



Danson Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 101403
Local Authority Bexley
Inspection number 294482
Inspection dates 1–2 November 2006
Reporting inspector Wendy Simmons

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Danson Lane
School category	Community		Welling
Age range of pupils	3–11		DA16 2BH
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	020 8303 1858
Number on roll (school)	417	Fax number	020 8304 2075
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Lawrence Baxter
		Headteacher	Mrs Jackie Edwards
Date of previous school inspection	26 September 2005		

Age group 3–11	Inspection dates 1–2 November 2006	Inspection number 294482
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This large school was found to be inadequate when it was last inspected a year ago. A 'Notice to Improve' under Section 13(3) of the Education Act 2005 was given because significant improvement was required in relation to pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching. Subsequently, sickness resulted in the former headteacher leaving. The newly appointed headteacher started some initial school improvement work with the school in June 2006 and took up the permanent post in September 2006. The local authority (LA) has been supporting the school intensively to help it to improve.

Pupils' social circumstances, while diverse, are broadly average. Most pupils come from White British backgrounds, although other larger groups include Asian British and Black British African. When children start school in the Foundation Stage most have the skills and knowledge expected for their age. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is lower than average.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Danson Primary School provides a satisfactory standard of education and in accordance with Section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement. Inspectors agree with the view of governors that, 'The school is well placed to drive forward further improvements.' The school has a satisfactory capacity to improve because it has made clear progress against the issues identified in 2005. For example, by improving the achievement of pupils, the pace and challenge in lessons, and by developing the roles of managers.

This has been a difficult year for the school. Staffing difficulties since 2003 have been resolved and in the last few months, the pace of improvement has become more rapid. Governors have supported the school well and have been calling the school to account during the last year, especially about standards and pupils' achievement. They have appointed an enthusiastic and visionary new headteacher.

The vision and swift action of the new headteacher, together with effective support from the LA are significant factors in why the school is improving. A year ago, the infant and junior departments were working in isolation. Clearer management roles and moving staff between year groups, have considerably improved the whole school ethos and teamwork.

There has been striking improvement in pupils' personal development and well being. A good range of clubs and links with local schools aid this well. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is now good. Pupils enjoy learning more and are now better prepared for their future lives. They show positive attitudes, are keen to improve and behave well.

Provision in the Foundation Stage remains good. The most significant improvement has occurred in the infants, where pupils' achievements have improved and standards have risen considerably at the age of seven. They are now broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics. The school has improved pupils' performance in science, reading and mathematics by the end of Year 6. However, higher attaining pupils do not do well enough, particularly in writing. The school has already started work to improve this. Overall, standards are improving but they remain below average by the time pupils leave the school. Pupils' achievement is now satisfactory and progress is being made in helping them to catch up. There has been good improvement in developing assessment procedures. As a result, teachers are quickly identifying those pupils who have underachieved in the past and they target specific support for them in lessons.

Improved leadership and the development of managers' roles have begun to make an impact on the quality of teaching and learning. Teaching and learning remain satisfactory, although the pace and challenge in lessons has improved and more lessons are good. However, pupils' learning is not as good as it could be. This is because some teachers are not ensuring that pupils understand their targets for improvement and then check, within lessons and through marking, that they are meeting these quickly. Equally, the quality of the monitoring of lessons is inconsistent, especially the way in

which learning is evaluated. Thus, there are missed opportunities to help teachers to understand how to improve their teaching.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve standards and achievement for higher attaining pupils, especially in writing.
- Sharpen the quality of monitoring, so that all managers evaluate learning effectively and thus help teachers to improve their teaching.
- Make learning targets clearer for pupils and check that they quickly reach these in both lessons and in their written work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

For the pupils currently in the school achievement is satisfactory and improving. However, due to past underachievement, standards in Year 6 are currently below average but, the school is on track to meet its challenging targets in English and mathematics.

Overall, achievement is now satisfactory. A variety of strategies are being used successfully to help pupils to catch up in English and mathematics. Pupils' achievements in science have improved because they have better opportunities to discuss scientific ideas and engage in more practical investigations. Pupils are making better progress in mathematics because teachers have attended appropriate in-service courses and are effectively using a good range of techniques and activities to improve pupils' problem solving skills. Higher attaining pupils do not achieve well enough in writing because they are not given precise targets on how to improve. The school has successfully improved boys' achievement from inadequate to satisfactory this year. Pupils with learning difficulties make satisfactory progress.

