

Dean Bank Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114086
Local Authority	Durham
Inspection number	289803
Inspection dates	22–23 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Denis Goodchild

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	254
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Michael Scurr
Headteacher	Mr Christopher Young
Date of previous school inspection	1 September 2002
School address	Dean Bank Ferryhill County Durham DL17 8PP
Telephone number	01740 651512
Fax number	01740 654835

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	22–23 May 2007
Inspection number	289803

© Crown copyright 2007

Website: 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 three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average sized primary school. The school serves an area of high social and economic deprivation. Pupils are mainly from a White British heritage with only a few from minority ethnic groups, some of whom speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well above average. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well above average. Very few pupils have a statement of special educational need. When children start school in the Nursery, their attainment is very low especially in communication and social skills. A high proportion of pupils enter the school at other times after Reception. The school has recently been subject to reorganisation incorporating the local Nursery school into a Foundation Stage Unit, which involved major rebuilding work during the 2006 summer term. A learning mentor is funded through an Excellence in Cities grant.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school, which provides outstanding care, guidance and support. Parents value the school and agree that their children are safe and well cared for. The exceptional care and sensitive support provided to all pupils enables them to overcome considerable barriers to learning. Pupils' personal development is good because it is strongly promoted within the curriculum. They willingly accept responsibility and through their school council work contribute well to the school community. Pupils have a good understanding of safe and healthy living. They have very positive attitudes to school and their behaviour is very good, but attendance is below average. A good range of activities and innovation enriches the curriculum and adds enjoyment to learning. For example, the introduction of Personal Digital Assistants (PDA) is generating great enthusiasm for learning.

Pupils achieve well. They have a low starting point and standards are broadly average by the time they leave. Good teaching and learning ensures that pupils make good progress at all stages of their education.

Children's attainment when they start school is low and very low in social and communication skills. In the newly established Foundation Stage Unit, children make good progress with very good progress in the development of social and communication skills because personal development is strongly promoted. Standards in Year 2 were well below average in 2006 in reading and writing and below in mathematics. This was because there was a higher proportion than usual of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in this group. This, however, represents good achievement from children's very low skills when they start in the Foundation Stage. School data and inspection evidence indicate an improvement in standards in the current Year 2 because of well-judged initiatives in reading and writing.

Pupils continue to achieve well in Key Stage 2. In the 2006 tests, results were broadly average. Pupils exceeded their targets for mathematics and improved on the previous year's results in mathematics and science. They did not do as well in English because insufficient pupils achieved the higher levels in writing. School data and inspection evidence shows that action taken by the school is raising standards in writing. All pupils, including vulnerable pupils and pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because of the sensitive support they receive in class and effective support from classroom assistants.

Leadership and management are good. The excellent leadership of the headteacher provides a clear direction. He is well supported by the senior management team and, with the governors, has been successful in providing a safe and secure learning environment in which pupils achieve well. In this, he has the full support of the parents. The management team is accurate in its self-evaluation of the school's performance because of the very effective systems for monitoring and tracking standards. Appropriate initiatives are in place and are raising standards in reading and writing. Governors know the school well and are, therefore, in a good position to act as a critical friend and to continue to give good support to the headteacher. Effective financial management has accessed additional funds and has improved resources and the fabric of the school. The school has made good improvement since the previous inspection. Accurate self-evaluation and appropriate priorities indicates that the school has a good capacity to improve and gives good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the attendance of those pupils who do not benefit fully from all the school has to offer.
- Build on recent initiatives to raise standards in reading and writing by the end of Year 2.
- Extend and develop further the initiatives to raise standards of writing in Key Stage 2 especially for higher attaining pupils.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' achievement is good and pupils of all abilities make good progress. By the time pupils leave school, standards are broadly average.

Provision in the Foundation Stage helps children make good progress in all areas of learning from very low starting points. They make very good progress in the development of their social and communication skills because the carefully planned organisation of the Foundation Stage curriculum promotes and develops collaborative and independent learning and also speaking and listening skills.

Results over time in the national tests in Key Stage 1 are below average. This represents good achievement and progress through Key Stage 1 from a well below average starting point in Year 1. In the 2006 tests, results in reading and writing were well below average and below in mathematics. This was because there were a higher proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in this group. School data and inspection evidence indicate that recent initiatives on reading and writing are raising standards.

Pupils continue to make good progress in Key Stage 2 and achieve well. In the 2006 national tests, results were broadly average and pupils exceeded the targets set for them in mathematics. Results in mathematics and science were an improvement on the previous year. The English results were lower than the previous year because a smaller proportion of pupils achieved the higher levels particularly in writing. School data and inspection evidence show that the current Year 6 pupils make good progress. Standards are about average and rising in writing because of successful school initiatives. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and those learning English as an additional language achieve equally well because of the good support they receive from well briefed teaching assistants.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Though attendance is below average pupils demonstrate very positive attitudes and behaviour is very good. Pupils enjoy their lessons and the additional activities provided by the school. They are particularly keen to join in the sports activities and have a good understanding of a healthy lifestyle and good eating habits, which the school works hard to encourage. Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe when using the Internet.

