



# Dronfield Junior School

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 112539  
**Local Authority** DERBYSHIRE  
**Inspection number** 289318  
**Inspection date** 5 March 2007  
**Reporting inspector** Martin Newell

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Junior	<b>School address</b>	School Lane
<b>School category</b>	Community		Dronfield
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7-11		Derbyshire S18 1RY
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01246 413145
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	333	<b>Fax number</b>	01246 291226
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Mr John Harvey
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr John Anderson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	10 March 2003		

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector in one day.

## Description of the school

This is an above average sized junior school serving the town of Dronfield. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is a little below the national average, although the percentage of pupils with a statement of special educational need is similar to the picture found nationally. A high percentage of pupils are from White British backgrounds and of those pupils from different ethnic backgrounds only a very small percentage are at an early stage of acquiring English. A small number of Traveller learners attend the school. The school has gained Investors in People, Artsmark Silver, Healthy Schools, Eco Schools, Activemark awards and The Quality Mark in Basic Skills.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

### **Grade: 1**

Dronfield is an outstanding school, providing excellent value for money. Inspection findings fully support the school's judgements on its own effectiveness and it rightly deserves the overwhelming support it has from parents and pupils. Some parents commented and others echoed that the school is 'a wonderful place, admirably led, where the learning experiences are second to none'.

The school's success is due to a number of influential factors, not least outstanding leadership and teaching, excellent care and guidance and a vibrant and exciting curriculum. While pupils start at the school with attainment levels that are above the national average, teachers go the extra mile in building on these skills. Teaching is demanding and keeps all pupils on their toes but in a way that keeps them thoroughly engaged, and hanging on teachers' every word. A wealth of high quality learning opportunities are on offer both within and outside of the school day as well as within and well beyond the school building. It is no surprise that attendance at the school is good. The support for pupils and the academic guidance they receive is impressive, as is pupils' own knowledge of their targets and precisely what they need to do to be even better. It is no coincidence that when all these qualities are put together pupils often achieve outstandingly well and reach very high standards by the time that they leave school.

A significant strength of the school is the pupils. Their behaviour is outstanding, they show an infectious enthusiasm for learning and contribute significantly to the life of the school and the wider community. Pupils know only too well the importance of keeping healthy and safe and they show great initiative and enterprise in the many fundraising activities which they organise and run themselves. These activities not only show their great concern for others but enable them to develop qualities and skills that equip them very well for their future lives.

All staff and governors work extremely well together as a team and share the desire and vision to provide the best that they can for all pupils. A sense of whole school and community cohesion envelops the school. Under the excellent leadership of the headteacher, staff and governors are very effective at monitoring teaching and the school's performance and in robustly tackling any weaknesses they find. The school has rightly flagged up the need for the English, mathematics and science subject leaders to play a greater role in analysing test and assessment data to help identify areas for improvement. The school's track record of improvement is outstanding as is its capacity to continue to move forward. The lasting impression is of a school that is not content to rest on its laurels but instead sets the bar higher thus enabling all pupils to leave the school very well rounded successful and confident individuals.

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

- Ensure the subject leaders for English, mathematics and science develop greater skills in analysing test and assessment data to help identify any areas for improvement.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils start at the school with standards that are above average. Test and assessment data indicates that by the time that pupils leave school, standards are consistently very high, particularly in reading, mathematics, science and speaking and listening. Much of this is due to the outstanding and exciting teaching and the manner in which the inspirational leadership and management of the school tackle the causes of any dips in performance when they occur. Writing standards at the higher level dipped in 2005. A range of innovative and excellently planned initiatives were put in place and in 2006 the percentage of Year 6 pupils reaching the highest level increased significantly. Standards are on track to rise again in 2007 and 2008. All pupils, irrespective of gender, ability or ethnicity make very good and often outstanding progress. The school sets very challenging targets and the commitment shown by all staff and pupils to ensure that they are reached, and sometimes exceeded, is a winning combination that lies at the heart of why this school is so successful.

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

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary and they are terrific ambassadors for the school. Their love of school, high levels of self-motivation and an overriding desire to do well are all tangible and reflected in the good attendance rates and their excellent work ethic. Pupils are very reflective, show a genuine concern for one another, demonstrate high levels of maturity and have a very good knowledge and respect of cultures and beliefs beyond their own. Pupils' awareness of what is needed to follow a healthy lifestyle and keep safe is outstanding and is reflected in the achievement of the Healthy School awards. Pupils carry out a plethora of tasks and responsibilities around the school, run the school council themselves, participate regularly in community social events as well as organising litter picks and raising community awareness of environmental issues. The pupils run a Charity Group which makes decisions about which charities to support, organises fundraising events and writes to local businesses for financial backing. They set up and run enterprise initiatives which have included making jewellery and Christmas cards and there is little doubt that the school provides pupils with outstandingly good skills and qualities for their future lives.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 1**

Teaching and learning are outstanding. Planning of work is meticulous and ensures that tasks set are very challenging and closely matched to pupils' individual abilities.

