



Dame Dorothy Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 108776
Local Authority Sunderland
Inspection number 288185
Inspection dates 14–15 November 2006
Reporting inspector Keith Oglesby

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Dock Street
School category	Community		Monkwearmouth, Sunderland
Age range of pupils	3–11		Tyne and Wear, SR6 0EA
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0191 5537610
Number on roll (school)	160	Fax number	0191 5537615
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Andy Taylor
		Headteacher	Mrs Diane Gale
Date of previous school inspection	1 February 2002		

Age group 3–11	Inspection dates 14–15 November 2006	Inspection number 288185
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors

Description of the school

Dame Dorothy is a smaller than average primary school. It serves a community on the north bank of the River Wear. The area is going through major redevelopment. The proportions of pupils who have learning difficulties and disabilities, and those learning English as an additional language are average. Six pupils are at an early stage of learning English. In the past, pupils have joined the school with a range of ability but overall attainment has been below that usually found. However, the most recent cohorts have skills typical for their age.

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. One of its strengths is the way that everyone works together to strive for the best possible academic and personal standards. The care and support for all pupils are outstanding. As some older pupils put it, 'This is a great school for those who learn quickly, but just as good when you have a problem or feel bad. There is always someone to help'. Parents agree. They appreciate the attention to detail, quick response to any problems and good communication.

The school has come a long way since its last inspection. For example, there were concerns then about some pupils' behaviour and attitudes. Pupils now love coming to school, they work hard and want to learn. The good curriculum is carefully matched to their needs and interests. Behaviour, in lessons and around the school, is excellent. Pupils say there is no bullying. They get on very well with each other and with adults. As a result, lessons are productive and pupils are learning well.

Children make a good start in the Foundation Stage, where provision and teaching are good. They continue to make good progress in all parts of the school. Recent test results confirm that pupils are reaching the expected standards by the end of Year 6. Many entered the school with below average attainment, so their achievement is good. The previous inspection team found that the more able pupils were not making fast enough progress; this is no longer the case. Stimulating teaching and very good assessment ensure that no-one stands still. All pupils achieve well. However, the school believes that it can do even better, particularly when the redevelopment of the area is complete. Of the class that took the Year 6 tests last year, for example, well over one third joined the school later than the Reception year. Those who were in this school from the beginning made significantly better progress than the others.

Most of the teaching is good and, in some classes, it is outstanding. This, together with the school's determination to help every pupil succeed, is the main reason for good achievement and excellent attitudes. Teachers expect a lot, but good support is never far away. Some pupils said, 'We like a challenge but are never afraid to say we don't understand'. They appreciate the significant contribution made by the strong team of teaching assistants.

The school rightly believes that teaching can be even better. In a few lessons, there are times when the pace of learning drops and pupils go off the boil. There are systems to monitor lessons, check pupils' work and share the considerable expertise of staff. These can work well because all the teachers are open to suggestions and are keen to develop their skills.

Leadership and management, at all levels, are outstanding. The senior team and governors have steered the school through a difficult period. The headteacher provides inspirational leadership and is highly respected by pupils, parents, staff and governors. Excellent teamwork and morale mean that all staff are focused upon raising standards and promoting the pupils' personal development and well-being. The school looks critically at everything it does and is constantly planning to do better. Its capacity to

improve is therefore outstanding. Finance is carefully managed and the school provides good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise the quality of teaching and learning even further.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' achievement is good. This is evident in lessons and their previous work. However, test results are affected by high mobility in some years, some significant differences between cohorts and a change in the attainment of pupils joining the school.

Standards on entry to the Nursery class have changed considerably in the last two years. Until then, many children joined the school with lower than expected ability, particularly in language and social skills. Although these children made good progress in the Nursery and in Reception, many did not reach the expected level by the end of this stage in their education. They continued to catch up well, with good teaching, in Years 1 and 2. National test results show that, in most years, they reached levels close to those expected for seven-year-olds.

The most recent cohorts joining the Nursery have shown a better range of skills. Most are at least at the level usually seen at this age. These classes are making good progress and are well on course to reach the expected level by the end of the Reception year. Standards in the current Year 2 are higher than they have been in previous years.

In the junior classes, where teaching is good and sometimes outstanding, pupils continue to make good progress and achieve well. Test results at age 11 have been close to, or slightly above, the national average since 2003. This is despite the number of pupils joining or leaving in each year. Standards seen during the inspection match this. The school sets challenging targets for both individuals and cohorts and usually meets them.

Teachers constantly challenge the more able pupils, so their achievement in all subjects is much better than it was at the last inspection. The proportion reaching the higher Level 5 in mathematics and science is in line with other schools. In English it is below average but rising. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and those learning English as an additional language make the same good progress as their peers. Boys and girls achieve equally well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Pupils love coming to school and make the most of all that it offers. Levels of attendance have improved and are now above average. Behaviour is excellent. Adults treat the pupils as responsible, thoughtful partners and they respond in kind. For example, in some

registrations, they are invited to put a number grade to their state of mind and health. This sometimes leads to some positive sharing of problems. Pupils summed up the quality of relationships when they said, 'Everyone supports each other and makes you feel good about yourself'.

