



Delves Lane Junior School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 114047
Local Authority Durham
Inspection number 289792
Inspection dates 14–15 September 2006
Reporting inspector Dave Byrne

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

Type of school	Junior	School address	Delves Lane
School category	Community		Consett, County Durham
Age range of pupils	7–11		DH8 7ES DH8 7ES
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01207 503984
Number on roll (school)	159	Fax number	01388 588880
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs Andrea McGuigan
		Headteacher	Mrs Susanne Haley
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected		

Age group 7–11	Inspection dates 14–15 September 2006	Inspection number 289792
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a school of average size. It serves an area with relatively high levels of deprivation. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average and the percentage with learning difficulties or disabilities is almost twice the national average. There has been a recent influx of pupils of Polish origin who are at the early stages of learning English. The school has been successful in gaining the Investors in People award and has gained the Artsmark, Activemark and an award for information and communication technology (ICT).

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school which provides pupils with a safe, secure and caring environment. It has good links with its local community and enjoys strong support from parents who like the quality of information the school provides for them. Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. They are happy, well behaved, enjoy learning and know the right choices to make in order to stay fit, safe and healthy.

Under the joint guidance of the headteacher and deputy headteacher, a generally accurate picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses has led to satisfactory self-evaluation. This recognises that academic standards could be higher, although pupils do well in art and design. In the 2005 national tests, standards in Year 6 were broadly average in mathematics but below average in English and science. From a low starting point in Year 3, this represented satisfactory achievement, but the performance of higher-attaining pupils could have been better. Action taken in the last two years has started to raise standards.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory with strengths in Years 5 and 6. The quality of teaching has improved with much better use of assessment and marking to explain to pupils how to improve. Lessons have also become increasingly more creative and fun, which has motivated pupils to learn. In 2006, pupils did better than they have for many years by achieving challenging targets in English and mathematics. There is evidence of the performance of higher-attaining pupils getting better, but across the school, the level of challenge for these pupils is still often not high enough. Achievement is held back throughout the school because many pupils struggle with the development of their speaking skills and as yet, the school is not intervening enough to counteract this barrier to learning.

A good range of clubs and educational visits are popular with pupils and adaptations to the curriculum are increasingly broadening opportunities for pupils to read, write and use computers more often. The planning of links between subjects, however, is underdeveloped and reduces pupils' ability to apply their basic skills to learning in all subjects. Good support and provision for pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities and those with English as an additional language ensures good inclusion for these pupils. This means that they achieve similarly to their classmates.

Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory and has accelerated in the last two years. Standards in writing, basic number and aspects of science, and the pupils' presentation of work are now good. The governing body makes sure that the school meets statutory requirements and gives a lot of time to supporting and helping staff, parents and pupils. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Meet the needs of higher-attaining pupils across the school.
- Develop strategies to improve pupils' vocabulary and speaking skills.

- Refine the management and planning of subjects to improve the pupils' application of literacy, numeracy and ICT across the curriculum.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement is currently satisfactory but could be better because higher-attaining pupils do not fully reach their potential. In addition, many pupils across the school have a narrow vocabulary which holds back their performance in the national tests. School assessment data shows that progress is getting better and standards are rising. In 2006, Year 6 pupils did well in achieving challenging targets in English, mathematics and science. The improvement is a result of the better use of assessment by teachers and inspiration gained from a livelier curriculum. In 2005, results in the national tests were broadly average in mathematics, but below average in English and science. Standards at the beginning of Year 3 are below average, with around a third having learning difficulties. From this low starting point progress is satisfactory for all groups except higher-attaining pupils who could do better. Girls, however, tend to outperform boys, particularly in writing but more boys than girls have learning difficulties which is a key factor in the differences. There is no significant difference in the progress boys and girls make. Pupils who learn English as an additional language make similar progress to their classmates. Throughout the school, standards in art and design are above average.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good around school and in class. The large majority love learning and enjoy lessons which contribute to satisfactory attendance. The pupils' willingness to help others in the playground and to listen when a confidential friend is needed reflects the safe and supportive ethos within the school. Pupils' views are valued although some pupils would like more opportunities to voice their opinions. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils understand, and are proud of, the different cultures in their school. During a lively celebration assembly, pupils showed sensitivity to others and demonstrated an appreciation of one another's creative abilities as well as their individual achievements. Pupils understand the importance of healthy eating and exercise.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory with strengths in Years 5 and 6. In all classes, warm relationships exist and lessons are well managed and organised. High expectations are made for the quality of pupils' presentation of work, which gives pupils a sense of

