



Darell Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 102884
Local Authority Richmond Upon Thames
Inspection number 298243
Inspection dates 17–18 January 2007
Reporting inspector Christopher Gray

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Darell Road
School category	Community		Richmond
Age range of pupils	3–11		TW9 4LQ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	020 8876 6721
Number on roll (school)	318	Fax number	020 8876 3895
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs Celia Hodges
		Headteacher	Mr Brian Glover (Acting)
Date of previous school inspection	11 October 1999		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
3–11	17–18 January 2007	298243

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is bigger than most primary schools. There is a very wide mixture of ethnicities in the school population. Children of White British heritage form about half of the total; most other ethnic groups are represented but each accounts for only a small percentage of the total population. The proportion with English as an additional language is above average. Pupils' social circumstances and their attainment on entry are broadly in line with that found in most schools. The school has a special unit with 10 places for pupils with moderate learning difficulties, though not all places are currently filled.

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 that is understandably popular with parents and their children. The outstanding curriculum enables pupils to grow into mature and responsible pupils. As one pupil said, 'You have to learn to get on with others in social life or no one will like you.' Their personal development and behaviour are good. Pupils' enjoyment of learning is outstanding. One explained, 'It's a privilege to come to school because some children in the world can't.' Another added, 'We sometimes take it for granted.'

Pupils achieve well and reach above average standards by the time they leave. Pupils make slower progress in mathematics than they do in English, where progress is very good. In mathematics, pupils make slower progress because the work planned for them is not linked closely enough to their abilities. Children in the Foundation Stage get a good start to their schooling in the nursery and reception classes and make good progress. Most are likely to meet the goals expected of them by the time they join Year 1 and a number will exceed them. They make particularly good progress in their personal development and aptitude for learning.

Teaching is good. Adults and children have very good relationships which are the basis of the good learning. Good support is given to pupils in the unit, others with learning difficulties and those with English as an additional language. The care, guidance and support offered to pupils are good. Pastoral aspects are very strong. Assessment is consistent and regular, but analysis of pupils' attainment is not undertaken sufficiently often in the course of the year to guard against any possible underachievement.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher and (in her temporary absence) the acting headteacher give a clear lead in which they are well supported by all staff. Their self-evaluation is accurate and effective and identifies the same key areas for development as does this report. This shows that the school has a good capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Help pupils to make faster progress in mathematics by matching work more closely to their ability
- Make more frequent analysis of assessment data to spot and help any pupils who might be underachieving

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well throughout the school to reach above average standards by the time they leave. The school recognised that standards by Year 2 were not high enough a few years ago, especially in mathematics. Staff worked hard to rectify this and standards now are broadly average by the end of Year 2. This past underachievement in mathematics means that current standards in Years 3 to 6 are not as high as they

are in English. The school is working to raise standards, but pupils are not progressing as quickly in mathematics as they are in English.

There are no significant differences in the achievement of boys and girls or of those from different ethnic backgrounds. Pupils in the unit receive high quality support. They and pupils in the main school with learning difficulties are enabled to achieve as well as other pupils.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good, with outstanding features. Most pupils are well behaved; a few show challenging behaviour but this is dealt with well by adults. Pupils are helpful towards each other and very courteous and friendly to visitors. They are very proud of their school and have an outstanding appreciation of the wide variety of cultures represented in society; one boy described it as 'a mix of worlds'. Pupils make an excellent contribution to the community through their well developed sense of responsibility. They express their views confidently and explain why they think as they do. They work for school improvement through the school council. Attendance is good. Pupils enjoy a wide range of sporting activities through their clubs and are conscious of the need to eat and drink healthily throughout the day. Pupils' outstanding enjoyment of school is evident in their attitudes to learning and their avid participation in clubs and outings. The many positive comments from parents are summed up by one: 'My youngest son ... just bounces out of school every day at 3.15.' Pupils are prepared well for their next stage in education and gain the basic skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) that they require for the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Teachers plan their lessons in great detail and use interactive whiteboards well to make them interesting. Very good relationships inspire confidence in the pupils, as was seen in a discussion group in the infants. Pupils were discussing their feelings and seemed to have total confidence in the adults and each other, so that they could say exactly what they felt without fear of ridicule or criticism.

