

# Downs Way School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	125043
<b>Local Authority</b>	Surrey
<b>Inspection number</b>	293176
<b>Inspection dates</b>	9–10 May 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Marianne Harris

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	124
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs K Weightman
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs S Palmer
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	14 October 2002
<b>School address</b>	Downs Way Oxted RH8 0NZ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01883 712518
<b>Fax number</b>	01883 716904

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<b>Age group</b>	4–7
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

This is a smaller than average infant school in a socially advantaged area of Surrey. Most of the pupils are of White British heritage and a few are from a minority ethnic background. The number of pupils who have learning difficulties and disabilities is much lower than normally seen, but is rising. These needs are mainly for speech difficulties or emotional needs.

## 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 where pupils make good progress from an average starting point. Teaching and learning are good and the school is well led and managed. Parents are particularly pleased with the recent improvements and many comment on how much their children enjoy school. They attribute the warm and friendly atmosphere in the school to the good leadership of the headteacher and the approachable, professional staff.

Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good. They achieve well in all areas of learning so that, by the time they enter Year 1, they reach standards that are in line with those expected for their age and some children exceed them. Children make particularly good progress in their personal development, although some find it difficult to listen attentively. This difficulty continues into Years 1 and 2, with some pupils occasionally talking over the teacher or others in the class. The school has identified this and is working towards providing more opportunities for pupils to listen to each other. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics are above average by the time pupils leave the school, and they achieve well to reach these standards. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are well supported so that they make good progress, and those who are more able are generally challenged to achieve well. However, there are times when teachers plan work on a carousel basis where pupils take turns at each activity. When this happens, some activities are not sufficiently challenging and others cannot be fitted into the time available. Consequently, some pupils lose interest or do not have enough time to complete their work.

All staff work very well together as a team. The purpose of each lesson or activity is carefully explained so that pupils know what it is they are going to learn. Each child's progress is carefully tracked so that any who are not making the expected progress can be given support so that they can soon catch up. The curriculum is rich and varied and makes very good use of the outside area. Pupils' personal development is fostered well. Children quickly settle into school and learn to get along together. Pupils understand how to keep healthy and safe and make a good contribution to the school and local community. They are well equipped for the next stage of their education. Governors are very supportive of the school and work with the staff to accurately identify what the school needs to do next to improve.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Provide more opportunities for pupils to listen to each other.
- Plan activities during carousel time that are challenging and can be completed in the time available.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Attainment on entry to the school varies each year, but is broadly average. Children make particularly good progress in their personal development as they quickly settle into school routines and make friends. Over the recent past, standards in national assessments for pupils in Year 2 have been above average in reading, writing and mathematics. These standards are currently being maintained and the school's own accurate tracking data shows that pupils of all abilities make good progress and achieve well. The school has been particularly successful in raising the attainment of boys so that they reach standards that are above those normally seen. This is because the school makes such good use of all the available facilities and plan

activities that are particularly well suited to the way boys learn. As a result, boys achieve as well as the girls.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal development, including the spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects is good. Pupils understand about keeping healthy and know that eating fruit is 'good for your heart and keeps you fit'. Many enjoy the early morning physical activities designed to get the day started in an energetic fashion. The school council is very proud of the part they played in providing a scooter park so that children can scoot or cycle to school on a regular basis. They know that their views are listened to and their ideas taken seriously. Pupils are keen to raise money for local and national charities and have many letters of thanks for their efforts. School assemblies are used well so that pupils can reflect and celebrate the successes of others. Behaviour in school is generally good, although there are times when pupils do not listen attentively in class. They are too keen to call out and talk over others and have not yet fully realised that there is a need to listen to what other people have to say. Relationships throughout the school are very good and this contributes to the good progress that all pupils make. Music is used very well to encourage the pupils to learn about other cultures. For example, they talk enthusiastically about different parts of America and what music you will find there. They say that they enjoy coming to school because 'everyone is friendly and learning is fun'.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching and learning are good. Activities are planned successfully to meet the needs of all pupils in the class, whatever their ability, and teaching assistants are used well to support pupils, some of whom have specific needs. The purpose of each activity is explained well and pupils are enthusiastic about learning. Good emphasis has been given to the way in which each child learns and teachers have organised some activities on a carousel basis. This generally works well as each child has an opportunity to experience every activity. However, there are occasions when some activities are not challenging enough, or there is too much planned and pupils do not always get the opportunity to complete a task. Pupils themselves report that they know how well they are doing because their teachers tell them and let them know how they can improve their work.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The school provides a rich curriculum. Very good use is made of the exceptional grounds and facilities so that as much learning as possible can take place outdoors. This is especially important for some of the boys who really enjoy exploring and learning outside the classroom. Subjects are linked well so that pupils experience a wide range of activities on topics that are relevant and interesting to them. The programme for pupils' personal development is good and time is allocated in class so that they can discuss issues that worry them and explore ideas such as people or things they care about. There is a reasonable range of out of school activities. Pupils take part in some sporting activities, including keep fit, football and martial arts. However,

some girls think that there are too few activities for them, despite the school offering these in the past and there being too few who attended.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 2**

The school provides good care, guidance and support for pupils. It is safe and pupils know that there is someone they can go to if they have a problem. Child protection procedures are robust. The school has very good tracking systems in place that charts each child's progress from the time they enter in the Foundation Stage. This system also tracks some aspects of personal development so that pupils who are experiencing behaviour difficulties can be monitored. There is currently no tracking of pupils' speaking and listening skills and, as a consequence, staff have no way of checking pupils' progress in these areas. Staff are very caring and they know the children well and support is given whenever it is needed. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities have their needs accurately assessed and outside agencies, such as speech therapists, are used effectively to support pupils.

### **Leadership and management**

#### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides strong, calm leadership that is much admired by the pupils and parents. All staff work together very well to ensure that pupils make good progress and achieve well. The governors are very supportive of the school and understand its strengths and areas that need to be developed. Many governors visit the school regularly and report back to the governing body so that all are well informed. Together the staff and governors have made a realistic evaluation of the work of the school and have accurately identified the areas that need improving. However, the plans for further improvement are lengthy and do not sufficiently prioritise what needs to be carried out first. There has been good improvement since the last inspection. High standards have been maintained and the number of pupils reaching the higher levels has increased. Behaviour has improved and parents comment on the recent improvements. The school has good capacity to improve further.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

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

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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**

18 May 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Downs Way School, Oxted, RH8 0NZ

Thank you for being so helpful when I visited your school a few days ago. You were very friendly and polite and I enjoyed hearing all about your work. I am now writing to let you know what I thought about your school.

I think that yours is a good school and you told me how much you enjoyed being with your friends. You all work very hard and make good progress in your work. I especially like the beautiful outdoor area that you all use and I was very impressed by all of the activities that you manage to do while you are out there. I especially like your science work and think that you make good scientists. I enjoyed hearing all about the visits you make and the children in the Foxes and Rabbits class must have really enjoyed their Teddy Bears' Picnic.

You were all very knowledgeable about how to keep healthy and how you can help others by raising money. You work hard in lessons and I have asked your teachers to help you to work harder by giving you more opportunities to learn to listen to each other. Some of you get very excited and try to talk when others are speaking. I am asking you to think about what other people have to say and to listen carefully before you speak. I think that the lessons where everyone has a turn at each activity are a good idea. I have asked your teachers to make it even better by planning activities that you can finish in the time available and by making sure that all activities are interesting and make you think hard.

Once again thank you for your warm welcome. I wish you all good luck in the future.

Marianne Harris

Lead inspector