



Danesholme Junior School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 122104
Local Authority Northamptonshire
Inspection number 292318
Inspection dates 18–19 October 2006
Reporting inspector Arnalena Bee

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

Type of school	Junior	School address	Motala Close
School category	Foundation		Corby
Age range of pupils	7–11		NN18 9DT
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01536 741657
Number on roll (school)	376	Fax number	01536 742281
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Janet Askew
		Headteacher	Martin Holmes
Date of previous school inspection	26 March 2001		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
7–11	18–19 October 2006	292318

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Danesholme Junior is an above average sized school. Nearly all pupils are of White British origin. A small number of other ethnic groups are represented in the school. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is above average. Attainment on entry is average.

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 with some outstanding features relating to personal development and the curriculum. Parents' views of the school are very positive. One parent said, 'teachers are approachable and are happy to work with us if any problems occur'. Over the last few years the school has focused more on pupils' personal development than pupils' academic achievement. Consequently, pupils' academic progress is not as good as their personal development. Standards are average in English, mathematics and science and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Standards have been average for the last few years, apart from a dramatic dip in English in 2005. As a result of more focus on the teaching of writing, the national test results in 2006 show that standards in English have improved.

As a result of satisfactory teaching, progress is satisfactory. Although some pupils make good progress, there are a few occasions when pupils do not do as well as they should do. This is because teachers do not always use assessment information effectively to plan activities that are challenging for the higher attaining pupils or well matched to the learning needs of lower attaining pupils. Leadership and management are satisfactory. To a certain extent, the monitoring of teaching has successfully focused on improving planning and the quality of marking as well as highlighting areas where teachers can improve their work. But, this has not been rigorous enough because the monitoring is not picking up that a small number of pupils are not working to capacity and others are finding their work too hard. Tracking systems are not yet used effectively to identify the few pupils who are not making the progress they should. This results in underachievement not always being tackled fast enough.

The headteacher successfully promotes pupils' personal development. There is a satisfactory level of care, support and personal guidance. All pupils are well cared for. The school provides well for pupils pastorally but there are some weaknesses in how academic guidance is used. Pupils' personal development and well-being are good with some strong features. The work of the school council is most impressive and prepares pupils very well for their future life by giving all pupils many opportunities to think for themselves, work together and decide what can be done to make a difference. In addition, the way the school focuses on the importance of eating healthily and exercising regularly is outstanding. Pupils are given clear guidance on what constitutes a healthy packed lunch. This is important because at lunchtimes only packed lunches are eaten. The many opportunities pupils are given to keep fit are varied and promote being part of a team very well. Governors challenge the school effectively and support its improvement. They proudly and rightly believe that every child in the school is important. Most pupils leave the school with a love of learning, great confidence and a mature attitude to life. This is because they feel valued and are well cared for and supported. The curriculum is good. It is greatly enriched by an outstanding number of well-planned educational visits that very effectively broadens pupils' knowledge and understanding of the world around them. It contributes significantly to their personal development.

What the school should do to improve further

- Use assessment information more effectively to identify pupils who may not be making the progress they should and to plan appropriate support.
- Ensure that all teachers plan appropriate activities for the different ability groups within their classes.
- Monitor teaching more effectively and provide each teacher with clear targets for improvement.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

The majority of pupils start in Year 3 with average standards. They make satisfactory progress as they move through the school. Progress is no better because teaching does not consistently help the higher attaining pupils to always achieve their best. Consequently, standards in Year 6 are average. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make similar progress to their peers. When they receive well-targeted, small group support from the learning support assistants they achieve well. Targets in English and mathematics for 2006 were exceeded. But, they were not challenging enough, in particular, for higher attaining pupils.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils display very positive attitudes to all aspects of school life. They feel well cared for and safe. This sense of security is helped by the high quality relationships between pupils and adults, leading to an excellent standard of behaviour. Attendance is average but these figures do not reflect this positive picture of the school. The school has worked hard and reduced the number of unauthorised absences. Pupils make a good contribution to the community. They genuinely care about others and regularly raise monies for local and national charities. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Much effective work has been done since the previous inspection to provide an insight into other cultures, such as planning visits to different places of worship and promoting cultural awareness through artwork.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Overall the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Although the school is now working hard to eliminate any underachievement, occasionally, weak teaching has led to a very small minority of higher and lower attaining pupils not doing as well as they should. Teachers have very good relationships with pupils and generally manage their classes well so pupils thoroughly enjoy their lessons and take pride in their learning.

