



# Danesfield School

## Inspection Report

---

**Unique Reference Number** 110277  
**Local Authority** Buckinghamshire  
**Inspection number** 288617  
**Inspection date** 27 February 2007  
**Reporting inspector** Mike Thompson

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

---

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Henley Road
<b>School category</b>	Foundation		Medmenham
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4-11		Marlow SL7 2EW
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01628 483031
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	402	<b>Fax number</b>	01628 476191
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Mrs E Fergusson
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr D C Lewis
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	25 November 2002		

---

<b>Age group</b> 4-11	<b>Inspection date</b> 27 February 2007	<b>Inspection number</b> 288617
--------------------------	--	------------------------------------

---

---

© Crown copyright 2007

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

## **Description of the school**

Danesfield is a large two-form entry primary school located to the west of Marlow. Most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils who either join or leave the school during the course of each year is above average. Much of this movement of pupils occurs within the large group, comprising about a third of the number on roll, who are the children of RAF personnel. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is well below average.

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

### **Grade: 2**

Danesfield is a good school with a number of outstanding features.

The parents hold their school in high regard. Over 120 returned the inspection questionnaires, and these were extremely positive in almost all areas surveyed. A number had written comments appended. One of these sums up the views expressed in many others when noting, 'Danesfield has given my child an excellent grounding from which to progress to secondary education'.

Children in the Reception classes are given a good start to their education. When children begin school at the age of four their attainment is above what is normally expected at this age. The school successfully builds on this good start and ensures that pupils achieve well in all year groups. This is because pupils are taught well and the good curriculum provides them with a wide range of interesting and exciting activities. The pupils enjoy learning and appreciate their lessons. The teachers keep a close check on how well their pupils are doing. They are good at using what they know to ensure that their pupils make good gains in their learning. By the time pupils leave at the end of Year 6, standards are consistently high in English, mathematics and science.

A further important factor in the school's success is the excellent climate for learning evident in all classes. This stems from the outstanding personal development of the pupils. They behave well, and show a real desire to learn.

The pupils are warmly welcomed and equally valued. The good quality of the school's provision for the care, guidance and support of its pupils ensures that they feel secure. One pupil in Year 6 commented, 'I feel very safe here. My friends and the teachers are very supportive'. The school provides good academic guidance for its pupils because there are clear systems for checking on what individual pupils know and can do. The system for tracking pupils' overall performance has recently been computerised. This has been done because the school recognised that it needs to be able to use information about the progress made by pupils in a greater variety of ways. At present, this system does not provide the sort of information that faculty leaders need to gain a clearer overview of pupils' progress in different subjects.

The driving force behind the school's success is its good leadership and management. In particular, the headteacher gives outstanding direction for the work of the school. He receives strong support from the committed and highly professional staff. The school has made good progress since its last inspection, and the way it has maintained high standards is a clear indication of its good capacity for continuous improvement.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Further refine systems for tracking pupils' progress as they move through the school.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Standards are high in all classes. The school's performance in the annual assessments at the end of Key Stage 1, in Year 2, and in the national tests at the end of Key Stage 2, in Year 6, is consistently well above the national average. Throughout the school, pupils make good progress in maintaining high levels of attainment. This level of performance stems from the culture for learning and the good teaching that are features in all classes.

Boys and girls achieve equally well. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress because they are given good quality help in meeting their targets.

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

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils' outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development underpins all aspects of school life. Particularly noteworthy is the excellent social development of pupils. The work of the school council not only gives pupils first-hand experiences of democracy in action but also enables them to help improve the facilities that the school has to offer. For example, the council's initiative to introduce cloakroom lockers for Years 5 and 6 is greatly appreciated by these pupils. Plans are now underway to similarly improve storage space for pupils in Years 3 and 4.

Relationships throughout the school are excellent, and pupils are generally well behaved. About one in ten of the parents who returned their pre-inspection questionnaires had some concerns about behaviour. However, none of the pupils interviewed were at all worried about the occasional immature behaviour of a very small minority, and most were irritated by it. These pupils also felt happy that the rare instances of bullying are quickly and sensitively dealt with.

Attendance rates are consistently above the national average, and illustrate pupils' exceptionally positive attitudes towards their school. Pupils are exceptionally well prepared for the next phase of their education and for a future as life-long learners. They have an excellent understanding of the importance of healthy lifestyles, a good awareness of how to keep safe, and have high levels of competence in basic skills.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

The school's view that teaching and learning are good was confirmed by the inspection. Some of the teaching observed was of the highest quality.

