

Delves Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104150
Local Authority	Walsall
Inspection number	308529
Inspection date	16 July 2008
Reporting inspector	Chris Kessell

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	348
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Maureen Woodcock
Headteacher	Gary Thornton
Date of previous school inspection	3 July 2004
School address	Botany Road Delves Walsall WS5 4PU
Telephone number	01922 720754
Fax number	01922 642069

Age group	3-7
Inspection date	16 July 2008
Inspection number	308529

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector, who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

the effectiveness of the school's strategies to improve boys' achievement and whether any other pupil groups are achieving less well

whether pupils' progress through Key Stage 1 is consistent and possible reasons for this not being the case

the impact of the academic guidance and support provided for pupils in raising achievement and standards.

Evidence was gathered from observations of pupils at work and play, discussions with staff, governors and pupils, scrutiny of pupils' work and school documentation and an analysis of parents' views. 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

The school is larger than most infant schools. Although the largest single ethnic group is White British, the majority of pupils come from either Indian, Bangladeshi and Pakistani backgrounds or other minority ethnic groups. The proportion of pupils identified with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. A small minority of children who join the nursery are at the early stages of learning English. Not all nursery children go on to join the Reception classes, and about a third of the children who join the school in Reception come from other pre-school settings. There has been significant staff disruption over the last few years as a result of illness.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Delves Infant is a good school. There are some outstanding features within the pupils' good personal development and well-being. The school is extremely popular with parents and, on entering through the main entrance, it is easy to see why. Pupils are very polite and extremely friendly. It is obvious that they thoroughly enjoy all that the school offers and find learning fun. One parent was correct when she wrote, 'Children learn well but enjoy themselves.' Another parent even said, 'My child enjoys school so much, they ask to go back in the holidays.' Corridors and classrooms offer exciting displays of pupils' work and other school activities. Artwork is of a high quality. Not only does the school develop the pupils' personal qualities, but they also achieve well academically. Children enter the school with skills that are lower than those normally expected for their age, and leave with average standards overall in reading, writing and mathematics.

The school is successful because the quality of teaching and learning, the curriculum and the care, guidance and support provided for the pupils are all good. Teaching is effective because activities are interesting and the pace of learning is good. Pupils are very enthusiastic learners and take pride in their work. Pupils' work in books is particularly well presented. Good attention is paid to the differing abilities of the pupils, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics. However, more able pupils are not always challenged sufficiently in their topic work. On the few occasions when teaching is only satisfactory, the pace of lessons is slower and teachers' expectations are not always high enough. The curriculum is enhanced well by a good range of additional activities such as visits, visitors to school and school clubs. The use of creative weeks, which link subjects across the curriculum as well as developing a range of skills, is good. During the inspection, it was delightful to observe the pupils as they followed their 'jungle' theme. Foundation Stage children worked in their jungle camp and older pupils were learning to samba whilst others kindly shared their healthy 'jungle juice' with the lead inspector and headteacher. Information and communication technology provision was a weakness at the last inspection and has been improved significantly. The school has worked hard recently to develop and improve the transition from Foundation Stage into Year 1. Good strategies have been put in place to improve this process, although it is too early to see any impact on standards.

'My child is in safe hands,' is a typical comment from parents. The school is a safe place where pupils are valued as individuals. They are offered high quality pastoral care and pupils themselves say that they feel safe and very secure. They know that if they have a problem or concern, there is always an adult that they can turn to. The school works well with outside agencies to support pupils with specific needs and parents have welcomed the appointment of the Parent Support Advisor, who offers help to parents and families who might be experiencing difficulties or require guidance on a particular issue. Pupils' progress is tracked rigorously, enabling the school to ensure that all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, make at least good progress. Targets for pupils have been introduced during the current academic year and pupils are beginning to find these helpful. Teachers' marking provides supportive comments to the pupils about their learning but not enough guidance is given to help pupils improve their work or move to the next stages of their learning, particularly for the more able pupils.

