

# The Drive Community Primary School

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	108361
<b>Local Authority</b>	Gateshead
<b>Inspection number</b>	301749
<b>Inspection dates</b>	28–29 November 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Alan Keenleyside

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>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	154
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Rev V Shedden
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ms H Gofton
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 October 2003
<b>School address</b>	The Drive Felling, Gateshead NE10 0PY
<b>Telephone number</b>	0191 4210390
<b>Fax number</b>	0191 4699763

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

The Drive Community Primary School is a smaller than average sized primary school, serving the area of Felling, Pelaw and Heworth. This is an area of considerable social disadvantage. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is above the national average. Most pupils are of White British heritage and very few pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds or are learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below the national average. There are two mixed-age classes in Key Stage 2. The school has the Healthy Schools and Gold Artsmark Award.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

The Drive Community Primary School is a good school with some outstanding features. A strength of the school is the way in which it nurtures pupils' personal development and well-being. Parents wholeheartedly appreciate the work of the school and a significant number write positive comments such as 'My daughter has had a fantastic time at the Drive. I have watched her grow from a shy three-year-old to a very confident eleven-year-old'. Pupils really enjoy coming to school and appreciate the exciting opportunities it provides. When one Year 6 pupil was asked how the school could be improved, he replied 'Could we build an upstairs so we can stay for Year 7?' Pupils report that they feel safe and secure and rare cases of bullying are dealt with quickly. Pupils contribute well to the school and the wider community through a variety of responsibilities and activities, such as school council and 'playground friends'. The school pays great attention to health, safety and welfare and this ensures that all pupils are extremely well cared for. To support this, a good range of high quality experiences is provided to encourage the pupils to be safe, healthy and secure. Parents appreciate the excellent care, guidance and support that the school provides to enable their children to make good progress in their learning. Relationships between staff and pupils are very positive and this is reflected in the good behaviour. Attendance is satisfactory.

Achievement is good. Pupils enter the Nursery with attainment that is usually well below average. They make good progress overall and reach standards that are similar to the national average by the end of Year 6. Children get off to an excellent start in the Foundation Stage and make very good progress. Pupils make good progress in Key Stages 1 and 2. The school's results of assessments and tests at the end of these key stages indicate that standards are usually similar to national averages and occasionally above average. The results are subject to variability due to the relatively small numbers in each year group.

The quality of teaching is good and results in good learning. Teachers ensure that pupils are challenged in lessons and use information on pupils' progress to good effect to pitch work accurately. Pupils' academic progress is well tracked and they know exactly what they need to do to improve their work because they receive clear targets that guide their learning and teachers' mark effectively. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are supported well and, as a result, make good progress.

The breadth and richness of the curriculum ensure that all pupils enjoy a wide range of interesting activities, but there are not always enough opportunities for them to do practical work in mathematics. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding and they have a very good understanding of the cultures that make up society. The curriculum is planned to take good account of pupils' individual needs and is well adjusted to match the ability range in classes. Leadership and management are good. The headteacher has created a strong team spirit amongst the staff. The school has a clear plan for improvement based on a realistic evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses. However, the plan is not sufficiently focused on the intended outcomes for pupils so that these can be evaluated when completed. The active involvement of governors ensures they are well informed about the school's performance and, consequently, the school's capacity to improve is good.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 1**

Overall, the effectiveness of the Foundation Stage is outstanding. Leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are particularly strong. Children's skills and abilities when they start school are currently well below those which are typical of three-year-olds, especially in their personal, social, and emotional development and communication, language and literacy skills. Children enjoy school and thrive within the well planned routines. Across the curriculum children make very good progress, shown by the school's detailed records and rigorous assessment. Weaknesses in areas of personal development, communication, language, literacy and an understanding of number are seen as the greatest priorities; these are catered for very well in the planning of activities. Opportunities to play and work are managed very well and each area is geared to preparing children for the next step in their learning. There are many opportunities for practical learning including role-play. All initiatives are well supported by very skilled teaching and support staff who ensure that all experiences are built on purposefully. All staff have an exceptionally good understanding of all areas of learning and how young children learn. Very strong teaching, matched to children's individual needs, means that by the end of Reception most children reach standards expected for their age.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Ensure the curriculum gives pupils regular opportunities to work practically in mathematics.
- Ensure that development plans are sharply focused on outcomes for pupils.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' achievement is good and standards are average by Year 6, although they vary from year to year and are sometimes above average. By the time they start Year 1 most pupils reach the levels of development expected for their age. The pupils make good progress in Key Stages 1 and 2 because of effective teaching. The school's results of assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 in 2007 were above average in reading and writing and average in mathematics. The results of the 2007 Year 6 national tests were average, reflecting the make-up of the year group, but standards in English show strong improvement. Current school assessment data indicate that standards are set to rise in 2008. Results in English show an improved picture year on year. Boys tend to make better progress than girls in all three subjects. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress towards the relevant targets set for them.