Although teachers usually plan work for different ability groups the activities are not always accurately matched to the wide range of abilities within each class. As a result, higher attaining pupils are not always being sufficiently challenged. This is reflected in both the 2005 results and to a lesser degree in the 2006 national results. Some of the higher attaining pupils agree that they could work 'a little bit harder sometimes'. Lower attaining pupils sometimes find their activities too difficult and struggle to make headway and this hinders their progress in some lessons. However, pupils with learning difficulties benefit from the support of learning assistants particularly when the activities are carefully matched to their needs. This often results in them making good progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good with some outstanding features. It is very broad and well balanced and enables pupils to make interesting and useful links in their learning. All subject areas are given very high priority. One girl said, 'All the subjects are important in this school'. The personal, social and health education programme (PSHE) makes an excellent contribution to pupils' personal development. In addition, the school offers pupils in Years 5 and 6 the chance to learn French. These older pupils talk very excitedly about their forthcoming visit to France. Visitors, such as artists, who are invited into school enrich many other curriculum areas very well. Out of school clubs, which promote physical education very effectively, and residential visits, offered to all year groups, are enjoyed by all pupils and further enhance a wide range of curriculum areas.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Pupils feel happy, safe and secure. There are effective procedures in place for safeguarding pupils and for promoting well-being. Consequently, pupils are confident that they can talk to anyone in school if they have a problem. Effective child protection procedures are in place and are regularly updated. The learning mentor supports individual pupils and their families well and when necessary, external specialists are used to support other individuals. Academic progress is not always tracked effectively for all pupils and as a result, a very small minority of pupils do not do as well as they could. Information collected on individuals is used well to develop individual learning targets in literacy. One girl said, 'I like these writing targets because I can see that I am getting better'. There are no targets for pupils to work to in mathematics. Much of the marking gives good guidance and suitable targets for improvement but practice is inconsistent.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Although there are strengths in the pupils' personal development and pastoral care, shortcomings in pupils' achievement and teaching and learning have not been addressed rigorously enough. Aspects of the school's evaluation of its own effectiveness are too optimistic. Since the disappointing results in English in 2005, leaders have constructed detailed systems to track and measure pupils' progress. In addition, the monitoring of teaching and learning has become more rigorous. This monitoring has highlighted areas where teachers can improve their work further and provided leaders with a more accurate view of the quality of teaching. Despite these interventions, the quality of teaching remains inconsistent and a very small minority of pupils underachieve. This is because the progress pupils make in English and mathematics is not measured frequently enough for teachers to adjust their planning to meet pupils' new learning needs. Governors are well informed and as a result, have a clear idea of the school's performance and its strengths and weaknesses.

The school acknowledges that there is still a way to go to improve the quality of teaching and provide challenge for the most able. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory particularly with regard to raising pupils' awareness of the beliefs and customs of minority ethnic groups. The school demonstrates a satisfactory capacity to improve. This is most clearly shown in the improved results in 2006, the way in which it has maintained a rich curriculum and how it has continued to place pupils' well-being at the heart of its work.

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	1
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

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	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 making us so welcome when we came to visit you. I am writing to tell you what we found out about your school.

- We think that your school is satisfactory but there are some things that are good. The way you behave and your knowledge of the importance of living a healthy and safe lifestyle are excellent. We were also impressed with the work of the school council.
- We think that the adults who work in your school care for you well. We also think that the teachers plan lots of interesting things for you to do, in particular the visits out of school and the interesting visitors who are invited into school.

To make the school even better than it is we have asked your teachers to:

- make sure that the work you are given is not too easy or too hard
- track carefully your progress as you move from one year to the next
- make sure that all lessons help you to make as much progress as you can.

Best wishes for the future.