

Denton Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121814
Local Authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	292227
Inspection date	28 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Lois Furness

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	121
School	
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mike Connor
Headteacher	David Croot
Date of previous school inspection	14 January 2002
School address	Vicarage Lane Denton Northampton NN7 1DT
Telephone number	01604 890330
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

In this small school most pupils are from White British backgrounds and no pupils are at the early stages of learning English. The proportion of pupils that have learning difficulties or disabilities is broadly average. Children's attainment on entry to the school in the Foundation Stage (Reception) is slightly above average. The school achieved Active Mark in 2006 and Healthy School status in 2007. At the time of the inspection, two staff were on temporary contracts covering for teachers on maternity leave.

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 agree and typically say: 'Children love Denton School. The teachers are fantastic, the work is fun; it is a place where children blossom!' Relationships are of the highest order. Consequently, pupils feel safe and are confident that adults will help them if they have a concern. 'Teachers are very kind and always listen', is the view shared by many. Good care, guidance and support effectively promote pupils' good personal development and well-being. Pupils love coming to school as shown by their very good attendance and punctuality. Behaviour is excellent because learning is fun and pupils want to learn. Pupils have a good understanding of the benefits of living a healthy lifestyle and are able to give sensible advice about healthy eating and the importance of exercise. They have a good awareness of keeping themselves safe and understand the dangers of smoking, alcohol and drugs. A good contribution to the community is made through their work as school councillors and play leaders.

Pupils' love of school starts in Reception where provision is good. Good teaching and an interesting curriculum ensure these young children make good progress and by the time they enter Year 1 almost all attain and some exceed the goals expected for their age. Good progress continues and, by the end of Year 6, standards are significantly above average. Writing however, has been consistently weaker than reading and in Key Stage 1 standards have been declining in this aspect of English. Good strategies to improve have been introduced but it is too early to see the full impact of this work. Also, although academic guidance is satisfactory, pupils are not always clear about how to improve their work. Their knowledge of learning targets is inconsistent and marking does not clearly identify the good aspects of work and what to do to improve. These inconsistencies prevent pupils' progress becoming even better.

Nevertheless teaching and learning are good. Very good relationships mean that pupils want to learn and are keen to contribute their ideas. Interactive whiteboards are used effectively. Teaching assistants ensure that pupils with learning difficulties are included well in lessons and make good progress. However, teachers do not always have high enough expectations of pupils' presentation or handwriting. The good curriculum provides an extensive range of exciting activities including visits, visitors and sporting activities. These activities enhance pupils' learning and contribute well to their very good enjoyment of school. There is good emphasis on the arts, including dance, drama and music and this aspect of cultural development is good. However, pupils' understanding of life in multicultural Britain today is underdeveloped.

Good leadership and management, and positive teamwork are supporting school improvement. The headteacher is enthusiastic and tackles weaknesses in provision with determination. For example, standards in mathematics are now much higher as a result of improvements in mathematics provision. Through effective procedures for evaluating its own effectiveness, the school has a good understanding of what it needs to improve, for example writing and using assessment more effectively to support learning. The good improvements since the previous inspection, particularly in improving standards by the end of Year 2, and in monitoring and evaluation, indicate the school's good capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Embed the strategies to raise standards in writing and raise teachers' expectations of pupils' presentation of work and of their handwriting.
- Ensure teachers make better use of targets and marking to tell pupils how well they are doing and how they can improve their performance.

- Develop pupils' understanding of life in multicultural Britain today.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good. Children enter the Reception class with levels of skills that are slightly above those expected for their age. As a result of good teaching they make good progress. By the time they enter Year 1, children are working securely within the goals expected for their age with some children working beyond these goals. Good progress continues and by the end of Year 2, pupils attain significantly above average standards overall. Mathematics standards are much improved this year as a result of the school's focus on improving provision in this subject. By Year 6, standards are significantly above average overall and the trend of improvement seen in 2006, following a dip in 2005, has been maintained. The school has correctly identified writing as a development area and throughout the school, markedly so in Key Stage 1, reading is the stronger element of English. The few pupils with learning difficulties receive skilled support and achieve well as a result.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Children in Reception quickly develop very positive attitudes towards school. This enthusiasm and enjoyment is evident in all year groups. It is also reflected in their very good levels of attendance and punctuality. Pupils get on very well with each other and by Year 6 they are extremely confident, polite and mature young people. Behaviour is excellent. Pupils contribute well to the school community, eagerly taking on responsibility, for example, as school councillors or play leaders. School councillors are proud they have influenced school improvement, for example, by improving playtime facilities. Although spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall, pupils do not know enough about life in multicultural British society.

