

Dulverton Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101434
Local Authority	Bexley
Inspection number	307683
Inspection dates	30–31 January 2008
Reporting inspector	Jane Chesterfield

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	455
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs E Blaylock
Headteacher	Mrs S Stringman
Date of previous school inspection	10 November 2003
School address	Dulverton Road New Eltham London SE9 3RH
Telephone number	020 8302 3573
Fax number	020 8308 1511

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school serves a residential community of mainly owner-occupied housing. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The proportion who are from minority ethnic backgrounds or who are learning English as an additional language is also below average. The number who have learning difficulties or disabilities is lower than the national figures. The post of deputy headteacher has been filled only since the beginning of this term.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Dulverton Primary is a good school where pupils achieve well. They reach above average standards by Year 6, particularly in mathematics where standards are very high. However, the school is not complacent about its successes. The headteacher and senior staff give good direction to the school and have established clear systems for monitoring its work and tracking pupils' progress. As a result, they have identified that some of the more able pupils do not achieve as well as they might in writing and science, and that provision for science does not always interest and excite pupils.

Pupils make good progress because teaching is good. Teachers use questioning well to challenge pupils and develop their thinking and speaking skills, so pupils enjoy their lessons. Practical tasks give them scope to find things out for themselves. 'Our teacher has loads of ideas', said one pupil. A well balanced curriculum supplemented by a good range of extra activities helps pupils develop their talents and skills as well rounded and confident individuals.

Pupils are happy at school and feel safe. 'If there's any bad stuff, teachers put an end to it quickly', one commented. Pastoral care for pupils is good, and they respond well to the positive relationships that exist between adults and children. Their behaviour is good and they are keen to take on responsibility around the school. Academic guidance for pupils is satisfactory. Teachers monitor their pupils' progress carefully, but marking does not always make it clear to pupils what they need to do to improve, and they are not always given the next steps for which to aim in their learning. Pupils who need additional help are well supported.

Most parents who responded to the questionnaire are satisfied with the school and what it offers their children. 'We are extremely happy with the nurturing environment provided', commented one, while another felt that, 'the school has a strong ethos and a caring approach'. However, a number of parents felt that the school does not take sufficient account of their views or keep them fully informed. Inspectors investigated these issues thoroughly and found that the school does more than many schools to involve parents in their children's learning. This is apparent in the meetings and information sent home advising parents how they can help their children. Nonetheless, there is more work to be done to improve some parents' perception of the school.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children begin the nursery with broadly average or above average skills for their age. They make good progress. By the end of the Foundation Stage, nearly all have securely reached levels above those expected of children at this stage of their development. Well established routines for settling the children and warm relationships with staff help them enjoy their learning. Capable leadership and dedicated staff ensure children benefit from a rich curriculum. They participate enthusiastically in a wide range of stimulating activities. Their increasing confidence is shown in their ability to use language imaginatively. During a role play activity set in a Chinese restaurant, for example, children inventively took orders and served dinner. Behaviour is good and children play happily together. Good safety measures promote their welfare and well-being.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase the achievement of more able pupils in writing and science.
- Make it clearer to pupils how they can improve their work and make progress.
- Enable more parents to recognise the school's good work and to feel part of it.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils enter Year 1 with a level of skills above that expected for their age. They make good progress throughout the school, reaching standards that are above average and sometimes very high, particularly in mathematics, by the time they leave. This year most pupils are on track to meet challenging targets in their literacy and numeracy tests. The school is working hard to make sure that the more able pupils achieve as well as they can in writing and science, setting up challenge as well as booster groups to target individuals. In lessons, teachers now have a common focus on basic grammar and increasing opportunities for writing, and on giving pupils practical tasks for investigation in science. These strategies are beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' interest, involvement and progress. In a Year 4 science lesson, for example, one pupil exclaimed to the teacher, 'Come quickly, something weird's happening!', when he saw the results of his experiment. Pupils who need extra help are given good support to enable them to achieve well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The personal development of the pupils is good. They enjoy coming to school, and this is reflected in their improving attendance rate over the last three years. When asked to work with others, such as their 'talking partners', pupils do so with enthusiasm. They behave well in lessons and around the school, for example holding doors open for other pupils. They know that exercise and a healthy diet are important, and older pupils are able to explain why. They feel safe in school and know that if someone is causing them a problem, they can always turn to an adult and it will be sorted out. Pupils are pleased to be elected to the school council. They take their responsibilities seriously and are proud of the school improvements they have suggested, such as the buddy bench and the playground markings. Pupils are also active in fundraising to support several charities. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, although their knowledge of different cultures in modern Britain is limited.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good across the school because teachers are now using assessment accurately to inform their planning. Systematic monitoring of teaching and learning is beginning to have a good impact in improving in the quality of pupils' writing and their achievement in science. Pupils have good opportunities to work in teams and with partners, and this helps to develop their social skills. Teaching assistants work well to support pupils who need additional help. In some lessons, planned activities for the more able pupils are not always extended in order to ensure that they make as much progress as they can. The quality of marking is

