



# Duckmanton Primary School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 112630  
**Local Authority** DERBYSHIRE  
**Inspection number** 289355  
**Inspection dates** 17–18 October 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Michael Miller

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>	West Crescent
<b>School category</b>	Community		Duckmanton, Duckmanton
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11		Chesterfield, Derbyshire
			S44 5DH
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01246 825650
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	150	<b>Fax number</b>	01246 827605
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Mr Howard Featherstone
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Ms Sarah Stevens
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	29 January 2001		

<b>Age group</b>	<b>Inspection dates</b>	<b>Inspection number</b>
3–11	17–18 October 2006	289355

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Duckmanton Primary School is smaller than average, serving a former mining community to the east of Chesterfield. Most pupils are of White British background. The number of pupils from minority ethnic groups, or learning English as an additional language, is very low. The loss of the mining industry continues to result in high levels of local social and economic disadvantage. The proportion of pupils taking free school meals is over twice the national average. A higher than average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties or disabilities. Children enter the school, in the Nursery or Reception, with below average attainment. The numbers of pupils moving on and off the school roll, other than at the normal time of entry, is relatively high. Some pupils have a history of changing schools regularly. The school is part of a Coalfields Excellence Cluster, working together with other such local schools on joint initiatives. The school has gained an anti-Bullying Kite Mark, a Basic Skills Award, a Health Promoting Schools Award, and recently the Investors in People Award.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

This school provides a satisfactory standard of education, and gives satisfactory value for money. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The new headteacher is effective, and has analysed well the needs of the school. She is working to good effect with staff, to ensure the necessary changes and improvements take place. She is very active around the school, has a high profile, and knows the staff and pupils very well. Consequently, the school has regained successfully its sense of direction, and has sound capacity to improve.

In recent years, staffing and related issues have adversely affected the standards and achievements of its pupils. In particular, there was no headteacher for four terms to Easter 2005. The governors accept that the school lost its direction. Consequently, the achievement of pupils was rather inconsistent. Until 2005, a key issue from the last inspection, related to improving standards, had not been addressed adequately. Standards in national tests have been up-and-down, but not better than satisfactory. Although evidence seen during the inspection shows that standards in Year 6 are slightly below average and achievement is sound, results for 2006 indicate that they were significantly below average in tests. Results were particularly low in science. The previous Year 6 class's performance was adversely affected by a lack of strong leadership.

The curriculum meets requirements satisfactorily, but the school is currently undertaking a realistic review. Through this, it is identifying and sharing good practice, in order to ensure what it teaches is increasingly relevant to the individual needs of its pupils. With a firm lead from the school's senior management, the leadership role of coordinators is being developed successfully. However, some subject leaders lack experience, and are not yet in a position to accept full delegation of responsibility. There is effective monitoring and evaluation by the headteacher, but assessment and analysis of performance by other staff is inconsistent. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, with the best teachers ensuring pupils are involved fully in lessons through open questions and discussion. Where teachers tend to talk too much in lessons, pupils' opportunities to become involved in their learning are reduced significantly. There are good elements to the care for, and guidance of pupils. However, this area is satisfactory overall because a common approach to the academic guidance of pupils is still a developing area. Provision for pupils in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory and so they get off to a sound start.

The pupils' personal development is good, and is seen as a key to the school's future success. The school is laying down successfully firm foundations upon which to build the self-esteem and self-confidence of its pupils. The headteacher leads from the front in this; as one parent wrote, 'She always has a friendly smile and a word of encouragement.' The school appreciates well its role in implementing the national initiative that Every Child Matters. Consequently, pupils are being helped to gain an increasing understanding of the significance of leading healthy lifestyles, and the importance of their role as future citizens. Pupils enjoy working and playing together. Parents have commented very positively on the inclusive nature of the school as a

community. Attendance has risen because pupils want to come to school. Another parent wrote: 'Like any parent, I want the best for my children and feel Duckmanton Primary School does its best to achieve this for them.'

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

- Improve pupils' standards, and raise achievement, particularly in science, in Years 3 to 6.
- Ensure that all pupils are enabled to take an active role in their learning.
- Develop the work of curriculum leaders, so they can play their full part in monitoring, evaluation, curriculum development and school improvement.
- Sharpen the use of assessment information to set challenging targets for pupils of all abilities, and to check more regularly on the progress pupils are making.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Children enter the Nursery with skills which are less well developed than most three-year-olds. They gain a sound start in the Nursery and Reception, and make satisfactory progress. Standards are broadly average by the time they complete the Foundation Stage. Standards are improving in Key Stage 1. The 2006 teacher assessments of pupils in Year 2 show broadly average standards overall. Standards in science meet expectations. The school's focus on improving scientific investigation work, through practical experiments, has been particularly successful by Year 2.

