

Downderry Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100679
Local Authority	Lewisham
Inspection number	307436
Inspection dates	30 June –1 July 2008
Reporting inspector	Grace Marriott

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	450
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Tracey Hewitt
Headteacher	Mrs Tracey Lewis
Date of previous school inspection	7 March 2005
School address	Downderry Road Downham Bromley BR1 5QL
Telephone number	0208 6985768
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Age group	3-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Donderry is much larger than most primary schools. It serves a very mixed area, with many more pupils entitled to free meals than most schools. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or is broadly average. The main learning difficulties are speech and language, autistic spectrum disorders and dyslexia. The proportion with a statement of special educational need is higher than the national. The percentage of children from minority ethnic groups is well above the national average and a significant number are at an early stage of learning English. A large number of pupils join the school at different times of the year. The school has had an acting headteacher since April 2008. The school has achieved the Active and Sportsmark awards, Healthy Schools status and the Artsmark award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Donderry is a friendly and caring school which is providing its pupils with a satisfactory education. The school has gone through a difficult period. The discovery of asbestos in the building in the summer term of 2007 caused considerable disruption as the school had to move to another site for the autumn term while it was removed. There have also been some staffing issues and the deputy headteacher is currently acting as the headteacher.

The Foundation Stage gives children a secure start. The children make satisfactory progress overall, and particularly good progress in personal and social development. The school is very aware that, in Years 1 to 6, achievement and standards have declined in recent years and pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics has not been good enough. The staff are taking effective action to improve standards. Pupils are now achieving satisfactorily although their progress is more rapid in mathematics than in reading and writing. Standards in Year 6 are still below average but pupils have made good progress over the course of the last year. Across the school, however, boys are still not achieving as well as girls.

Pupils are welcoming and considerate to visitors and eager to engage them in conversation. Pupils understand how to stay safe particularly, and have a healthy life style. They enjoy physical education and also were thoroughly enjoying the cookery challenge event during 'Health Week' which coincided with the inspection. The programme of enrichment activities and themed weeks make learning more interesting and introduces pupils to new experiences. The pupils are helped to become aware of the needs of others through supporting several charities. They show respect for each other's culture and beliefs. Older pupils take responsibility as prefects and peer mediators. Most pupils attend regularly. Attendance was affected by the difficulties in the autumn term, but has improved considerably since then. Most parents are supportive and appreciate what the school offers their children. One parent wrote, 'Donderry has a great atmosphere, and my children are given lots of opportunities to celebrate their achievements.'

Teaching is satisfactory overall and good in some classes, though expectations of what pupils can achieve are not always high enough. Pupils mostly find the activities and tasks in lessons interesting and enjoyable. In some classes, teachers use the information from assessment and marking well to plan the next steps in learning, set targets and give pupils good feedback on how to improve their work. This is not consistent enough across the school and, as a result, progress has varied too much between year groups.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Subject leaders are monitoring the quality of teaching systematically. However, there is too little evaluation of how well pupils are learning and achieving. The acting headteacher is providing strong leadership and has the confidence of the staff. The partnership with the local authority is effective in helping the school to improve. The school's track record in the last year shows that it has satisfactory capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

The procedures to welcome children and parents into the Nursery and Reception classes are good and ensure that children settle quickly, feel secure and enjoy the broad range of activities available. Children start the Foundation Stage with knowledge, skills and understanding which are generally low when compared with the expectations for their age. By the end of Reception,

though still below average, children have made good progress in communication, language and literacy and some aspects of mathematical development. Their progress in knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development and calculation is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. All areas of the curriculum are covered adequately with an appropriate balance between direct teaching and opportunities for children to learn through their own choice of play activities. Opportunities are missed, however, to extend children's learning through more effective questioning and discussion. Also, there are insufficient stimulating, focused activities linked to literacy and numeracy to engage children fully in their learning. Staff work hard to promote children's personal development. Most children have good attitudes and generally show a good level of care for each other although a few still have to learn more consideration for others. The care provided by adults is good as are the relationships between staff and children and between staff and parents. The leadership and management are satisfactory.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve teaching to ensure consistently higher expectations of what pupils can achieve, especially of the boys and in reading and writing.
- Ensure more consistent assessment, marking and target setting across the school to give pupils more information on how to improve and help teachers to plan the next steps in learning.
- Strengthen the role of subject leaders in English, mathematics and science so that they focus their work more clearly on what pupils should be learning and achieving.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance, will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

