



Dunalley Primary School

Inspection Report - Amended

Unique Reference Number 115582
Local Authority Gloucestershire
Inspection number 290264
Inspection dates 20–21 September 2006
Reporting inspector Mo Roberts HMI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	West Drive
School category	Community		Cheltenham
Age range of pupils	4–11		GL50 4LB
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01242 512391
Number on roll (school)	179	Fax number	01242 256535
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	David Horstead
		Headteacher	Judith Price
Date of previous school inspection	12 February 2001		

Age group 4–11	Inspection dates 20–21 September 2006	Inspection number 290264
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Amended Report Addendum

Report updated to resolve formatting inconsistency

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The school is close to Cheltenham town centre. It serves a diverse social and cultural community. This includes some of Gloucestershire's least advantaged districts. Nearly a third of the pupils have learning difficulties. A similar proportion of pupils are entitled to free school meals. More pupils than the national average learn English as an additional language. A substantial number of pupils leave or join the school during each school year. There is one class for each year group. Numbers have fallen since the last inspection as there are fewer children in the area. There is now space for family learning, extended care for children – before and after school – and a nursery. Reports on these are separate as they are not managed by the school governors. The school is now smaller than the average primary school nationally.

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. It is a centre for the community and provides a haven of stability and security for all the pupils. They are taught how to get on with each other and are helped to behave well. They understand the straightforward rules. The reward scheme encourages pupils to spend their 'golden time' on activities such as cooking healthy food or enjoying extra sport. Pupils speak with pride about the school and a younger child said, with much feeling: 'This is a really nice place'. Another explained: 'You learn lots of interesting things'. The curriculum has been skilfully adapted to ensure that pupils are given a wide variety of first-hand experiences through visits, residential stays and visitors to the school. This in turn gives them a lot to talk, think and write about. This is especially important as many enter with low communication skills and a limited knowledge of the world around them.

Pupils are encouraged to have a pride in themselves and all they do. They become confident learners thanks to the good teaching they receive. Pupils enjoy coming to school. They make a very strong start in the reception class. Those that stay progress well as they go up through the school and standards are broadly average at ages seven and eleven, having improved since the last inspection. Those with learning difficulties are very effectively helped to achieve their personal best. Support for those learning English as a new language is good. However, the constant flux of pupils in Key Stage 2 impacts on the school's overall results: in mathematics and science they are close to the national average, but English scores are slightly lower. The school is well aware of the issue and is working with external consultants on an intensive programme to raise standards. This is to help teachers ensure that learning is always clearly focused in all age groups. In the past the pace of learning as pupils entered Key Stage 2 has sometimes dipped.

The leadership and management of the school are good. The staff truly want the best for every child and through working with families strive to reach this goal. They persevere in trying to improve the attendance of the few who unduly depress the rate. The school is well supported by a knowledgeable and active governing body. The school's self-evaluation is accurate and shows that there is a high level of understanding of the complex issues it faces in raising standards further. New staffing arrangements have been introduced to support this drive. It has a good capacity to improve. The monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning and the various strategies employed are not yet tight enough. One measure of the school's success is that it managed to keep its development on track during the headteacher's recent extended sick leave. Parents are generally supportive of the school and are becoming more involved each year.

What the school should do to improve further

- improve the consistency in the quality of teaching to ensure there is no slowing in the rate of the progress pupils make, especially in English in Key Stage 2
- ensure all the management are fully involved in the process of monitoring and evaluating the improvement strategies.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Many pupils join the school with lower levels of skills than those normally found in children of their age. A lot also have communication difficulties. In the reception class they make good progress in developing socially and are given many opportunities to talk about their work to adults and other children. The development of good attitudes to learning gives them a very good foundation for later learning. The majority enter Year 1 with standards that match those found nationally.

Progress from reception through to Year 2 is good and the school's results for seven-year-olds are close to the national average. Progress through Key Stage 2 is not quite as consistently strong but is good overall. Standards achieved vary partly because of the high turnover of pupils. Over half of the eleven-year-old class in 2005 had not originally started their formal education in this school. That year the school did not quite meet its challenging target for English but exceeded the targets for mathematics, where standards showed an improving picture. Standards in science were close to the national average. The detailed analysis of 2006 results was incomplete at the time of inspection but the early picture shows broadly similar trends to previous years. Pupils have all got off to a good start in the first two weeks of the school year.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The pupils' personal development is good. Pupils are beginning to adopt healthy lifestyles and the school recently attained a 'Healthy School' award. The pupils are keen on growing and eating vegetables from the garden. The younger ones especially enjoy the daily free fruit. Pupils know what to do if anyone tries to bully them, and are confident action will be taken by the school to help them. The school is assiduous in tracking down a tiny minority who are persistently poor attenders. Children make a positive contribution to the local community through, for example, singing in church.

