ethnic families, a few of whom are learning English as an additional language. The number of pupils eligible for a free school meal is below average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is below the national average. The school has 26 full-time nursery places and attainment on entry to the school is typical of three-year-olds.

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. Its success is due to the strong leadership of the headteacher who is well supported by staff and governors. Pupils thrive in the happy and caring atmosphere and as one parent wrote, 'I am in a position of being able to compare different schools and Dinnington School clearly shines and stands out from the rest.' Pupils make outstanding progress in their personal development. They have a mature and sensible approach to life and are aware of their social responsibilities within school and the wider community. They know that a good diet and plenty of exercise are important and they adopt a healthy lifestyle. They say they feel safe and secure and that they enjoy their work. The comment was made that school offers good opportunities to 'socialise and make friends.' Pupils receive good care, guidance and support and are well prepared for the next stage of their education and for their future economic well-being.

Pupils enter the school with skills and knowledge typical for their age. They make good progress in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. By the end of the Reception year, standards are slightly above average and by Year 2 standards in reading, writing and mathematics are well above average and have been so since the last inspection. Over the past two years, attainment in Years 3 and 4 has varied because of staffing difficulties. These have now been resolved and the school's assessment and tracking systems show that standards have risen to above average and are improving. Pupils in these two years make good progress.

Teaching and learning are good. New learning is often delivered in practical ways, which interest and motivate pupils and ensure that their understanding is secure. Relationships are excellent so pupils want to please the teacher and try very hard with their work. Teachers encourage pupils to discuss new ideas and this has a good impact on speaking and listening skills. The new marking system and target-setting procedures help pupils focus better on what they need to learn next. Teachers interact well with children in the Foundation Stage. They plan activities carefully to help them become confident and independent learners.

Classrooms and corridors are vibrant and with good quality displays of pupils' work and learning prompts related to current topics. They are a reflection of the good curriculum provision. The indoor curriculum in the Foundation Stage is good and offers a variety of challenging activities. Nursery children have regular activities planned outdoors, but outdoor provision for Reception children is limited.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides strong leadership and shares a clear vision with all staff and governors. The collegiate approach to management means staff are involved and responsible for bringing about new improvements. Through recent monitoring of subjects, all are aware of what the school does well and what needs to be developed. Governors know the school well and are supportive and challenging in all respects. Self-evaluation is accurate and is used to inform the school improvement plan.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve outdoor learning opportunities for the Reception year children.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good and standards for boys and girls are well above average by the end of Year 2. The school's performance in the national tests in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 has been consistently well above average for the past five years. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities exceed their targets because they are well supported and the work is well tailored to their needs and abilities. Those who are learning English as an additional language are making good progress.

When children start the Nursery, their attainment on entry is at the expected level for their age. Most benefit from good full time Nursery and Reception provision and as a result children achieve well and make good progress. The majority reach the early learning goals in all six areas and some exceed expectations by the end of the Reception class.

School data shows that attainment for Year 4 pupils is above expectation. Staff disruption during the past two years resulted in some pupils not making the progress expected of them in Key Stage 2. The school has dealt with the matter through recent staff appointments and has implemented new teaching and learning strategies. These have had a positive influence on the rate of learning and progress in Years 3 and 4 is now good.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are outstanding. Pupils are courteous and friendly. They thoroughly enjoy school and attendance is consistently above average. One pupil declared he would rather come to school than do anything else, 'because school is a great place to make friends.' Parents are delighted with the 'friendly family atmosphere.' Pupils accept responsibility in a very mature way. They willingly help out with jobs to aid the smooth running of the school. They try hard to win the 'tidy cloakroom' award each week and are thrilled when chosen because of their good manners to have lunch on the special 'Friday table'. Pupils show exemplary levels of care for each other. They compete to become playtime buddies and show compassion for those less fortunate than themselves. Charities at home and abroad are well supported by pupils in the school. They are aware of fair trade. They feel very much part of the school community and speak with pride about the improvements the school council have made to the toilets, cloakrooms and garden areas. They explain that being healthy is crucial to finding a good job and discuss the impact good food and exercise has on the body. The school has close ties with the local church and the good input from art and music specialists involves pupils in local

