

Downsview Primary and Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101778
Local Authority	Croydon
Inspection number	307803
Inspection date	25 June 2008
Reporting inspector	David Whatson

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	462
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Maria Miller
Headteacher	Dr Michael Brockett
Date of previous school inspection	4 October 2004
School address	Biggin Way Upper Norwood London SE19 3XE
Telephone number	020 8764 4611
Fax number	020 8679 8023

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: achievement and standards, teaching and learning, academic guidance and support and leadership and management, particularly the extent to which self-evaluation is giving leaders an accurate view of the school's effectiveness. This was evaluated by gathering evidence from school data, lesson observations, discussions with pupils, staff and governors, and the analysis of parent questionnaires and school documents. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessment, as given in its self-evaluation, was not justified, and these have been included where appropriate.

Description of the school

Downsvie is much larger than other primary schools. The school is becoming increasingly ethnically and linguistically diverse. The two largest minority ethnic groups are Black Caribbean and Indian. Nearly a quarter of pupils at the school are learning English as an additional language; a minority are at an early stage. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is well above the national average and a third of these have behavioural, emotional and social needs. In 2007 the school received the Basic Skills Agency Quality Mark, the Healthy Schools Award and the Activemark.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

'We feel Downsvie values every child and helps each one reach their full potential', commented one parent, echoing the views of many others. Parents and pupils are right to be proud of their school because it is a good school where pupils achieve well.

Relationships are strong throughout the school and because of this pupils feel safe and secure. Year 6 pupils all say that they will miss their teacher when they leave in a few weeks time. They know where to turn if there are experiencing problems and confidently say, 'Teachers always help sort out our problems' and that if they were lonely at playtimes a 'Playground Friend' was always close by. Pupils readily adopt healthy life styles as shown by their willingness to eat fruit and the good levels of participation in sports events and clubs. Pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is built on respect for other people's values, feelings, and beliefs. Specific lessons that deal with pupils' personal and social health improve the social and emotional aspects of learning. There is an effective school council that took the initiative and raised a considerable amount of money for more playground equipment. Pupils enjoy the responsibility the school gives them and are keen to help younger children. Pupils are also concerned about the environment. I was told, 'You shouldn't use plastic shopping bags if you want to be green'.

Although behaviour is good, in the past there was a concern amongst both the school and parents about the behaviour of a small number of pupils. The school has worked hard to combat some challenging behaviour by closely monitoring and supporting the personal development of these pupils. This has met with success and, as pupils said, there are only a few pupils who are sometimes 'naughty'.

When asked, pupils said they enjoy school because 'We have good lessons'. These comments are reflections of the good teaching pupils receive. Teachers know their pupils well, record carefully the progress that they make and, in most cases, tailor the activities well to meet the needs of pupils of different abilities. Lessons are often made interesting because teachers are often skilled at asking questions and encouraging pupils to explain their answers and thinking. However, teachers do not often encourage pupil to challenge each others answers and reasoning. Pupils say that their work is marked regularly and that they find their teacher's comments help them to improve. Most pupils know their targets and why they are so important. During a discussion, one pupil said, 'If you did not have targets you would continue to do things wrong and not improve'. Occasionally targets are too general and do not provide sufficient guidance to pupils about the specific area they have to concentrate on to improve.

Music has a high profile in the school and, as several parents and pupils said, there are also 'tremendous sporting opportunities'. Pupils enjoy these and the chance to learn French and attend the many popular clubs offered by the school such as cookery and sudoko. There are good links with other schools and organisations that enrich the curriculum and provide opportunities, particularly for gifted and talented pupils, to develop their knowledge and skills well.

Standards over the last three years have been improving and were above average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 in 2007. All pupils achieved well, but it was not even across all subjects. Pupils achieved exceptionally well in English, better than expected in mathematics and broadly satisfactorily in science. Current pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 are not reaching the same levels because of their lower starting point. From this point these pupils have made good progress,

with the exception of the most able in writing because they have not had enough opportunities to write for different audiences and purposes. Pupils are well prepared for their future because they make good progress in acquiring the necessary basic skills.

At the start of this academic year the school adopted the new guidance on teaching of literacy and numeracy and these are having an impact on pupils' learning. This is evident in the higher proportion of pupils working at the higher levels in mathematics this year. The school is increasing the number of links it makes between subjects and the opportunities for pupils to use their writing skills in other subjects.

Through the careful monitoring of pupils' academic performance, those in need of extra help are quickly identified. The support they receive from trained assistants, for example in mathematics, helps them make good progress. Pupils learning English as an additional language, particularly those at an early stage, achieve well because of the intensive support they receive.

The headteacher and deputy lead the school well and are effectively supported and challenged by the governors. Through the senior leaders' monitoring and focused support the quality of teaching and learning has improved. Subject leaders are effective in overseeing developments in their subjects. Pupil performance data is carefully collated and analysed. This is used well to provide an accurate evaluation of the school's effectiveness and identify priorities, but these are not always clearly reflected in the school's written records and development plans. The school does not use data on pupil performance to form a very precise and clear view of the progress of different groups of pupils across the whole school. Because of this the school's development planning does not pin point what exactly needs to be done to accelerate pupils' progress even more across English, mathematics and science.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children currently in the Nursery entered with the skills and knowledge expected for their age, although in some years it has been below. Adults provide a warm welcome to all children who feel safe and settle quickly into the very spacious and stimulating environment. The careful monitoring of children's progress enables each of them to make very good progress. The views of one parent echoed that of others when she wrote, 'Downsvie Nursery is a wonderful place where each child is nurtured.' In Reception, as in the Nursery, the day's activities are well organised. Both the indoor and outdoor space is extensively used to develop children's skills in all areas of their learning. Through training and example, the Foundation Stage leader has improved provision and, as a result, planning and assessment across the two year groups is now more consistent and thorough. She has accurately evaluated the effectiveness of the provision and identified that currently there are not enough opportunities to engage boys in their learning. Adults in the Nursery provide a good balance between independent activities and teacher focused sessions that are both interesting and challenging. This is becoming a stronger feature in the Reception classes. Because of their starting point, unlike some previous year groups, those children currently in Reception are working at levels above that expected of their age.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing, particularly for the more able pupils, by providing more opportunities across the curriculum for pupils to use their writing skills.
- Evaluate pupil performance data more thoroughly in order to identify more precisely what needs to improve so that pupils' progress accelerates.

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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	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	3
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?	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.

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

08 July 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Downsview Primary and Nursery School, London, SE19 3XE

Thank you for contributing to the inspection of your school. I enjoyed spending time with you, watching some of you work in lessons and chatting to you. Everything I saw convinced me that you attend a good school.

I can understand why many of you, and your parents, are so pleased with the way that staff help you and look after you. The Nursery is a great place to start your school life and those of you in Reception make good use of the indoor and outdoor space that you have.

Your behaviour is good, although some pupils said that a few of you could sometimes still be naughty. These pupils could help the school by trying really hard to behave well and use all the support and help the school gives you.

The school gives you plenty of opportunities to take responsibilities. I was particularly impressed by the work of the school council. You told me that you particularly like sporting and musical activities.

You said you enjoy your lessons and like your teachers. I also found that you work hard. You make good progress and standards in years 2 and 6 are often better than in many other schools. However, standards in writing are not as high as in other subjects. It is important that you continue to work hard, and try especially hard to improve your writing.

The school's leaders and managers lead the school well and are keen to make the school even better. They are going to do this by looking at your performance even more carefully and plan more precisely how they are going to try and make Downsview even better.

Yours sincerely

David Watson

Lead Inspector