They also raise money for animals for families in Africa. Some pupils' own future economic well-being is potentially depressed by their failing to reach high enough standards in English at the age of eleven. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, although they are least secure in their knowledge about other cultures.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good. While the majority of lessons are vibrant, those that are judged by monitoring to be satisfactory have a less urgent pace. This results in some pupils not fully developing their potential, especially in literacy, as

they require quick rewards, through lots of small steps, to increase their confidence in writing.

Good teachers use a variety of interactive strategies or information and communication technology (ICT) to help pupils to understand how their new learning fits with things they have already learned. Year 6 pupils were totally engrossed while a computer gradually revealed a picture of a character in a novel they were studying. They were stimulated to thoroughly discuss what each segment of the face revealed about the character. In all lessons the purpose is carefully explained so that pupils know what they will be doing, and in the better lessons they are involved in checking that this has been achieved. Pupils who have learning difficulties and those whose first language is not English are provided with good additional support from teaching assistants or visiting specialist teachers. As a result they are fully included in lessons and achieve as well as other pupils.

Parents are pleased with the teaching and the progress of their children. Pupils enjoy their lessons and have very positive attitudes to learning. They are confident about how they learn. They are keen to understand how to improve their work if they make mistakes.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. There is a lively, interesting curriculum with a strong emphasis on personal development in the Foundation Stage. Children are encouraged to talk about and reflect on their experiences. The curriculum in Years 1 to 6 has been successfully adapted so that it is well matched to the needs of all pupils, whatever their interests or abilities. An appropriately high emphasis is placed on developing literacy and numeracy skills and encouraging a healthy lifestyle. ICT is well used and often stimulates partnered or group discussion. Periods of physical activity are built into the lessons, which helps learning to sink in. Good examples were the younger children making snakes with their arms to emphasise the sound 's' and older pupils using their bodies to demonstrate how various forces act in their science lesson.

The school is justifiably proud of the good additional opportunities it provides to enrich the curriculum. Pupils are given scope to learn through their own experiences. They are taken on a variety of visits, including residential trips, and a range of visitors is invited into the school. The 'Golden Activities' programme is very popular because it provides additional opportunities, especially in sport and art. There is a minor issue from the pupils' perspective as some activities are oversubscribed.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

There is a strong emphasis on inclusiveness. Those new to the school are given buddies who help them to settle in quickly and successfully. The school works well with external agencies and ensures all child protection procedures are followed. Children's health and safety are given a high priority and pupils are learning to take responsibility for

themselves. Parents' evenings and sessions about the work their children do are appreciated. Pupils know what their own academic targets are and the marking is developing to show them how to achieve them.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. Targets are challenging and there is a clear shared vision for what Dunalley aims to achieve for all its pupils. The school development plan sets clear priorities and the school has not hesitated to seek external expert advice to help it address identified concerns. This exemplifies the pro-active approach of the headteacher, senior managers and the governors. They have worked hard to encourage family learning, to get an on-site nursery and to begin to deal with the roots of low achievement. A new staffing structure has been introduced. Teachers have been encouraged to vary their work by working with different age groups. There are many special initiatives for groups of pupils with identified needs. These are well thought through but systematic monitoring and evaluation are in the early stages. The school year got off to a good start with a 'motivation week' which the pupils thoroughly enjoyed.

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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?	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	3

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?	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?	2
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	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

Thank you for the welcome that you gave us when we recently inspected your school. I was very pleased with the way you have all settled down together at the start of the new school year. We really enjoyed talking to you about the exciting things you do. I am glad you feel the rules are fair and that you are sure who to go to if anything is bothering you.

You go to a good school. Your headteacher and teachers know how to make learning exciting and how to help you progress well. The school is a safe, well-organised place and you keep it nice and tidy. You seem to know a lot about keeping healthy. I like your plans for shaded areas on the playground.

I have asked your teachers to:

- make sure that teaching is consistently good and to make sure that you improve your English, especially in Key Stage 2
- and keep a tight watch on what you learn in your various groups and classes to make sure you do your best.

What you do at school is important for your future so I know you will do your best to help your teachers to help you.

Best wishes to you all.



Dunalley Primary School
West Drive
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire
GL50 4LB

22 September 2006

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Best wishes to you all.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Roberts and Mrs Senior