pride in what they do. Assessment information is wisely used to anticipate and provide for the needs of all pupils, except in some classes the needs of higher-attaining pupils are not met. Recent investments in ICT, although not complete, are benefiting learning by bringing some lessons alive. Expectations for pupils to use computers to support learning, however, are not high enough in all classes. Teachers value pupils' ideas and often engage them in intelligent discussions, but the pupils' relatively poor vocabulary and speaking skills are not sufficiently catered for in lessons. This slows the rate at which pupils learn. Good teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants contributes to good support for pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities. Pupils who learn English as an additional language also benefit from good support. Throughout the school, marking successfully engages pupils in assessing how well they are doing and how to improve. Homework has a high status and its development in recent years is a key factor in the improved progress that pupils make.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory and is well balanced to include work on the development of pupils' healthy and safe lifestyles. Good provision is made for pupils who learn English as an additional language and those who have learning difficulties or disabilities but the needs of higher-attaining pupils are not given enough attention.

Recent initiatives to add creativity to lessons have been successful in lifting standards particularly in writing. Weaknesses in pupils' vocabulary have not, however, been tackled through a whole school approach to developing pupils' speaking skills. A good start has been made to enable pupils to apply their basic skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT to all subjects. The planning and management of this, however, is not refined enough to fully exploit the links. A good range of out-of-school activities enhance the curriculum and add to pupils' enjoyment of learning. Close links with local business and commerce, through the Young Enterprise scheme, gives pupils a good introduction to the world of work.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils are well cared for and given good personal support and guidance.

Pupils' health and safety are effectively managed with thorough child protection and risk assessment arrangements. The school works very well with parents and keeps them very well informed. Regular reports give up to date information about their children's educational development. The pupils' involvement in their own assessments has improved significantly in recent years and is boosting pupils' learning. The academic progress of pupils is now carefully monitored and pupils are aware of what they need to do to get better. Educational support is good for pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities and those who learn English as an additional language and contributes to these pupils being fully integrated into all elements of school life. The support for the highest attainers is, however, not given enough attention which reduces these pupils' achievement.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory and ensure good levels of personal development and care, guidance and support. The headteacher, supported by a very effective deputy headteacher, has created a strong team spirit amongst staff. Each member has a clearly defined role and together there is a strong commitment to school improvement. Satisfactory school self-evaluation procedures, established in the last two years, have identified the need to raise academic standards. Decisive actions, in particular in improving the curriculum and aspects of the use of assessment, are improving progress and standards. Good leadership and management in mathematics and English is having a positive impact on standards, but the management of other subjects is not creating strong enough links between pupils' learning in different subjects. Good management exists for the needs of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities and those who learn English as an additional language but provision for the more able is not sufficiently planned. The accommodation is well maintained and care is taken to create a lively, vibrant atmosphere throughout the school for pupils to learn in. The governing body energetically supports the school but its role in monitoring standards and achievement, whilst satisfactory, is not rigorous enough. Given the current educational direction the school has a sound capacity to improve in future.

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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?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
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	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ 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

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	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	3
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

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

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?	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

15 September 2006

The pupils of:

Delves Lane Junior School

Delves Lane

Consett

County Durham

DH8 7ES

Dear pupils

Thank you for welcoming us to your school. We enjoyed talking with you and joining you in lessons and at assembly. Your mums, dads and carers told me that you are happy at school and we agree with them. You are caring to each other and enjoy most lessons.

You enjoy school, because your teachers all care for you and make sure that you feel safe and secure. Your classrooms are bright and lively and lessons are usually interesting and fun. We think that those of you who find learning hard were supported very well but also think that at times some of you found work a bit easy. We have asked the school to do more to challenge all of you and also to find ways of encouraging more times for you to speak, discuss and debate.

We were impressed by the way that many of you know how well you are doing in your work. The quality of marking is good and seems to be very useful in helping you to improve your work in future. The quality of your homework was very impressive. You are all very neat and take a pride in your work. Your handwriting is of a good standard and your homework is usually very well presented.

We agree with you that there is a good range of clubs out of school and are pleased many of you like joining in. It helps to make you happy and encourages you to behave well and be helpful to others. We were impressed where we saw computers being used to make lessons more interesting, but feel that more can be done to give you even more opportunities for this. The school has been asked to see if more time can be given to letting you practise your skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT as part of your normal lessons.

We wish you all luck in future and hope that you all continue to play your part in the life of the school. Keep working hard and taking care with your work and above all, caring for each other.

Yours sincerely

David Byrne and Betty Colley

(Your school inspectors)