Pupils feel safe and happy in school because they are well supported by adults. This is evident in the very calm orderly atmosphere in the school. Pupils move around in a sensible manner, are polite to one another and adults and cooperate well in their lessons. This good behaviour contributes to the good progress that pupils make in their lessons. Pupils willingly accept responsibility and contribute to the smooth running of the school by acting as monitors, reading

partners and playground buddies. Their work on the school council has secured school improvements, such as in the toilets, and they are currently involved in developing playground facilities. Pupils make a good contribution to the wider community through fundraising, concerts and their involvement in the 'Clean it Up' campaign. Their basic and personal skills prepare them well for the next stage of learning.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Teachers have good subject knowledge, lessons are well prepared, interesting and promote enjoyment in learning. Teachers have very good relationships with pupils and very high expectations of behaviour. Pupils, therefore, listen carefully, are responsive, work hard in lessons and make good progress. Typically, good teaching has a lively pace with varied activities, which keep pupils engaged and on their toes. Also, clear explanations and demonstrations make sure that pupils have the necessary skills and knowledge to work independently. Occasionally, teacher led discussion slows the pace of learning and does not give pupils enough time to use what they know. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used very effectively throughout the school and contributes significantly to pupils' enjoyment of learning. Year 6 pupils use PDAs in all aspects of their learning which is a major factor in a high proportion of pupils completing homework. This fits seamlessly into their class work and helps pupils make good progress. Teachers know their pupils very well and make sure that work and resources are well matched to pupils' needs. Marking is consistently good and teachers give pupils good advice on how to improve. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because of support from well briefed and skilled teaching assistants.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school provides a good curriculum with a good emphasis given to developing pupils' basic skills. The curriculum in the newly established Foundation Stage Unit promotes very well the development of children's personal, social and communication skills removing, at an early stage, barriers to learning. The long connecting ramp between the indoor and outdoor provision hinders free-flow between the two learning environments. However, the staff work very hard at overcoming the problem through careful planning and supervision. Throughout the school, the personal, social and health education programme has a high priority so that all pupils receive appropriate support and make good progress in their personal development. A good range of visits, visitors and clubs adds enrichment and enjoyment to pupils' learning. Pupils have opportunity to learn French and communication with pupils from European countries extends pupils' interests and experiences. Links are made between subjects and pupils have opportunity to use and develop their basic skills across the curriculum. The school has been very innovative in the use of ICT to help pupils of all needs access the curriculum. For example, Year 6 pupils make excellent use of PDAs to help them learn independently in school and at home.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The care, guidance and support of learners are outstanding. Child protection and safeguarding procedures are in place and are rigorously applied. Health and safety checks and risk assessments are thorough and meet requirements. A home-school agreement covers procedures promoting safe use of the Internet including the PDA project. Parents agree that their children feel safe and secure in school. Excellent management systems ensure that pupils enjoy a high level of personal care when something really concerns them. A rapid response system ensures that specialist staff trained in pupil management skills can provide prompt appropriate support when required. The school has a very effective tracking system, which monitors social and academic progress and enables early intervention. Therefore, vulnerable pupils and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive very good support and guidance from teaching assistants, a learning mentor and specialists from outside the school. All pupils benefit from very good advice on how to improve their work and are also encouraged to set their own targets for improvement. This has a positive impact on their progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The excellent leadership of the headteacher gives a clear direction and sets appropriate priorities, which lead to school improvement. The headteacher, governors and senior management are successful in providing good quality education and set a high premium on providing outstanding care and good personal development for all its pupils. They have, therefore, been successful in providing a safe and secure environment in which pupils can thrive. In this, the school has the full confidence of the parents.

A very supportive senior management team effectively checks the school's work and pupils' progress. Management is therefore well placed to identify those areas which need developing and those pupils who need additional support. For example, this has led to initiatives, which are already raising standards in writing and reading. Management is also very innovative and the introduction of PDAs has promoted enjoyment in learning in school and at home. It is also contributing to raising standards in writing in Year 6 and developing pupils' study skills.

Governors are very supportive and effective financial management has removed a deficit, accessed other funds and improved resources and the fabric of the school. They are very knowledgeable of the schools' performance and act as a critical friend.

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.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

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

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	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	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
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

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	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	2

The quality of provision

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

24 May 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Dean Bank Primary School, Ferryhill, Co Durham, DL17 8P

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school. You were all very friendly, helpful and polite when answering our questions.

We were impressed with how hard you work in class and how well you improve as you move through the school. Your teachers are working really hard to help you get even better at reading and writing and we have asked them to continue with the good work. Teachers already give you good advice on how to improve your work but we were also impressed on how the older pupils are setting their own targets for improvement. Well done.

You are all very well behaved in class and around the school. Your school council is helping to make the school a better place and they told us about the work to improve the school grounds. You have a good understanding of how to stay healthy and safe and you particularly like the physical activities in school. You contribute well to the local community and also through the fundraising you do. We agree with you that you have lots of visits and visitors, which make learning more interesting. The adults take very good care of you. You and your parents, and we agree, think that your school is a very safe and happy place to be. You enjoy school but some are not as good as others at coming to school. So I have asked your school to work even harder to raise attendance but they will need your help to do this.

Your headteacher, deputy headteacher and governors work very hard for you and are keen to improve your school for you. I am sure that you will continue to play your part in making your school an even better place to be. Once again thank you for your help.

Yours sincerely

Denis Goodchild

Lead Inspector