Pupils' spiritual, social and moral development is excellent. They learn to think about their own place in the world, together with an understanding of those different to themselves. They know how to keep themselves safe and healthy. Older pupils are eager to take responsibility in the school and the wider community, for example through the school council or working together on projects during 'enterprise week'. They are very well prepared to move on and succeed in the next stage of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good and in some lessons it is outstanding. Typically, lessons are purposeful and stimulating but enjoyable. Teachers make sure that everyone is challenged but able to succeed. Pupils say that teachers seem to enjoy what they do and work hard to help all of them. They think that they make lessons interesting and explain things clearly and patiently. As a result, pupils work hard and so make good progress. The high quality support provided by teaching assistants is also making a difference.

In a very small number of lessons, even where otherwise satisfactory or good, the pace of learning flags at times. Sometimes this is because explanations go on too long, or some pupils are ready to move on. Very occasionally the work is too easy or too hard. These are issues for fine tuning not radical change. The very good teamwork amongst adults and the expertise available, equip the school well to raise teaching standards even higher.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. The school teaches everything required, and more. Concerns from the last inspection have been dealt with. Attractive displays demonstrate a good balance between different subjects and areas of learning. National guidelines are modified flexibly to meet the needs of all the pupils. There are opportunities to apply their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects, as well as in events such as an enterprise week or producing the very good school magazine. The teaching of French and the effective use of a music specialist enrich the curriculum across the school. Visitors such as theatre and music groups share their skills and encourage pupils to develop new interests. Visits to museums and areas of local interest add enjoyment to the curriculum and help to develop a positive attitude to learning. Residential visits and out of school activities provide opportunity for pupils to work together and get on with one another. The school places a high priority on pupils' personal, social and

health development. This helps them to develop a very caring nature and a good understanding of a healthy lifestyle.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The care, guidance and support for pupils are outstanding. Procedures for safeguarding pupils and ensuring their health and safety are rigorously followed. Exemplary relationships help pupils feel safe, secure and cared for. This view is overwhelmingly supported by the parents. Pupils know who to turn to if they have any problems or concerns. The very strong partnerships between pupils, teachers, support staff, parents and external agencies make an outstanding contribution to the excellent personal development and good achievement. Pupils feel proud to be part of the school community. They know that their views are sought and valued in lessons and through the school council. The school keeps very good records of academic and personal progress. This information is used promptly to identify individuals and groups who need additional help, or more challenging work. Pupils appreciate and recognise the value of their individual targets. Some older pupils said, 'Targets help a lot, you know where you are and how to move onto the next level.' Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are identified at an early stage and the school goes the extra mile to meet their needs.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Leadership and management are outstanding. The headteacher has led the school through some difficult times with vision, determination and sensitivity. Effective delegation has helped phase and subject leaders to manage their responsibilities very well. The school keeps a very close eye on standards and progress. The team, and governors, have an accurate picture of strengths and weaknesses and are quick to act when improvements are needed. Despite the great improvement since the last inspection, leaders are always looking for ways to be even better. Everyone is valued. Teamwork and morale are excellent. People like working here and it shows. Both pupils and parents know that their views are sought and listened to. The success of all this is evident in pupils who are happy, confident learners.

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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	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

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?	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	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	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?	1

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?	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	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

Dame Dorothy Primary School

Dock Street

Monkwearmouth

Sunderland

Tyne and Wear

SR6 0EA

17 November 2006

Dear Pupils

Thank you for helping us when we came to your school. We enjoyed talking to you and looking at your work. I remember saying to some pupils on the first day, 'We seem to have found a good school, are we completely wrong?' They all said 'No, you are completely right!' And we were.

There were so many things to admire that we can't put them all in a short letter. Some of the strongest memories are:

- The way you all seem to get along well together and help each other. I include both pupils and adults in this.
- The way all the adults work so hard to look after you, especially when you are not feeling too happy.
- Watching you in lessons, listening, thinking, working hard but enjoying it.
- Some of the things you said to us. We remember 'Teachers make the hard things easy because they explain things and help us,' or 'The work is sometimes hard but we like a challenge.' We especially liked 'In this school they listen to us.'

We usually leave schools a list of things they should try to improve. In this case we have just suggested that Mrs Gale and the teachers, and you, keep on improving as you are. It seems to be working. We saw some super lessons, with pupils concentrating, thinking, and learning at a terrific rate. Lots more of those, please.

Best wishes for the future

Keith Oglesby and Dennis Goodchild

Inspectors