inconsistent, leaving some pupils, often the more able, unclear of what they need to do to improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The quality of the curriculum is good. It prepares pupils well for the next stage in their education, by giving them a good grounding in literacy and mathematics. The recently introduced focus on creativity in the curriculum and the wide range of extra-curricular clubs allow pupils to develop their all round interests and talents. Many are keen to take part in the sporting and arts activities. Visitors to the school and visits such as those to Thames Barrier and the Isle of Wight offer pupils unforgettable experiences. The use of information technology across the curriculum has improved considerably since the last inspection, although the school recognises that there is still scope for further development. Good quality, colourful displays of pupils' work enhance their self-esteem and help to create a stimulating environment for learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support for pupils are satisfactory overall with a number of strengths. Staff provide good support for pupils' personal development and pupils say there is always an adult to help them if the need arises. Staff follow procedures to protect children closely. Pupils who may be vulnerable are carefully identified and appropriate support is provided for them. Assessment of risks to health and safety are carried out in school but are not fully undertaken for all educational visits. Teachers set challenging targets for the standards individual pupils should reach by the end of each year. However, pupils are not always clear about what they need to do to make progress. At the time of the last inspection there was a lack of rigour in the way in which pupils' progress towards their targets was monitored and underachieving pupils identified. This has now improved and tracking information is used well to identify pupils who could benefit from extra support in either challenge or booster groups.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school has worked hard since the last inspection to develop clear leadership structures and roles, and now has a full complement of staff to carry out them out. Subject leaders are fully involved in monitoring and developing their areas, and this is having a positive impact on provision and achievement. This shows that the school has a good capacity for future improvement. However some leaders, including of science, are new to their posts, and so are just beginning to have an impact on their subjects. The headteacher and senior leaders have successfully created a sense of teamwork and a shared desire for improvement among the staff, so everyone is committed to a common purpose. Governors carry out their duties well and give the school a good balance of support and challenge. School self-evaluation processes are good, so that everyone has a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.

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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?	3
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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

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?	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?	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

11 February 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Dulverton Primary School, London, SE9 3RH

Thank you for being so helpful and friendly when we visited your school. We really enjoyed meeting you and talking to you. We think that Dulverton Primary is a good school and we could tell that you like going there. You are doing well in your lessons because your teachers know you well and know how to make your work interesting so that you learn new things.

We were impressed with your good behaviour in the school and the playground and we thought that you all get on very well together. The staff take good care of you and those of you who need extra help are well supported.

Your headteacher and her staff run the school well and know how to make it even better in future. We have agreed that they are going to do more to make sure that all of you achieve as well as you can, and that you get plenty of help to do this through your teachers' marking and feedback on your work.

You can do your bit by following the advice your teachers give you and asking if you don't understand anything. The staff are also going to try to give your parents as much information as they can about changes in the school which affect you all.

Well done to you all and best wishes for the future.

Jane Chesterfield

Lead inspector