

Dorridge Nursery and Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104045
Local Authority	Solihull
Inspection number	308491
Inspection date	12 March 2008
Reporting inspector	Lois Furness

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3-7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	318
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Vacant Position
Headteacher	Catherine Llewellyn
Date of previous school inspection	20 June 2005
School address	Station Road Dorridge Solihull B93 8EU
Telephone number	01564 774873
Fax number	01564 778115

Age group	3-7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector, who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: children's attainment when they start at school and their progress from there onwards; pupils' involvement in assessing their own progress; opportunities for outdoor learning in the Foundation Stage and how well pupils are involved in school improvement. The inspector gathered evidence from observations, scrutiny of pupils' work, assessment information, interviews and photographic evidence. 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 assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This is an above average size infant school providing provision for 80 part-time nursery age children. The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds, although ten other ethnic minorities are represented within the school. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well below that found nationally.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school where pupils thrive both academically and personally. Parents are delighted with all aspects of its work, making comments such as 'The school is fantastic, where all children flourish as a result of the care, time and effort given by all staff.' Their confidence is well founded, as all aspects of the school's work are excellent. Visitors are immediately transfixed by the stunning displays of pupils' work in this delightfully warm and vibrant environment. Excitement and enjoyment are evident, as pupils eagerly take part in an exciting range of experiences that make learning interesting, relevant and fun. The curriculum is excellent, with a strong emphasis on creativity. As a result, pupils are enthused and motivated by the imaginative, well-organised activities, often inspired by visits and visitors to the school. This was seen as Year 1 pupils excitedly and competently made light circuits, following an input from a science theatre group. The Reception children enthusiastically planned a puppet show, using their own high quality glove puppets as a result of the work of a visiting puppeteer. Pupils have many opportunities to appreciate a diverse range of cultures and traditions, through learning French, having visitors such as an African dance group, and the school kitchen providing paella on a Spanish themed day.

A wonderful start to children's school life is made in the Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception). Children enter the school with skills that mainly match those expected for their age. Excellent provision ensures that by the end of the Reception Year, children's knowledge and skills are above average in all six areas of learning. These above average skills are built upon very well and, by the time pupils leave school in Year 2, they attain exceptionally high standards in reading, writing and mathematics. More able pupils are effectively challenged as shown by the well above average proportion of them attaining Level 3 in all three subjects. Those pupils with learning difficulties also make rapid progress as a result of closely targeted support. Pupils have a high level of skill in information and communication technology and they use this resource skilfully to promote their learning. Achievement is outstanding and pupils are very well prepared for the next stage of their education.

The reason for the undoubted success of the school can be attributed to the inspirational and first-rate leadership of the headteacher. Pupils themselves say, 'We have a lovely headteacher who always listens to us.' Her vision and strong determination to ensure that all pupils are enabled to do their best is shared by senior leaders, staff and governors. Leadership and management are outstanding and this is a school where every child matters. Superb teamwork with a strong ethos of accountability underpins all of the school's work. Teaching and learning are rigorously monitored and this results in outstanding teaching and the rapid progress of all groups of pupils. The teachers spur pupils on as they plan lessons that are really interesting and enjoyable. This means pupils are keen to learn and their behaviour is excellent. Teaching assistants are clear about their roles, and work closely with teachers to assist pupils. Pupils relate extremely well to each other, for example when they bounce off ideas with a partner during discussions about learning. The marking of pupils' work is very good and celebrates success as well as showing how to improve. Pupils are becoming increasingly involved in assessing their own and each other's work. This is proving successful in enabling them to learn from one another, and to be clear about how to make their own work even better.

The pursuit of academic excellence is not at the expense of pupils' personal development, which is excellent. Their pastoral care is of equal importance. Child protection, health and safety and risk assessment procedures promote a very safe working environment. Parents agree their

children are looked after very well and pupils also say they feel safe and that adults will always listen to them. Well above average attendance confirms their great enjoyment of school. When asked, they say there is nothing they would change as they like their friends, their teachers and their lessons. They know the importance of making sensible eating choices and of taking regular exercise. The recent re-award of Healthy School status and Active Mark shows the school's strong commitment to ensuring pupils' understanding of the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle. Pupils take on responsibilities very willingly, for example as ECO Committee members. They are keen to share their thoughts about the importance of recycling, and have good plans to involve the school and local community in supporting this valuable work. The headteacher's 'talk time' provides very good opportunities for all pupils to express their ideas about improvement.

This is a school that does not rest on its laurels, as the leadership continually strives to move forward. Self-evaluation is rigorous and accurate and the school improvement plan is sharply focused on maintaining high standards and excellent achievement. This commitment, together with exceptional leadership and strengths in the quality of teaching and learning, provide the school with an excellent capacity to maintain its undoubted strengths and to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children get off to a flying start and make excellent progress in their first two years in school. Very good attention is given to their personal, social and emotional skills so they quickly settle and become enthusiastic interested learners. They cooperate well with adults and other children and willingly follow well-established routines. There is a very good balance between those activities led by an adult, and those that children choose for themselves. This means children quickly show confidence in working independently, which is a key factor of their success as they move up through the school. Activities are very well organised and purposeful, so children are engaged in a wide variety of stimulating experiences both in the indoor and outdoor environment. Progress is very carefully tracked so any early difficulties are quickly picked up and rectified. Parents are effectively involved in supporting their children's learning and are very pleased with how their children settle. One summed this up with the comment, 'In just a few months, my child has enjoyed so many exciting activities and new experiences; her confidence just grows daily!'

What the school should do to improve further

- The school's leadership team is very clear about what must be done to sustain school improvement. Consequently, there are no further issues to add.

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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?	1
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?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

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	1
The behaviour of learners	1
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	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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

Dear Children

Inspection of Dorridge Nursery and Infant School, Solihull B93 8EU

I am writing to thank you for being so friendly and helpful when I visited your school. I had a wonderful time and wished I could have stayed longer than just one day. I think your school is really special, and this means that your school is outstanding. There are so many things that are really really good that I must make sure I tell you about them all.

It is so good to know you love coming to school and, when I visited you, it was fantastic to see how hard you all work, your excellent behaviour and how you all try hard to help each other. I think having a 'talking partner' is a great idea as it means you all have a chance to say something when your teacher asks questions. Your teachers are excellent and plan lots and lots of interesting and exciting things for you to do. I only wish I could have been in school when you made your snowmen - I expect you had a great time. Those of you in Nursery and Reception do wonderful things, and have lots of fun. As it was so windy the day I visited your school, I kept thinking I would have liked to have had time to visit your hairdressing salon! You learn very well in these two classes and also in Years 1 and 2, and so by the time you leave school, you are doing much better in your work than most pupils of Year 2 age. Well done! You also know lots about eating healthily and keeping fit. I think the ECO committee is doing a really good job and 'talk time' is a good idea so you can tell your headteacher what you think about your school. It is good to know you all feel safe and adults will help you if you are worried or upset. Your parents also think this is a very good feature of your school.

Your headteacher is very determined that you should all do the very best you can, and I think she is very good at making sure this happens. All staff and governors agree with her and work together to make sure that your school is an outstanding one. You can help by continuing to work hard and behaving very well.

Best wishes

Mrs L Furness Lead Inspector

PS. I forgot to say the art and design and technology work you do is stunning. When I walked around the school, I was amazed to see the wonderful displays of your work.

13 March 2008



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