Particularly noteworthy features of lessons are the attention and enjoyment shown by all pupils. This is because teachers plan carefully to make their lessons interesting.

They know their pupils' learning needs very well. As a result, they generally pitch work at different levels or present it in different ways so that pupils of all abilities are given achievable challenges. There are inconsistencies in teachers' assessment of pupils' work. Teachers' marking of pupils' work is thorough, but on some occasions pupils do not learn from their mistakes. This is because corrections requested by teachers are not always done. The excellent method of assessing pupils' work in science in Year 6 is a good model for other staff to follow.

Skilled classroom assistants work well in partnership with teachers and give good quality help to pupils who need more individual attention.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is very well planned to ensure that pupils have a wide range of interesting experiences. Outstanding features include the emphasis placed on music and the promotion of healthy lifestyles and social skills through sport. A number of pupils commented enthusiastically on the wide range of after-school activities available to them. These are very well supported, and data provided by the school show that almost 200 pupils attended at least one of these activities during the autumn term 2006. The school ensures that visits to places of interest or visitors to the school add interest and enjoyment to pupils' learning. The annual residential visit for pupils in Year 6 helps give pupils experience of a range of outdoor and adventurous pursuits. Despite its very many strengths, the curriculum cannot be judged as outstanding because the school does not fully meet the requirements of the National Curriculum. This is because there are no swimming lessons provided for pupils in Key Stage 2. The school is fully aware of this issue, and is looking at ways of overcoming the difficulties that might arise from the provision of swimming, in particular, the impact that the large amount of time required would have on the curriculum in other subjects.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Overall, the care guidance and support provided for pupils are good. The quality of pastoral care is excellent. The school has good procedures for integrating the large numbers of new pupils who are admitted during the course of each year. Parents generally agree. Their comments about the school's procedures for welcoming their children were mostly positive. The procedures to ensure pupils' safety and well-being are clear. There are regular opportunities for pupils to take exercise during and at the end of the school day.

The quality of academic guidance given to pupils is good. There are effective systems for assessing each pupil's academic performance, and these provide a lot of information for class teachers. Clear targets are set for individual pupils to achieve in literacy. The school recognises that this system could be extended to other subjects by making full use of the data about pupils' performance now being collated on the computer system.

---

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

The impact of leadership is seen in the good progress made by the pupils. The headteacher knows the school exceptionally well and makes very good use of information gathered from his thorough and regular monitoring to guide its development.

One of the many strong features of the headteacher's leadership is the thoughtful and innovative approach taken to improve the school on all fronts. This is exemplified in the development of the new management structure. Faculties for humanities, the sciences, arts and sports were established at the start of the current school year, each with a faculty leader supported by a staff team. These faculty teams are working well. They have clearly identified priorities for improvement and have produced clear plans for future action. The faculties also provide an excellent forum for the professional development of teachers, since individuals are given responsibility for different aspects of the faculties' work.

The school's evaluations of the impact of its work are used exceptionally well to set challenging targets for its performance. However, the school acknowledges that its new tracking systems do not yet provide faculty teams with enough detail about the gains made by pupils in different subjects.

Governors provide useful support and challenge for the work of the school. Although many of the governors are relatively new, they contribute a lot of professional skills to the management of the school.

**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).**



## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>
---	-----------------------

### 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>	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	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	1
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

<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	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
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>	2
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2

<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>	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	1
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**

Thank you for helping me so much when I came to inspect your school to find out how well you are getting on. I particularly enjoyed looking at your work and talking to some of you.

I agree with your parents that you go to a good school.

There is so much I like about your school that I can't mention everything, so here is a list of what I think are the most important things.

- You do well in your work, and when you leave school at the end of Year 6 your results are always better than those of most other schools. You should be very proud of this.
- Everyone in your school is friendly and welcoming. You behave well and get on really well with each other.
- You learn a lot in lessons because the teaching you are given is good.
- Your teachers are good at planning lots of interesting things for you to do.
- All of the adults in your school make sure that you are well looked after.
- Your headteacher and all of the other people who help run your school work hard to make sure that you get a good education.

Even in a good school like yours there is always something that could be even better. So, I think that what needs to be done next is for the school to improve the way in which it already checks on your progress. This will help the teachers to see exactly how well you are getting on in each subject as you move from Year 1 to Year 6.

I am sure that you will continue to have great success in the future.

Yours sincerely,

Mr M Thompson Lead Inspector