In Year 2, though standards in mathematics are below average and well below average in reading and writing, the pupils have, nonetheless, made good progress this year. Almost all pupils in Years 5 and 6 have made good progress in English and mathematics and many have made very good progress. This has not though, been enough to enable all pupils to catch up and overcome fully the effects of previous underachievement. Progress in other years has been satisfactory and not quite as rapid as in Years 5 and 6. Across the school, progress and standards in mathematics have improved faster than in reading and writing. The more systematic teaching of reading and writing is helping to improve literacy skills but more could be done in other subjects to give pupils more opportunities to practise their reading and writing skills. Effective support enables pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities which include speech and language difficulties, dyslexia and autism, to make at least satisfactory progress. The pupils who have English as an additional language are generally achieving better than other pupils because of the good support they receive.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils participate well in the thought-provoking assemblies, and take time to reflect on issues raised. They have a

clear sense of right and wrong. Behaviour is satisfactory overall and often good, though some pupils feel that occasional misbehaviour by a few pupils is distracting. Pupils show a good understanding of healthy lifestyles and are very active in the playground, but they know that their packed lunches are not always as healthy as they could be. At all stages, pupils know how to stay safe and feel secure in school. In one child's words, and;quot;because no-one can get inand;quot;. They also show a good level of care for their friends and feel well supported by the school. Pupils' contribution to the community is satisfactory. The members of the school council take their responsibilities seriously and are proud of the money raised through their sponsored silence. Their preparation for the next stages of education, and ultimately for employment, is satisfactory as reflected in their progress in literacy, numeracy and computer skills. Older pupils are enjoying their experiences in business through selling fruit and other items to other children at playtimes.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teachers manage classes well and create a purposeful working atmosphere so that pupils know what is expected of them and are motivated to take part. In a good literacy lesson in Year 2, the level of challenge in the questioning and constructive feedback helped to expand pupils' vocabulary and improve the planning of their stories. In most lessons, the match of work to all pupils' needs is satisfactory but opportunities are sometimes missed to extend learning through more challenging questioning and activities which build on what pupils already know. Sometimes, too, opportunities are missed to reinforce literacy skills in other subjects. Teachers are using assessment information to set targets but pupils do not always understand these well enough. Some marking clearly shows pupils how to improve their work, but this is not consistent enough across the school. Teaching assistants are well-deployed to enable pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to join in whole class activities well.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Curriculum changes in 2006 helped to establish better links in the planning between subjects. This has enabled teachers to develop learning better in one subject through work in other subjects. For example, pupils have opportunities to use computers to write for different audiences in Year 4 and in Year 6 to make presentations on Tudor life in history. In general, however, the curriculum plan does not make explicit enough how all subjects should contribute to developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills, particularly their writing. The amount of time spent on science this year has been increased and this has contributed to improved standards. The range of enrichment activities including visits to places of interest such as the Globe Theatre, is at least satisfactory with good provision in sports activities. Specific events, such as health week, a mathematics investigation day, science week, Black history week and international day contribute to pupils' enjoyment of learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The staff know the pupils and families well and pupils are confident that there are adults to whom they can go if they need to. Child protection, safeguarding procedures and health and

safety systems are in place and meet statutory requirements. Links with partner agencies are good and the links with the local Tamil community are very good, with support for parents through the 'Share' programme, and welcome coffee mornings and support in 'The Den'. The school has worked hard to ensure that attendance has improved. Support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is effective in enabling them to have access to the curriculum and make similar progress to their peers. The support is good for pupils who have English as an additional language, especially those who are at an early stage of learning English. Academic guidance is satisfactory, pupils know that they have targets which are discussed at the twice yearly target setting meetings. However, pupils do not always understand how these relate to their work or how they can help them to improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The school has been through a turbulent time. However, senior managers have remained focused this year on raising standards and have been effective in halting the decline in pupils' achievement. Frequent checking of progress contributes well to the way pupils are now achieving and, except in English at the end of Year 2, standards have also improved. The analysis of assessment results, especially in mathematics and science, has helped to identify curriculum priorities. Although progress in English has started to improve this year, standards since the last inspection have not improved enough because of lack of focused analysis and support through the school development plan. Monitoring the quality of the teaching is systematic and results in action and support where necessary. However, there is not enough focus in lesson observations on the impact of teaching on pupils' learning. Governors support the school appropriately through their work in committees and the full governing body, but are not rigorous enough in holding the school to account for the standards it has been achieving.

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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?	3
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	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

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?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
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.

Annex A

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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	3
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

14 July 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Donderry Primary School, Bromley, BR1 5QL

Thank you for all your help when we visited your school recently. You were friendly and welcoming and we very much enjoyed talking to many of you.

We agree with your teachers that the school is satisfactory and that there are some things that are good.

- You know how to stay safe and that being healthy is important. You really enjoyed the cookery challenge which was part of Health Week.
- Most of you enjoy school, attend regularly and behave well.
- You have interesting visitors, clubs and other activities.
- The adults are good at looking after for you and you know there are people to turn to if you need help.

Your headteacher and teachers know that you are able to reach higher standards, especially in reading and writing. We agree with them that they need to carry on working to make sure that:

- your teachers challenge all of you, but particularly the boys, to achieve higher standards
- the way your work is marked and the targets you are set, help you to know how to do better, and help teachers plan the next steps in your learning
- the teachers who are responsible for different subjects such as English, mathematics and science, make sure that you are learning as much as possible in those subjects.

You can help by working hard and making sure that you take notice of the advice your teachers give you. Some of you who do not come to school very regularly should try hard to improve your attendance.

Thank you again for welcoming us into your school and best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Grace Marriott

Lead Inspector