Children get a good start in the Foundation Stage, where they make good progress. Current school data shows that most pupils in Years 1 and 2 continue to make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. The school has had a successful focus on pupils' writing, and standards

for the current Year 2 are above average. Standards in reading and mathematics are average although there have been improvements in the standards in mathematics on the previous year. The proportion of pupils who reach the expected National Curriculum Level 2 is either similar to or above the average found nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. However, this is not the case for the percentage reaching the higher Level 3, which is below average except in writing. The school has been successful in narrowing the gap between boys' and girls' performance so that it is similar to that found nationally. With the rigorous monitoring of pupils' progress, the school is in a good position to provide additional support or help to any individual or groups of pupils that begin to fall behind.

The strong pastoral care and welcoming and supportive ethos contribute effectively to the pupils' good personal development and well-being. The pupils' response to learning and their behaviour are excellent and contribute significantly to the good progress they make. Pupils work hard and collaborate well with each other. At break times, pupils play sensibly with each other. They share equipment maturely and have an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves safe. Visitors are greeted in a friendly manner and immediately feel at home in the school. Pupils are excellent ambassadors for the school. They undertake a wide range of duties conscientiously and wear their yellow responsibility and achievement badges with pride. They become familiar with the principles of democracy by electing their school councillors, who contribute well to the running of the school, feeding back the results of their meetings to their 'constituents'. Pupils lead healthy lifestyles, showing a good understanding of why it is important to be active at playtime and accurately identifying inappropriate foods for school dinners. The school set itself an ambitious target for attendance which has been met this year. Levels of attendance are above average. With their mature social skills and good academic progress, pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education and future lives.

Many parents commented that the school has gone from strength to strength since the appointment of the headteacher in September 2007. Leadership and management are good and senior staff have a clear and accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. Staff work well as a team and have willingly taken on new ideas. Parents commented, for example, on the successful introduction of 'letters and sounds' throughout the school during the current academic year. Governors are supportive of the school and have worked hard over the last few years to develop their understanding and expertise. Although proud of the direction that the school is taking, they are fully prepared to challenge school managers if necessary. The successful focus this year on improving pupils' writing and boys' achievement shows that there is a good capacity for the school to continue improving.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children receive a good start to their education in the nursery and Reception classes. They make good progress so that standards are average by the time they enter Year 1, although their writing and calculation skills are not so strong. The children make particularly good progress in their personal, social and emotional development. It is noticeable how self-confident the children are, and how sociable they are with each other, members of staff and adults. The children are provided with a rich and interesting curriculum. It contains a good balance of activities that children choose for themselves or those that are led by adults. Children's progress is monitored carefully and good attention is paid to the children's individual needs. For example, the children's 'letters and sounds' activities are carried out in ability groups. Speaking and listening skills are promoted especially well and it is hard to believe that about a third of the

nursery children started school last year with little or no English. The outdoor environment is used effectively as part of the curriculum, although this is still an ongoing development priority, particularly to ensure that children can work outside in all weathers. The Foundation Stage is well led and managed. Parents are impressed with the provision, particularly by the way their children quickly settle into school and gain confidence.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the proportion of pupils who reach the higher Level 3, particularly in reading and numeracy.
- Ensure that teachers' marking provides pupils, especially those who are more able, with guidance on how to improve their work and move on to the next stages of learning.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	----------------

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	3
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	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
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

17 July 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Delves Infant School, Walsall WS5 4PU

Thank you very much for being so nice and friendly to me when I visited your school. You go to a good school and I have listed the things that I liked most about your school below.

- You behave very well and are friendly and helpful.
- You all get off to a good start in the nursery and Reception classes and then continue to make good progress through the rest of the school.
- Your teachers make lessons interesting and exciting so that you really enjoy school.
- You play and work very safely.
- All of the staff take very good care of you so you are happy and safe in school.
- Your mums, dads and other adults who look after you think the school is good.
- Your headteacher, staff and governors have worked hard to make yours a good school and are trying to make it even better.

I have asked the headteacher, staff and governors to do two things to improve the school.

- Help more of you reach higher levels of work in reading and mathematics.
- Make sure the teachers' marking helps you improve your work and try new things in your work.

I hope you continue to enjoy your work at school. Please keep working hard and coming to school every day.

Best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Chris Kessell Lead Inspector 2