Pupils have a good understanding of the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle including taking regular exercise. They know how to keep themselves safe and speak informatively about the dangers of speaking to strangers, of drugs, alcohol and smoking. Their good basic skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology alongside good personal skills prepare them well for the next stage of education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Pupils are confident in asking and answering questions because relationships are very good. Questioning skills by teachers are strong and encourage pupils to give reasons for their answers which help them to deepen their understanding. Strategies such as 'talk partners' are used well to enable all pupils to contribute their ideas. The use of interactive whiteboards is good as teachers use them effectively to motivate pupils and show them new ideas. Mathematics teaching is improving as can be seen by the improving standards throughout the school. Strategies have been introduced to improve writing, to encourage pupils to use more exciting vocabulary and to use punctuation more accurately. However, as yet these strategies are not fully embedded in teaching practice. Also some teachers do not have high enough expectations

of presentation and of handwriting. Talented teaching assistants effectively support pupils with learning difficulties and those who sometimes need extra support with their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

In the Reception class there is a good balance between adult-led and child-led activities. The opportunities for outdoor learning have improved with the improved accommodation. However, outdoor activities are not always challenging enough as more able children sometimes lose interest in the activities available. Throughout the school, the local environment is used effectively as a resource for learning. There is a strong emphasis on sport and music and many pupils take advantage of the opportunity to play a musical instrument. The curriculum is adapted well for those with learning difficulties or disabilities, and those who are gifted or talented are provided with appropriate additional activities. The school works closely with the local cluster of small schools, to make the curriculum more stimulating. A good example of this was during the Creative Partnership work when Year 3 pupils learnt songs and rhythms on African drums. Personal, social and health education is promoted well, contributing effectively to pupils' personal development and well-being. A good range of activities, visits and visitors in and outside of the normal school day enriches and enhances learning for all pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Arrangements for securing pupils' safety and well-being are good. As a result, pupils feel happy, safe and well cared for. They say the rare incidences of bullying are effectively resolved by staff and the school motto of 'Being a friend not a bully' works well. Parents are pleased with the school's work with many typically saying, 'a happy caring environment where staff are friendly and approachable'. Induction procedures are good and children in the Reception settle into school life very quickly. Pupils with learning difficulties receive good support which ensures they are included effectively in all activities.

Academic guidance is satisfactory. In some classes, pupils help to assess their own and others' work and therefore begin to understand how to improve their own progress. However, this is not consistent. Pupils are not always clear how to improve their work because the process of setting targets is not well established and because of inconsistencies in marking.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The good quality of the headteacher's leadership and his committed enthusiasm give the school a clear vision for the future and a strong focus on improvement. All staff are very supportive of the leadership as they work very closely together. Monitoring and evaluation are thorough and as a result, the school knows its strengths and those areas which could be better. The priorities for action are identified clearly in the school's improvement plan, and raising standards in writing and better use of assessment are both understandably high on the school's improvement agenda. The checking of teaching and learning is regular, but teachers do not always receive clear written feedback about how they can improve their teaching. Governors are very supportive and knowledgeable. They present good challenge to the leadership when

necessary. The school successfully includes all pupils and this contributes to its very warm family atmosphere. Parents say they are very lucky to have such a friendly village school.

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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
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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	2
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	1
The attendance of learners	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
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.

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	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

29 June 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Denton Primary School, Denton NN7 1DT

- Thank you for the warm welcome you gave me when I visited your school recently. I really enjoyed speaking to some of you and seeing all the exciting things you do. You have a good school. Your headteacher and your teachers do a good job and this helps you to do well in your work. Here are some of the good things I found when I visited.
- You work hard, love learning and this helps you to make good progress and reach standards that are above those expected by Year 6.
- The teaching is good and you are taught an interesting, exciting curriculum.
- Your behavior is excellent and your parents must be very proud of the way you are so friendly and polite.
- You know the importance of keeping healthy and know the types of food you should eat every day.
- Your school council and play leaders do a good job in helping your school to be a better place.
- The younger children get a good start to school life in Reception.
- It was good to know that all the adults in your school look out for you and you feel well cared for and safe.
- Teaching assistants help those of you who sometimes find learning difficult to make good progress.
- To improve the school still further I have asked your headteacher to do the following.
- Ensure the good ideas which the school has to improve writing are used regularly in every classroom. Also make sure that teachers help you to make your work much neater, for example, writing the date before you start your work, using a ruler to underline headings and helping some of you to make your handwriting much neater.
- Make sure your teachers tell you how well you are doing and how you can improve your work and do even better.
- Help you to learn more about the different people who live in Britain today.

You can all help by continuing to work as hard as you can.

Yours sincerely

Lois Furness Lead inspector