

Dudley Wood Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103773
Local Authority	Dudley
Inspection number	308417
Inspection dates	10–11 October 2007
Reporting inspector	David Mankelow

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	411
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Thompson
Headteacher	Carol Sibley
Date of previous school inspection	17 May 2004
School address	Dudley Wood Road Dudley DY2 0DB
Telephone number	01384 818690
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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

Dudley Wood is a large primary school that serves an economically disadvantaged local community. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds, with about 6% from the Traveller community. Very few pupils are at an early stage of learning English as a new language. The proportion of pupils currently eligible for free school meals is above the national average. Pupils' attainment on entry to the Nursery is below that expected for their age, particularly in communication and language skills. The school has the Healthy School award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Dudley Wood is a satisfactory school that is welcoming and provides a good level of care. Most pupils come to school happily and parents appreciate this; one typically commented, 'If my daughter could attend school on Saturdays and Sundays I'm sure that she would!' However, attendance is below average because, despite the school's best efforts, a significant minority of parents take holidays during term time.

Children make a good start in the Nursery and Reception classes where, from low starting points, they make good progress. They reach standards in line with those expected for their age by the time they enter Year 1, except in communication language and literacy skills, which remain below those expected. In Years 1 to 6, achievement is satisfactory overall. It is better in English than mathematics, resulting in standards by the end of Year 6 being broadly average in English but slightly below average in mathematics. The school has rightly and successfully focused its action on improving pupils' language and literacy skills and on raising standards in English but this has resulted in too little attention being paid to mathematics. Skilled teaching assistants provide effective support to pupils with learning difficulties and those from the Traveller community so that these groups achieve well.

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The subject leaders for English have successfully introduced an assessment and tracking system that is used well to ensure that teaching is precisely matched to the needs of individuals and groups. The leaders for mathematics have introduced effective tracking in Years 1 and 2 but they are newer to their roles and this tracking is not yet extended to Years 3 to 6, therefore it has yet to impact on raising standards by the time pupils leave the school. Results of mathematics assessments are used to group pupils according to ability but this is not always done accurately, resulting in some pupils being insufficiently challenged, especially the more able. Procedures for evaluating the effectiveness of the school are satisfactory in the main but result in an over- generous view of many aspects of provision. This is particularly the case in the monitoring of teaching, which is insufficiently regular or rigorous. It is mostly carried out by the headteacher and does not sufficiently involve the senior leadership team or subject leaders. This means that not everyone is clear about the areas identified for development.

Teaching is satisfactory overall. It is good in the Foundation Stage and satisfactory in Years 1 to 6, with strengths in Years 2 and 6. There are good relationships and teachers manage pupils well so behaviour in lessons is good. Teachers look after pupils very well so they feel safe and secure and their personal development and well-being are good. Academic guidance is satisfactory. In Year 6, most pupils have a clear understanding of how well they are doing in English and what they need to do in order to improve. This is because their work is marked very effectively and they are involved in agreeing targets with their teachers. However, this understanding is insufficiently developed for younger pupils in English and for all pupils in mathematics.

The curriculum is satisfactory and there are good links between subjects, particularly to develop writing skills in history, geography and science. However, in some classes, too little time is spent teaching mathematics. Not all classes have a mathematics lesson every day and some mathematics lessons take place at the end of the afternoon when pupils' concentration is not at its best.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children make good progress in the Foundation Stage because they are taught and looked after well. A growing number of children enter school with speech and language difficulties and their needs are effectively met by teaching assistants with skills in that area. The strong emphasis on personal and social development and the good mix of adult-led and child-inspired activities ensure that children are quickly ready for learning. They rapidly learn to share, take turns and become more independent when choosing activities. Well-planned practical investigations in all areas of learning successfully capture children's natural curiosity. They particularly enjoy working outside, such as when investigating the sounds of their musical instruments and creating a scarecrow. Most children reach the levels typical for their age by the time they move to Year 1, but their language and literacy skills still lag behind.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in mathematics by giving it more importance on the timetable and matching work more closely to pupils' prior attainment, particularly for the more able.
- Make tracking and target setting procedures more robust and implement them consistently across the school so that all pupils know how well they are doing and what they need to do next to improve.
- Ensure that a range of senior leaders are regularly involved in rigorously monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning so that areas for development are pinpointed and improved quickly.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

After a good start in Nursery and Reception, children generally enter Year 1 with standards that are broadly in line with those expected except in their language and literacy skills, which are below those expected. Because of the school's focus on the subject, achievement is good in English in Years 1 to 6 and pupils reach broadly average standards by the time they leave the school. Achievement in science is satisfactory and pupils reach broadly average standards. However, achievement in mathematics is not as good and standards are a little below average by Year 6. In particular, pupils with the potential for higher attainment do not do well enough. This picture is confirmed by the results of national tests in 2006 and 2007 and by the work of pupils currently in the school. Pupils with learning difficulties and those from the Traveller community are well supported in class by skilled teaching assistants so they make good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Most pupils enjoy coming to school, behave well and are polite to visitors. They report that there is very little bullying in the school and they get on well with each other in lessons and on the playground. They move carefully and safely around the school, taking good care of each other. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall but their awareness of cultural diversity is less well developed. Pupils have a good understanding about healthy lifestyles through the school's healthy eating policy and physical education programme. They take advantage of having access to fresh water during the day and younger children eagerly eat the fruit that they are given. However, many pupils bring less healthy snacks for playtimes.