Standards in 2005 Year 6 tests were broadly average. In 2006 because of significant disruptions to pupils learning throughout Key Stage 2, the most recent national test results for Year 6 pupils are significantly below average. Standards in science were rather low. However, because of action taken by the school, under the new headteacher, the achievement of pupils in the current Years 3 to 6 is now satisfactory and so standards are slightly below average in Year 6. The school has set its pupils realistic targets to enable them to catch up. Nevertheless, the school is now keen to challenge pupils more, and to raise standards.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils enjoy school and feel part of a community that respects their views. They say the school makes them 'feel good', and they can express ideas freely. As a result, attendance has improved, and is now average. They give good examples as to how they make positive contributions to the school and local community, such as through fund raising for charity. They actively help pupils with physical and sensory needs, including them fully in their activities and friendships.

The school council is an effective driving force, especially in supporting the school's quest for healthy eating. As a result, pupils understand well the need to keep healthy

and how to stay safe. Behaviour is good, although a few pupils occasionally disrupt the learning of others. Pupils have a good understanding of the impact of their actions and think and reflect well on a range of matters. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. Pupils are prepared suitably for their next stage of education.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Lessons are planned well, organised effectively and pupils managed well. Working relationships are very strong. Pupils know what they are to learn because this is shared with them, as a whole class, at the beginning of lessons. However, it is not always clear what each different ability group, or those with learning difficulties, are expected to learn specifically. Nevertheless, the level of work is satisfactorily matched to pupils' needs and abilities. The use of the interactive whiteboard makes learning fun for pupils. This was especially the case when pupils, in a Year 3 lesson, were able to use its interactive features to cut off the heads of some of Henry VIII's wives!

Some teachers use questioning effectively to challenge pupils. Nevertheless, at times, pupils are involved insufficiently in their learning. Staff sometimes miss opportunities to use a wide variety of resources to stimulate ideas, or to enable pupils to build on existing knowledge. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are generally given effective support. At times, the individual teaching by support staff is outstanding. However, sometimes the work for these pupils does not always make sufficient use of computers to support their learning, and the work adapted is not refined enough. Assessment is satisfactory. The school has increased recently the frequency and ways it checks pupils' learning. However, the use of assessment information is not always used well enough to set targets for individual pupils.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum satisfactorily covers all requirements. However, not all subjects set out clearly enough how pupils will build on their skills, or how their progress will be monitored. Management has identified this as an area for improvement. In information and communication technology, teachers are already implementing a new system to track more effectively what is taught, and the pupils' progress. Teachers are currently working hard on other curriculum improvements, linking subjects together around themes to make learning more meaningful for the pupils. For a school of its size, there is a good range of extra-curricular activities. Visits and visitors are helping to make the curriculum come alive for the pupils.

## Care, guidance and support

### Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. The school cares for pupils well and is successful in including all as part of the school community. It works very hard to raise pupils' self-esteem and support their personal development. Links with agencies to support pupils with learning difficulties and disability are good. The work of the learning mentor in improving pupils' self-esteem adds much to this. Individual education plans are used well to guide the learning of these pupils, although the targets set do not always include some of the most important things the pupils need to learn. There are sound procedures for keeping pupils safe from harm and these meet government guidance. In the past year, the school has improved the way its keeps a track of pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science. Consequently, staff now have a better understanding of how well pupils' are doing. It is now developing ways to do this in other subjects.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

The leadership, enthusiasm and drive of the headteacher have been pivotal in refocusing the school, and it has come a long way in recent months. Nevertheless, it is still in the inevitable process of cementing its common vision and goals. Staff work together and support each other well. Subject managers are being enabled to take increasing responsibility. However, where some management responsibilities are shared, as with the monitoring and support of teaching assistants, the evaluation of its effectiveness sometimes lacks sufficient focus. Professional development is used supportively to enable change, and foster teamwork. Governance is satisfactory, but relatively few governors have regular contact with the school. Consequently, they are over-reliant on their regular reports from the headteacher and chair of governors, in order to develop their strategic thinking.

There is no schedule for the periodic review of policies, to ensure they take account of the latest guidance. Nevertheless, the school's leaders are steadily reversing the decline of recent years.

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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>	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
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	3

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	3
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	3
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	3

<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>	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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

19 October 2006

Dear Pupils

Duckmanton Primary School, West Crescent, Duckmanton, Chesterfield, Derbyshire S44 5DH

We would like to thank you all very much for welcoming us into your school. We really enjoyed talking with you, finding out about your school, and how you learn. This letter is to tell you what we found out about your school.

Some of you, who are older, may know that the school had a few difficulties before your new headteacher took over at Easter in 2005. Since then, your teachers have worked hard to make the school a better place for you. They have succeeded. We agree with your teachers, and school governors, that they are now doing a satisfactory job.

These are the things we found are best about your school

- You help your teachers to make the school a friendly place in which you can learn.
- You behave well, look after each other, and work together sensibly.
- You know how to keep yourselves safe in school.
- You are very interested in healthy activity and healthy eating!
- Your school works well with your parents, carers, and others to make sure you are looked after well, and want to come to school.

What we have asked the school to do now:

- help you to improve your skills and learning by Year 6, particularly in science
- help you to take part more in lessons, and become involved more actively
- help your teachers to improve their skills even more, so they become even better at making your lessons interesting, and in helping you learn
- use the checks they make on you during the year in different ways, to make sure you are all making the best possible progress.

You too can help by continuing to work hard together, with your teachers, and have fun in your learning!

Best wishes

Michael Miller (Lead inspector) and George Derby