

Dronfield Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112540
Local Authority	DERBYSHIRE
Inspection number	289319
Inspection date	21 March 2007
Reporting inspector	Keith Edwards

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	241
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Richard Gilson
Headteacher	Mrs Kay Lovegrove
Date of previous school inspection	13 January 2003
School address	School Lane Dronfield Sheffield South Yorkshire S18 1RY
Telephone number	01246 412302
Fax number	01246 412924

Age group	4–7
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Introduction

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

Description of the school

The school serves the town of Dronfield in north-east Derbyshire. The children come from a range of cultural backgrounds, although the majority are of White British heritage. Attainment on entry to the school is broadly average. The proportion of children with learning difficulties and disabilities, including those with statements of special educational needs, is below that of most schools.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school. It has improved significantly since the last inspection and is very well set to maintain this momentum. Standards remain high because the quality of teaching, learning, care and curriculum is exceptional. One delighted parent, whose views are echoed by many others, commented, 'This is a superb school which provides a rich variety of experiences as well as a sound education. My child is very happy and secure.' The school has the respect of the community that it serves and works very well with other schools, particularly the neighbouring junior school.

The children make outstanding progress in the Foundation Stage, particularly in their personal and social development and in their communication skills. This is because the school is highly successful in enabling children to settle quickly. Furthermore, it places great emphasis on encouraging children to work together across a range of activities and on the development of their speaking and listening skills. The enriched curriculum and the outstanding teaching ensure that the children make excellent progress as they move through the school.

Standards in Year 2 are well above average, not only in the academic subjects, but also in the creative and aesthetic subjects. For example, high quality music is a notable feature of the school. The vibrant curriculum captures the pupils' interest and motivates them. With the exception of writing, where the girls outperform the boys, the pupils achieve equally well. Because they are very well supported by a dedicated staff, those pupils who find learning difficult make outstanding progress. The more academic pupils are challenged to reach their potential because the work set is closely matched to their ability. Because the pupils have a clear understanding of what they need to do to improve, and their attitudes to learning are very positive, their achievement is outstanding.

The personal development and well-being of all pupils is excellent. From day one, the children really enjoy coming to school and attendance rates are well above average. Staff respect and value the pupils and consequently pupils develop self-confidence, high self-esteem and self-discipline; their behaviour is outstanding. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe and they respond very well to the many initiatives encouraging them to adopt healthy lifestyles. They work hard and play very well together, forming excellent relationships with one another and with adults in school.

The headteacher provides outstanding leadership. She has established an ethos of high achievement and has motivated and empowered her colleagues to settle for nothing but the best. The school's view of itself is very accurate and the commitment to sustain high standards has resulted in a clear strategy for further improvement. The quality of governance remains high. The governors are closely involved in the strategic development of the school and have developed a range of strategies to gauge the school's effectiveness and to measure its performance. The school provides outstanding value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- The school should raise standards in writing, taking particular account of boys' achievement.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Achievement is outstanding and standards are exceptionally high. The children achieve very well in the Reception classes and reach standards that are above average. Standards in the national assessments in reading, writing and mathematics for seven-year-olds are consistently well above the national average. All groups of pupils have outstanding achievements as the school uses its assessment data very effectively to ensure that the work set closely matches the needs of the pupils and provides the right degree of challenge. The only exception is achievement in writing, particularly that of boys, which tends to lag behind their other skills. The school is ambitious in its literacy targets for pupils and is mostly successful at meeting them. This is because the school has placed very good emphasis on developing speaking and listening skills and extending pupils' confidence in using a broad vocabulary. Furthermore, the quality of teaching, based on a very clear understanding of pupils' potential, is outstanding. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are now good because of enhanced resourcing and training for staff. Standards in music, particularly singing, are well above average and strongly support pupils' personal development.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development is outstanding. Pupils thoroughly enjoy coming to school, where they quickly become confident and enthusiastic learners. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They report that incidents of poor behaviour are rare and they trust staff to deal with any problems that might occur. Pupils are courteous, polite and helpful. They understand the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle and describe why it is important to eat a balanced diet.