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

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. They develop very well as mature and confident learners. Older pupils act as good role models for younger children. They willingly accept responsibilities for tasks around school, including serving as 'playground buddies'. They know the need to be truthful and trustworthy, attaining to the best of their ability. Pupils get on very well with one another and are sensitive to the needs of others. They enjoy coming to school. Attendance is close to the national average and the school does all it can to improve attendance and punctuality. Behaviour is good. Spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils readily explain what they know and understand about the traditions and cultures of people from other countries. Pupils trust and respect their teachers and are emphatic

that they feel safe in school. They are confident there is very little bullying which, should it occur, they say is always dealt with effectively. Pupils have an excellent awareness of healthy lifestyles. They are very enthusiastic about the opportunities to share in physical activities during the day and after school. Pupils' positive attitudes, excellent personal skills and good achievement mean they are well prepared for their next stage of learning.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

The overall quality of teaching and learning is good, with some outstanding features. Pupils make good progress because teachers are well focused on what the pupils need to learn. Where the teaching is particularly strong, the pace of the lesson is brisk and pupils strive to keep up with their teacher's challenges. Planning is thorough and takes careful account of pupils' previous learning. Relationships are good. Teachers make sure that the activities they have set have a clear purpose. Therefore, pupils talk confidently about what they are doing and show a pride in their work. Most teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. However, this is not consistently the case and, as a result, some lessons move on before the teacher has the full attention of all the pupils. Teachers provide good guidance by discussing pupils' work with them, highlighting their strengths and encouraging them towards improvement. Teaching assistants are skilfully deployed and well briefed to ensure that pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are provided and supported with tasks which cater well for their individual needs.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is good. It strikes a good balance between promoting the pupils' personal development and encouraging their academic progress. It is enriched by a wide range of extra-curricular clubs and activities that include art, sport and music as well as many visits to places of educational interest. The process of curriculum review and refinement is ongoing. Teachers diligently explore ways of making all learning relevant to the interests of groups and individuals. Pupils enjoy their work and explain confidently why they need to work hard to reach their personal targets. They understand that ideas developed in one subject help their learning in other areas. Work to develop skills in writing has been successful in increasing the number of pupils who are attaining at higher levels. In mathematics, however, opportunities to engage in practical work are not fully developed. Opportunities for independent research and pursuing personal interests are well developed.

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

#### **Grade: 1**

The care, guidance and support of children are outstanding. They are the underpinning reason why pupils' personal development and well-being are excellent. Adults know pupils very well and are dedicated to meeting their pastoral and academic needs, a view reflected in many of the responses by parents. Child protection and risk assessment procedures are clearly set out and arrangements for safeguarding pupils are in place. Transition arrangements to the secondary school are managed very well. The school has very effective working links with other agencies, such as those supporting pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. There are very

good systems for tracking pupils' academic and personal progress. Teachers make informed and sensitive use of all assessment data. Pupils who are at risk of underachieving are provided with very well targeted additional support. Opportunities to develop pupils' talents in athletic and creative areas are plentiful.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management are good. The very good leadership of the headteacher has ensured a clear focus on raising standards throughout the school. This has been achieved by understanding the needs of the pupils and their families. Provision to ensure that pupils gain life skills in a climate of outstanding care and support that nurtures their personal development and well-being is very well developed. The headteacher is ably supported by the assistant headteacher. Realistic, yet demanding, expectations of pupils' performance in all classes are shared with staff. There are detailed plans to take the school forward, but they do not always focus on outcomes for pupils. The school has a clear idea of its strengths and weaknesses, although inspection evidence indicates that in some aspects the school's self-evaluation is too modest.

Governance is good. Governors have a good understanding of the pupils' needs and confidently question and challenge the school through informal monitoring. The chair of governors contributes significantly to the school. The school has developed strong partnerships with external agencies such as the special needs support service and, as a result, vulnerable pupils receive good support. Parents overwhelmingly support the school. Effective links with other schools in the cluster are used to support both staff and curriculum development. The school provides good value for money.

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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	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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	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?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

<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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

30 November 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Drive Community Primary School, Gateshead, NE10 0PY

As you know, Mrs Evans and I inspected your school recently to find out how well you are learning. First of all, let me thank you for being so welcoming and friendly. We really enjoyed our visit and you were very helpful in providing information which showed that you like coming to school. Your behaviour and the hard work you showed in lessons were good. Well done, you are a credit to the school.

We found out these other important things. The Drive is a good school but it does excellent things as well. We are pleased that you are taught well, feel safe and make good progress in your learning, especially the boys and girls in the Nursery and Reception classes. There are lots of interesting things to do in the school and this helps you to enjoy school and to concentrate well on your work. The adults provide you with excellent care, support and guidance. You told Mrs Evans that you really enjoy all the exciting after school activities, such as the Drama Club, which are provided for you. The school council does a very good job on your behalf, for example, choosing new games equipment and organising special events such as Red Nose Day.

Everyone in the school, including the governors, works very hard and is determined to make the school even better. We are sure that it will continue to improve. We have asked them to do two things, which will help them to achieve this. Firstly, they are going to look at ways in which more practical activities for mathematics can be planned. Secondly, we have asked them to improve management by looking more closely at their plans to see how you are learning.

I should be grateful if you would thank your parents for all the very useful information which they provided. They clearly like the school and consider that the staff look after you well. They are right to think so. Thank you again for your kind and warm welcome. We hope you enjoy a happy Christmas!

With every best wish for the future,

Alan Keenleyside

Lead inspector