and multi-cultural activities. Pupils have good levels of literacy, mathematics and information and communication technology skills (ICT), which prepare them well for their next stage of education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good and account for the good progress pupils make. Teachers are very clear when explaining the aims of the lessons and what pupils are expected to achieve. This sets a positive and purposeful climate for learning and encourages pupils to concentrate well. Relationships throughout the school are excellent so pupils work hard, collaborate well and are very well behaved. Teachers are always on hand supporting individuals when they need extra help. Teaching assistants provide sensitive support for those who need it. Typically, work is closely matched to pupils' ability and so all are well challenged. In Key Stage 2, the pace of learning was too slow over the last two years and activities did not always challenge pupils enough. This slowed the rate of progress for some pupils. The recent introduction of targets for individuals is focusing pupils closer on what they are expected to achieve. Teachers are now marking pupils' work against the targets and are encouraging them to evaluate their own performance. As a result, progress is now good. Pupils speak positively about this innovation and say, 'We know what we have to do now.' In the Foundation Stage, there is a good balance between free choice and teacher direction. Teachers use resources well to illustrate new learning and this encourages pupils to listen and concentrate. Teachers have high expectations and this helps pupils make good progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good with many outstanding features that offer pupils a wide range of rich experiences. The core subjects of English and mathematics make a significant contribution to pupils' economic well-being. The inclusion of drama and French enhances pupils' learning experiences. The planning of subjects has been restructured towards a topic approach. This makes learning much more fun and the application of new skills more meaningful. The school places strong emphasis on physical education and has won many awards because of its commitment to pupils' healthy lifestyle. These include the Sport ActiveMark and the National Healthy School Award. The school employs teachers for music and art and this specialist provision is extended through after school clubs. Pupils say music is their favourite subject and from Year 1 onwards all learn to play a tuned instrument. The curriculum is enhanced well through an impressive range visits, visitors and after school clubs, which cover interests including the creative arts, ICT, food technology and sport. The latter is taught by a coach twice a week.

The Foundation Stage curriculum includes a good range of indoor activities covering all areas of learning. Outdoor provision for Nursery children is developing, but the area is not easily accessible for Reception children. This means that opportunities for learning outdoors are restricted for these children.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school makes good provision for pupils' care guidance and support. The school is a friendly community where all pupils are known as individuals. Arrangements for child protection, risk assessments and safeguarding pupils are all in place and understood by staff. Staff have had recent training in these areas. Pastoral care is very good. Teaching and support staff know and care about each individual pupil and work closely with outside agencies to address any specific need. Pupils say they feel safe in school and would willingly talk with staff should the need arise. One parent, reflecting the view of many, wrote, 'My child has benefited so much from the caring, professional and happy environment at Dinnington.'

The school has good systems in place to monitor pupils' progress. These enable teachers to provide the extra support some pupils need. The school has recently introduced target-setting for pupils and teachers spend time with them guiding and advising them about their work. Pupils are being encouraged to become more analytical about their own progress and the school has this as a priority for improvement.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The very strong leadership of the headteacher has ensured the continued good standards despite extensive staffing difficulties. She has created an ethos of shared ownership, which involve staff at all levels in decision making. Staff development is sharply targeted towards improving teaching, learning and pupils' personal development.

The school has recently appointed new staff into management positions. Together, the senior team are devising consistent structures and procedures to monitor and evaluate provision. The team has analysed test results and has introduced several new initiatives, including changes to the curriculum and target setting towards improving standards. The impact of their work is already showing through pupils' enthusiasm for school. The school improvement plan is good and areas for development are well rooted in the priorities identified in whole school self-evaluation.

Governance is good. Governors are experienced and are closely involved in the work of the school. They are supportive of all initiatives and hold the school to account. The school has made good progress since the last inspection. The key issue has been addressed and several new initiatives have been implemented. Good standards have been maintained and with a new and enthusiastic management structure, the school has the good capacity to improve further. The school provides good value for money.

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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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
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	2

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

Dinnington Village First School

Sycamore Avenue

Dinnington Village

Newcastle upon Tyne

Tyne and Wear

NE13 7JY

9 March 2007

Dear Pupils

Thank you so much for the warm welcome you gave me when I visited your school. It was a real pleasure to talk to you and to see how pleasant and polite you are with each other. You are lucky to go to such a good school and I know you all feel responsible for keeping it looking neat and tidy. The art work and the display boards are fantastic and any visitor can see how hard you work. I enjoyed watching you solving mathematical problems and it was good to hear you singing in French and to see you acting out a traditional story and working out a recipe!

I know you feel very safe in school because you said you have good friends and your teachers are always there to help. You certainly know a great deal about keeping fit and healthy. Well done to the enthusiastic school council who have helped to ensure that there have been good improvements to the toilets, cloakrooms and play facilities.

You told me you like your new targets and that you know how well you are doing and what you have to do to get better. There is one area for the school to improve. I have asked the school to look at ways of making sure Reception children are able to learn outside, just as Nursery children do now.

My very best wishes to all of you and remember, the friends you have now may well be your friends for life.

Yours sincerely

Gianna Ulyatt

Lead inspector