Children make good progress in the Foundation Stage and do very well in their personal and social development. In other areas, they reach at least the expected levels due to a stimulating curriculum and good teaching.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well being are good. Pupils' show good attitudes to learning and behave well. As a result they listen attentively, concentrate well and enjoy their lessons. Attendance has improved this year from below average to average. Pupils show respect for others' cultural and religious backgrounds and demonstrate caring attitudes. Pupils enjoy good relationships with each other and with adults. One pupil said, 'If we see anyone on their own at playtime someone would go over to play with them because we are kind like that'. Special events, such as Black History Month, help pupils to understand the lives and views of others. Pupils have a good awareness of how to eat healthily and know the benefits of taking exercise. They eagerly participate in the many sporting activities within school such as football, dancing and

fencing. Pupils make a good contribution to the community, notably by raising money for charities, designing a wild life garden and by producing a school newspaper. They take their responsibilities seriously and enjoy making decisions about how to improve their school. Pupils know about how to stay safe for example, and understand the dangers of 'trick or treat' during Halloween. Pupils make sound progress in their basic skills and together with their well developed social skills; they are prepared satisfactorily for the next stage of their life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Some good lessons were seen throughout the school. Teachers' planning and the challenges given to pupils have improved since the last inspection, and this is enabling pupils to make better progress. Teachers have secure knowledge of the subjects being taught and an adequate understanding of how pupils learn. Learning is satisfactory as lessons are mostly suitably matched to pupils' needs. However, there are missed opportunities to make learning better, especially for higher ability pupils. Pupils are keen to learn and collaborate well. Teachers are working hard to write often lengthy comments in pupils' books. However, the feedback given is not often related to the pupil's targets and there is not always sufficient time or opportunity for pupils to act on comments. Some lessons have a lively and effective buzz, which makes learning fun, but this is not consistent across the school. The effective support given by teaching assistants enables pupils to improve further. Teaching is enhanced by visiting specialists and this is aiding better achievement in English and mathematics and science.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory with several good features. There is a clear focus on improving literacy, numeracy and science and effective use of new initiatives. One child said, 'I like science now it's much more fun.' The curriculum meets the needs of most pupils, although it is not as strong in catering for higher attaining pupils. School managers are beginning to address this issue. Links with outside agencies and a good range of clubs add to pupils' enjoyment. The school offers a good curriculum for personal and social development, especially in the Foundation Stage. Latin and French, including links with the grammar school, are effective in widening pupils' achievements and enjoyment.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The care, guidance and support provided by the school are satisfactory. Procedures for ensuring pupils' welfare and safety are in place and are followed well by staff. Visits

from outside bodies such as the police and the fire service help pupils to understand risks and how to deal with them effectively. The vast majority of parents are confident that their children are well cared for. The school is working hard to set targets for groups and individual, but these are not always written in a way that pupils readily understand. Consequently, pupils do not always know exactly what they need to do to improve their learning and make faster progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The new headteacher provides clear, determined leadership and the school is already working on improving the provision for higher attaining pupils through staff training about writing. The roles and responsibilities of managers are now clearer and as a result, there is a more unified drive to raise standards and improve the quality of provision. Leaders have an accurate view of the school and the school improvement plan focuses precisely on the most pressing priorities. The school's evaluation of itself is accurate.

In the last year the monitoring of lessons, pupils' work and teachers' planning has increased considerably. The quality of teaching is evaluated and is accurate but, the monitoring of pupils' learning lacks clarity and there is no consistent format for doing this. Thus teachers are not always well enough informed about what they have to do to improve their teaching. Nonetheless, training, support and shrewd staff deployment have helped to raise levels of expertise in important areas, such as improving assessment. Governors are very clear about the needs of the school and use their expertise well to provide challenge to the school to improve standards and the quality of provision for pupils.

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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?	3
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	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	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?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
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

You may remember that three inspectors came to your school recently to find out how good it is and how well you are doing. Thank you for being so helpful and telling us about your school. We are writing to let you know our findings.

We think that your school has improved well this year and is now satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory and your teachers are working hard to make the school better. We especially like the work in the Foundation Stage and the way in which all of you are working hard to make better progress in your work. Overall, we think that you are making steady progress and notably many of you are doing much better this year. This is because your teachers are making sure that you are put into groups in your lessons, so that you have work that helps you to make quicker progress.

We are especially pleased to see that you enjoy your learning more and behave well. Well done for this and keep it up! All of the adults in your school, particularly your new headteacher, are working enthusiastically to make the school better. You are making good progress in your social and personal skills and these aspects of the school's work have improved well since the school was last inspected.

The inspectors have asked your headteacher and teachers to do these important things.

- Help those of you who find learning easy to make quicker progress, especially in writing.
- Keep a watchful eye on how well you learn in lessons, so that teachers can make more lessons good.
- Help you to understand and to be involved in setting your targets for improvement in English and mathematics. Then, in lessons and when marking your work check that you make the best possible progress in reaching these quickly.

Please help them with these things when you can.

Yours sincerely

Wendy Simmons Lead inspector