



St Denys Church of England Infant School, Ibstock

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 120138
Local Authority Leicestershire
Inspection number 291644
Inspection dates 6–7 February 2007
Reporting inspector Pat Walsh HMI

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

Type of school	Infant	School address	Laud Close
School category	Community		Ibstock
Age range of pupils	4–7		LE67 6NL
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01530 260004
Number on roll (school)	177	Fax number	01530 263406
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Sarah Wilson
		Headteacher	Jane Sharp
Date of previous school inspection	2 December 2002		

Age group 4–7	Inspection dates 6–7 February 2007	Inspection number 291644
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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 pupils in this average-sized infant school mainly come from the local area and most are of White British origin. Almost all have English as their first language. The school has a unit for ten pupils with moderate learning difficulties (MLD), who come from a wider area than the school's catchment area. This means that the proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is higher than average. These pupils have a range of complex learning and physical needs. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. Children's attainment on entry when they join the school in the Foundation Stage varies but is below average overall. The school has achieved Healthy School status.

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. Parents and children have a positive view of what it provides. One pupil commented, 'I like this school, it makes me feel happy inside.' Pupils achieve well from a starting point that is generally below average and reach standards that are broadly average. Many pupils, especially the girls, make good progress and attain well. Boys make significantly less progress than girls, partly because they generally take less interest in classroom work and concentrate less well. The school has recognised this and has begun to introduce a range of strategies to improve boys' willingness to learn. The provision for pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities in the special unit is excellent because their teaching is outstanding and support is carefully matched to their very complex needs.

Teaching is good throughout the school, building effectively on pupils' basic skills and based on a good curriculum for both the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. All staff have excellent relationships with pupils and encourage them to do their best at all times. The work given to pupils is generally suited to their abilities but, in some lessons, more-able pupils are not challenged sufficiently because the work is too easy for them. The pupils thoroughly enjoy school and benefit from the good quality of care and guidance provided. Pupils' personal development is good. They behave well and are proud of their school. The school council members take their responsibilities seriously. One commented, 'We help to make things better in the school'. Good links with the junior school prepare the pupils well for the next stage of their education.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides clear direction for all who work in the school and is well supported by key staff. She sets the tone for the school by maintaining a balance between academic and personal development. Her evaluation of the school's performance is accurate. Pupils' progress is tracked effectively and systematically. This information is used well by teachers to help pupils know what they need to do to improve their work. Governors are supportive and well informed.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the achievement of boys by ensuring that new ways of increasing their willingness to learn become firmly embedded.
- Ensure that the tasks given to all pupils always challenge them.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good. Children enter the Foundation Stage with below average skills and make good progress as they move through the school. By the time pupils in the main school leave Year 2, their standards are broadly average. This is borne out by the results of the national tests in most recent years. In all subjects, girls perform better than boys. The school's good focus on supporting pupils with learning difficulties or

disabilities gives them increased confidence and enthusiasm for learning and they achieve well. Pupils in the special unit make good progress because teaching and support for personal development are excellent.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. They have positive attitudes to work and want to do well. Most concentrate well, although occasionally some boys find difficulty in maintaining their full attention. Pupils in the unit respond very positively to the well-structured framework of their day. Pupils' attendance is similar to the average for primary schools. Absences are promptly followed up and term-time holidays are discouraged.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They have a good sense of right and wrong and respect each other's views. Pupils respond positively to the school's high expectations of their behaviour. They are actively involved in the local community. They entertain parents and friends and support local recycling and environmental projects. Through their support for charities, pupils successfully develop an understanding of different people's cultures, needs and aspirations.

Pupils have a good understanding of keeping safe and healthy. They follow the guidance provided by road and fire safety training and participate enthusiastically in a good range of physical activities, including skipping, gymnastics and rock 'n roll dancing after school. Pupils' growing confidence in handling problems and working together in groups prepares them effectively for the next stage of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The outstanding quality of the teaching in the unit is rooted in the staff's excellent knowledge of their pupils' complex learning needs and meticulous planning. Lessons there are conducted at a cracking pace which ensures that pupils quickly focus on their work and maintain their concentration throughout the lesson.