The school makes an excellent contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. It provides a rich range of opportunities for the children to develop a sense of their own worth and to value and respect their peers. Pupils gain a deep understanding of a range of moral issues, both from lessons and school assemblies. Their spiritual development is enhanced by reflecting on, for instance, the emotions that inspire, and are inspired by the works of artists and musicians. Pupils' grasp of cultural diversity is achieved by celebrating key events and festivals throughout the year. Pupils make a significant contribution to the school community through, for example, the work of the school council and the 'ECO' committee which is very vigilant about saving energy and reducing waste. The pupils contribute very well to the wider community and successfully acquire the essential skills that equip them exceptionally well for the next stages of education and adult life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Teachers and classroom assistants work very effectively as a team to motivate pupils and provide them with a high level of support. Assessment information is used very well in lesson planning so that the different learning needs of pupils are very well met. Learning objectives are made clear to pupils and are effectively reviewed so that pupils know what they are already doing well and what they need to do to improve. The teachers are skilled at using well-focused questions to extend learning and

encourage pupils to answer with confidence. Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and lessons are very well planned to provide imaginative and enjoyable learning activities. Teachers have high expectations of behaviour and academic achievement and this promotes very good progress in each year group. Pupils learn well because teachers engage their interest and this encourages them to want to work hard to succeed. The feedback to pupils is usually very encouraging and relates closely to pupils' targets. However, on occasions the marking lacks accuracy and does not help pupils to overcome basic inaccuracies in spelling and grammar.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is outstanding and strongly supports pupils' personal, academic and physical development. It is reviewed regularly to ensure that it continues to interest and excite pupils. It is enriched by a wide range of additional activities, including lunchtime clubs, visits and visitors. A particular strength is the attention given to the performing arts, with drama and music of exceptional quality. The curriculum creatively links learning across subjects and strongly supports the development of language. The school has a strong programme of personal, social and health education (PSHE) which is very well integrated with other activities. Pupils in Year 2 speak enthusiastically about their enjoyment of lunchtime activities and opportunities to develop their sporting and musical interests.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The quality of care, guidance and support is outstanding. There is a strong emphasis on nurturing and developing each child as an individual. The adults provide excellent role-models and, consequently, the school is a happy and inviting place in which to work and learn. Parents speak warmly about the care that is taken to ensure that their children settle quickly into school routines and how well their children are prepared for the next stage of their education. Arrangements to ensure pupils' safety and well-being are securely in place and understood by all staff. Pupils are confident in the knowledge that adults will help them with any problems, should they occur. Pupils of all abilities are very well supported academically because procedures for checking and tracking their progress are used shrewdly. The school has an excellent system for setting and reviewing personal targets which gives pupils a clear understanding of how they can improve their work. The partnership between home and school is strong. There are excellent links with support agencies to ensure that pupils who are vulnerable or need extra help receive the necessary support to help them to do as well as they can.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The leadership and management of the school are outstanding at every level. The headteacher has been resolute in her drive for excellence and has developed a strong team ethos. The staff respond well to the rigorous performance management system and are empowered by a culture of continuing professional development. The development of the quality of teaching and the use of assessment procedures to ensure that the work set enables all groups of pupils to achieve their best, have been significant components of the school's continuing success. Consequently, the pupils are highly motivated and standards remain exceptionally high.

There has been outstanding progress since the last inspection; every aspect of school life has shown improvement. The headteacher and senior staff have an excellent knowledge of the school and of the pupils' performance and have accurately identified those few areas that require further refinement. The governing body is fully involved in strategic development and has become confident in its ability to hold the school to account, particularly in terms of understanding school effectiveness.

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Annex A

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?	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	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

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ 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

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	1
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

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
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.

Annex A

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	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

21 March 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Dronfield Infant School, School Lane, Dronfield, Sheffield, South Yorkshire, S18 1RY

I really enjoyed my recent visit to your school because everybody was so polite and friendly. I was very pleased to be able to work with you in your classrooms, join in with your assembly, listen to your singing and watch you playing outside. I can understand why you enjoy your school so much as there are so many things that make your school very special. Here are some of them.

- You clearly want to do your best to learn in lessons and are prepared to work hard.
- Everybody understands the school rules and your behaviour is wonderful.
- Everybody tries to be friendly, thoughtful and helpful. Well done!
- All of your teachers work hard to make your lessons interesting and fun.
- The school provides an excellent range of activities and visits to keep you interested.
- You sing beautifully.
- Mrs Lovegrove is an excellent headteacher.

You are very, very fortunate to be able to attend Dronfield Infant School. Very few schools are as good as yours. This is because Mrs Lovegrove and the staff really understand how to make learning fun and work very hard to help you. But, as in all schools, there are still things that can be done to make your school even better. I know that some of you, particularly the boys, can do even better with your writing. You must keep on working hard to get better and I know your teachers will help you.

I would like to wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Keith Edwards

Lead Inspector