Teaching assistants make a significant contribution to pupils' learning. Lessons are packed with pace and incisive questioning. Teachers go out of their way to make learning fun and enjoyable. They often use their high levels of subject knowledge to bring learning springing to life. Excellent use is made of computers and interactive whiteboards, which add more interest to pupils' learning. Teaching is monitored rigorously and staff are always willing to take on board any pointers for improvement. This, together with staff enthusiasm to attend training courses, means that teaching and learning continue to go from strength to strength. Assessment is excellent and based on thorough tracking of pupils' progress and on setting challenging targets. The marking of pupils' work is outstanding because it gives excellent and detailed advice and guidance to which pupils positively respond because of their fervent commitment to high achievement.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 1**

The curriculum is outstanding. Literacy and numeracy skills are developed very well, as are pupils' computer skills. The school is very successful at improving pupils' investigative, problem solving and enquiry skills and pupils flourish as independent learners. Pupils learn French and the vibrant curriculum offers countless opportunities to participate in the creative arts. Very good provision is made for pupils with learning difficulties and higher attaining pupils. Enrichment opportunities are stunningly good. The after school clubs range from football to water polo, from choir to string ensemble, from needlework to Spanish and from art to computers. Residential visits include Wales and Paris. Pupils make regular visits to the theatre, ballet and concerts and many places of historical, cultural or political interest such as the House of Commons. This is supplemented by an array of visitors including artists, theatre companies and musicians and dancers from many nations. The headteacher's vision for a curriculum based around excellence and enjoyment is fully realised and is further embellished by the plentiful chances pupils have to take part in physical activity, to learn about healthy lifestyles and good citizenship and to make a telling contribution to the local community.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

This aspect of school life is outstanding. The school recognises and celebrates the individuality of all pupils and staff know pupils academic and social needs very well. Thorough procedures are in place for child protection, risk assessment and health and safety. Very good links are in place with outside support agencies to ensure that pupils receive support when it is needed. Strong links with feeder schools ensure smooth transition as well as enabling pupils to settle quickly and confidently. The excellent procedures for tracking their academic development are significantly enhanced by the fact that pupils have a very good knowledge of their own targets, the levels they are working at and what they need to reach the next one.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 1**

Leadership and management of the school are outstanding. The headteacher's leadership is inspirational and innovative. He ensures that the school provides an exciting range of learning opportunities that motivate and challenge pupils. This is helped in no small measure by the excellent support and data analysis skills of the deputy headteacher. Together the headteacher and deputy headteacher form an impressive partnership where their distinct areas of expertise combine seamlessly to help make the school outstanding. There is a tremendous team spirit in school and all staff are committed to the shared aim of providing the best for all pupils. The senior management team and teachers with key responsibilities all play influential roles in monitoring teaching and learning, in maintaining its high quality and rigorously tackling weaknesses. However, although it is work in progress, the subject leaders for English, mathematics and science are not yet highly skilled practitioners in analysing test and assessment data to identify specific areas for development. Governance of the school is excellent. Governors are great supporters of the school by playing an influential role in questioning, monitoring and challenging the school's performance.

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## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>
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### 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>	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	1
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

### 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	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	1

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	1
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	1
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	1

<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>	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	2
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	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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**

6 March 2007

Dear Children

Dronfield Junior School, School Lane, Dronfield, Derbyshire, S18 1RY.

You will probably remember that I visited your school not too long ago and I am now writing to let you know what I found out. Before I do, I would first of all like to say a big thank you for the welcome you gave me. You are all extremely polite and great ambassadors for the school. It was great to hear how much you enjoy school and all the many exciting activities on offer.

There are so many good things about your school that it is actually an outstanding school! The staff make learning fun and enjoyable and you achieve very high standards in your work. The school is excellent in the way it teaches you the importance of keeping fit, healthy and safe. It also makes really sure you are cared for and looked after very well. Another strength of your school is the impressive way in which the headteacher makes it such an exciting place for you to learn. But you are also another great strength of the school by the way you behave, your hard work, your contribution to the school and how you care for one another.

I have talked to your teachers about how they can make the school even stronger. More of your teachers are going to get more closely involved in ways in which they can help you to make even better progress.

The headteacher and all the staff want the school to continue to improve. Having met you I am sure you will play your part as well by continuing to work as hard as you do and by keeping up your excellent standards of behaviour. I wish you every success in your future. It was a privilege to meet you.

Martin Newell

Lead Inspector