In the main school, teachers manage their classes well. The recent focus on making learning more appealing to boys is helping them to improve the provision for pupils' different needs. Good planning in the Foundation Stage is closely linked to the recommended six areas of learning. In Years 1 and 2, teachers' plans successfully incorporate nationally recommended programmes for literacy, numeracy and other subjects. Teachers clearly identify what they expect pupils to learn and share these intentions at the start of lessons. As a result, pupils know what they have to do to improve their work. Most work hard when working independently and in small groups. However, there are occasions when a small minority of pupils, usually boys, find it

difficult to maintain their attention because they are not fully challenged by the work provided. This generally happens when the pace of the lesson slows or teachers do not fully anticipate their capacity for higher-level learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. Children in the Foundation Stage benefit from a well-planned curriculum that ensures they enjoy a broad range of experiences. The effective planning in Key Stage 1 means that pupils experience all that they should across the range of subjects. The good variety of additional activities enriches the school's curriculum and is a key factor in helping pupils become confident learners and in encouraging healthy lifestyles. Recent changes to the curriculum to ensure pupils are more actively involved in learning are beginning to be effective. In literacy, for example, pupils were encouraged to write instructions for making a model of a shark, following on from the work they had just done in science. The recent emphasis on writing has focused on different and more exciting ways of encouraging boys to write but it is too early to see the full impact of this in their work. The increased use of information and communication technology (ICT) is providing more opportunities to interest all pupils in their learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school's provision for the care, guidance and support of pupils is good. Staff know their pupils well and are highly committed to their care. Arrangements for safeguarding children are good. Risk assessments are thorough and adults have a good awareness of health and safety issues. Parents feel well informed about what is going on in school and say that the headteacher and staff are approachable. Good systems for tracking pupils' progress provide teachers with accurate information to help them support learning. Teachers' marking of work helps pupils know what they need to do to improve. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities are promptly identified and are well supported. Parents and carers are regularly involved in helping pupils meet suitably challenging targets. One parent said, 'My child has had the best possible care and education throughout all his time in the unit.' The school's links with its partner schools and outside agencies are good. Work with teachers at the neighbouring junior school successfully eases the transition of pupils to the next stage of their education.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher leads the school well. Her commitment to ensuring that all pupils do as well as they can is shared by the staff, who work together effectively as a team. Support staff play a valuable role in promoting and maintaining an attractive learning environment. Effective self-evaluation provides the school with a clear view of its strengths and weaknesses and has resulted in good

improvement since the last inspection. The school works hard to involve and consult parents. Early morning sessions, with parents sharing activities with their children in the Reception classes, give parents opportunities to meet staff and look at their children's work. Governors know the school's strengths and areas for development. They visit the school regularly and give good support as well as challenge. The good progress made since the school's previous inspection and the skills of the leadership team indicate that the school has good capacity to continue to improve, and it gives good value for money.

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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	2
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?	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	2
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

Thank you for welcoming us to your school, talking to us and showing us your excellent skipping! You told us you enjoy school and we think you are learning well. We enjoyed having lunch with you and finding out what a good job the school council does in helping to make things even better. You told us that you get lots of help with your work and that you feel safe and happy in school. You know a lot about staying fit and healthy and we were very impressed by the dancing in the after-school club.

Your headteacher and all the staff are doing a good job in helping you to learn as much as you can to help you as you grow up. They care for you very well and show you how to improve your work. The children in the special unit are trying their best, too, and getting lots of help so they can do even better at their work.

I have asked Mrs Sharp and the teachers to make sure that all of you, particularly the boys, are really interested in your work and that lessons are fun and encourage you to work as hard as you can. I am sure you will help by continuing to behave well and always doing your best. I wish you well for the future.