Pupils make a good contribution to the school through their work on the school council and by carrying out a range of responsibilities in the classroom. Older pupils enjoy being prefects and use their position to benefit the wider community, for example as 'reading buddies'. Pupils' preparation for their future lives is sound, as is reflected in their average attainment in literacy and information and communication technology (ICT). The senior managers of the school have put in place a range of initiatives that have improved attendance but the number of holidays taken in term time by a significant minority of families continues to keep the figures below the national average.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching across the school is inconsistent, with strengths in the Foundation Stage and in Years 2 and 6. Typically, teachers manage their classes well and develop good relationships with their pupils. They evaluate how well lessons have gone and mostly use the information gained to plan future work that is well matched to pupils' different learning needs, particularly those who have learning difficulties. However, this is not the case for more able pupils, especially in mathematics. As a result, they are not sufficiently challenged and do not make as much progress as they should. Teachers are beginning to ask pupils to assess how well they have understood things themselves but in most classes, this practice is not sufficiently developed to provide pupils with accurate guidance on what needs to be learnt next.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum meets statutory requirements through a satisfactory range of learning activities that pupils enjoy. However, the time allocated to different subjects lacks balance. In particular, there is too little time allocated to mathematics. Timetabling is hindered by the amount and nature of playground space, which results in pupils in Years 3 to 6 not having their lunch break until 1.00 pm because there is not enough room for everybody to go out to play at the same time.

Teachers have developed good links between subjects which are particularly successful in boosting literacy skills, for example, through writing science reports and historical accounts. Pupils with learning difficulties are given work that is well matched to their needs. A good programme for personal, health, social and emotional education results in good behaviour and pupils being mindful of the needs of others. Some specialist sports coaching, visitors and educational visits enrich the curriculum and enhance pupils' enjoyment of learning. There is a satisfactory range of sports and music clubs which are well attended but are only available to older pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The welfare and safety of pupils is at the heart of the school's work. As a result, children feel very safe in school, and are confident in the way they are looked after by their teachers and other adults. They know there is somebody to go to if they are worried. The school has secure child protection procedures that meet current government requirements. A team of skilled

teaching assistants provide good support to pupils with learning difficulties and those from the Traveller community. As a result, these groups make good progress.

Academic guidance is satisfactory. In Year 6, pupils are engaged in meaningful discussions about their work, especially in English, and have a clear understanding of their targets for improvement. However, this practice is at an early stage of development in other subjects and year groups so has not yet led to raised standards, particularly in mathematics.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The school's leadership has created a learning environment that is welcoming, caring and supports the pastoral needs of all pupils, resulting in their good personal development. Since the last inspection, there have been improvements in attendance and in the achievement of pupils with learning difficulties. Improvements in the leadership of English have led to effective assessment and tracking procedures. This demonstrates that the school has a satisfactory capacity to improve further. Senior leaders have identified many of the school's relative strengths and weaknesses and addressed them in the improvement plan. However, the school's self-evaluation of its performance is not as accurate as it should be and the improvement plan does not include targets that are specific enough to drive forward improvements in key areas quickly enough, such as achievement in mathematics. The plan identifies appropriate actions to be taken but does not prioritise which should be done first and by when. The headteacher carries out most of the monitoring of teaching that is undertaken. Lesson observations have been irregular and lacked rigour so areas requiring improvement have not been identified or overcome. Governors have a clear understanding of some of the school's strengths and weaknesses from information provided by the headteacher but many do not visit often enough to monitor the school's work for themselves.

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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?	3
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
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	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	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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

12 October 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Dudley Wood Primary School, Dudley DY2 0DB

You may remember that I visited your school a couple weeks ago with two other inspectors. Thank you very much for making us so welcome and telling us all about your school. I am writing now to tell you what we found.

We found everything in your school to be satisfactory or better. You get off to a good start in the Nursery and Reception classes and by the time you go to your secondary schools, you have made good progress in literacy and reach standards that are about the same as most eleven-year-olds. You don't make as much progress in numeracy so standards are not as high. All of your lessons are at least satisfactory and some are better than that. The adults look after you well so you feel safe and most of you are happy to come to school. You behave well, are polite and help to look after each other.

This is what we have asked your teachers to do to make things even better.

- Make sure that you all have a numeracy lesson every day and that your work is hard enough.
- Make sure that they talk with you more about how well you are doing and let you know exactly what you need to do to reach higher standards.
- Make sure that the senior staff watch your lessons more often so that they can help every teacher improve their lessons and help you make the best progress possible.

I am sure that you will do all you can to help the school make things even better and I wish you every success in this.

With my best wishes,

David Mankelow Lead inspector



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With my best wishes,

David Mankelow
Lead inspector