An outstanding lesson in a reception class had all the children engrossed in their various activities because the level of challenge offered to each group was just right. In mathematics in Years 1 to 6, the work given to pupils is not always closely enough matched to pupils' ability. Teachers generally give different activities to different groups, but the level of challenge contained in the work is sometimes much the same for all groups. Teachers do not always make enough use of questioning at varying levels of difficulty during mental sessions.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is outstanding and enables pupils to flourish. It is highly enriched by a very good programme of additional activities throughout the year, for all year groups, adding greatly to pupils' learning and enjoyment. The youngest pupils benefit from a stimulating and well resourced outdoor environment. Pupils' personal development is very well enhanced by the effective programme of social and health education. Pupils spoke of how valuable this had been in reducing bullying.

Provision for ICT is very good and is used to support learning in many subjects; for example, in literacy, pupils produced a 'news report' which they filmed with a digital camera. Music and art have a high profile in the school, as is clear from displays, from the frequent sounds of singing and instruments, and from quiet recorded music that accompanies some lessons.

The school is rightly proud of its links with the community and the very good range of visits, after school clubs and visitors to the school. A well resourced library is used extensively to enhance the opportunities to develop independent learning skills and prepare pupils well for future life.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. The quality of welfare provided for all pupils is very good. There is a strong commitment by all staff to promoting the health and safety of pupils and regular risk assessments are carried out. Procedures for ensuring pupils' safety are thorough and effective.

Individual education plans are relevant and particularly effective in enabling pupils with learning difficulties to make good progress. Pupils who speak English as an additional language receive effective support and make good progress. There are good systems to track pupils' progress in basic skills, but they are not used with sufficient frequency to nip any underachievement in the bud. The school makes good use of its strong links with other agencies to support pupils in their welfare. Parents value the information provided by the school and are very supportive of the school's guidance on learning at home.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher, supported very effectively by the deputy headteacher and other senior staff, has established a warm and welcoming school that is highly respected by pupils and parents alike. The headteacher provides very clear direction and, owing to her consultative and open approach, there are excellent systems of communication and support throughout the very strong team of staff. Parental support for the school is overwhelmingly positive.

School self-evaluation is accurate and the current priorities for improvement have been identified and planned for. The monitoring and evaluation of the school's work by senior staff is effective, though some middle managers are less experienced in evaluation. Established teachers have developed their practice well and teachers new to the profession are supported very well. The school is fully committed to equality of opportunity and all pupils, including the most vulnerable and those with learning difficulties, achieve well.

Governors are very well organised and supportive of the school. They are directly involved in the life of the school. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. Their commitment and contribution are much appreciated by the staff.

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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	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	2
The attendance of learners	2
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	1
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?	1
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

We very much enjoyed our time in your school, in spite of the dreadful weather. We thought that most of you behave well, even when it is terribly windy in the playgrounds. We found you very polite and friendly and you were keen to help us in our work. This was especially so of the groups of pupils who came to talk to us. I wonder if some of you will spot quotations from what you said in the main report?

Darell Primary is a good school, because you, all the staff and your parents help to make it so. You enjoy your schooling enormously. This is not surprising, because there is so much to do as well as lessons. You help in the running of the school by taking responsibilities such as school councillors and by the consideration you show to others. You achieve well and reach good standards by the time you are 11.

You told us that you enjoy many subjects. This is because teaching is good. All adults work hard to make sure that you are safe and happy in school and that you learn well. We have asked them to make some of you learn a bit faster in mathematics, by giving you work that is neither too easy nor too difficult. Another thing we have asked staff to do is to check more often on how much progress you are making, in case you need extra help.

Your headteacher and deputy headteacher lead the school well. We saw this for ourselves, and we also learnt how pleased your parents are with the school, from the large number of questionnaires they sent us. One of them wrote, 'I feel very lucky to be involved in such a rewarding school community'. We think you are lucky too.

I'm sure you will continue to enjoy your time at Darell.

Yours sincerely

Christopher Gray
Lead Inspector