

The Deans Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105924
Local Authority	Salford
Inspection number	308982
Inspection date	20 September 2007
Reporting inspector	Robert Robinson

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	232
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Paul Naylor
Headteacher	Mrs F Hartley
Date of previous school inspection	26 April 2004
School address	Vicarage Road Swinton Manchester Lancashire M27 0WA
Telephone number	0161 7282089
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: achievement and standards; teaching and learning; the Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception); and leadership and management. The inspector gathered evidence from lesson observations, examination of pupils' work, assessment data, interviews and 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 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 average-sized primary school. Most pupils are of White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and statements of their special educational needs is below average. The socio-economic circumstances of the area are below average. The school holds the Artsmark and Healthy School status.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

The Deans Primary School provides an outstanding education for its pupils. Excellent leadership and management and teaching and learning result in pupils' very high levels of achievement and exceptionally high standards. Pupils are extremely well prepared for their future learning. This is because of their admirable personal development, their enjoyment of learning and their keenness to do well. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Parents and pupils are proud of the school. Parental comments praise all aspects of the school's work reflecting on the advantages to their children. Typical remarks include, 'An inviting atmosphere with excellent teaching methods to benefit all the children's individual needs' and 'An excellent school, great facilities and brilliant staff.'

Children enter Nursery with skills below those expected of children of their age. They have a wonderful start to their learning in the Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception classes) so that, by the time they start Year 1, their standards are above those normally seen in all the areas of learning. This is particularly so in reading. This fast rate of progress continues throughout the rest of the school so that by the time pupils leave the school they reach exceptionally high standards in English, mathematics and science. For the past three years in the national tests at the end of Year 6, all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, reached the nationally expected level for their age in English, mathematics and science. Previous standards were surpassed in the 2007 national tests when all pupils achieved the higher than expected level in English and science and nearly all managed this in mathematics.

The reasons for the undoubted successes of the school can be attributed to the first rate leadership of the headteacher, other senior leaders, staff and governors. Superb teamwork with a strong ethos of accountability underpins all areas of the school's work. The headteacher leads the school 'from the front'. For example, since the school opened in 1994 she has been the literacy coordinator, giving clear guidance and resulting in spectacular improvements in standards in reading and writing over time. A climate of praise and encouragement pervades the school which raises the self-esteem of staff and pupils. A major strength is the attention to detail throughout the school. This reflects the high aspirations and expectations of all. The leadership keeps a close check of every pupil's progress and help is targeted to those needing extra support. Parents are also actively involved and informed of the school's aspirations for their children so that they work in an exceptionally close partnership with the school.

Teaching and learning are rigorously monitored and this results in a consistency of good and better teaching in all classes and, as a consequence, rapid progress for all groups of pupils. The pace of learning is brisk and children know what they are to learn. The enthusiasm of teachers spurs pupils on. Pupils are keen to learn and behave well because lessons are really interesting and enjoyable. Excellent use is made of resources, including information and communication technology. Teaching assistants are clear about their roles and work closely with teachers to assist pupils. Pupils have plenty of opportunities to practise and develop their skills in literacy and numeracy as well as in other subjects. High expectations of neat and attractive recording of work result in pupils' undoubted pride in their work. Superb organisation of learning, harmonious relationships between staff and pupils and the management of pupils ensures exemplary behaviour and attitudes to work. Pupils relate extremely well to one another, for example, when they bounce off ideas with a partner during discussions about learning. The

marking of pupils' work is consistent and celebrates success as well as showing them how they can improve.

The pursuit of academic excellence is not at the expense of pupils' personal development. Pupils' pastoral care is of equal importance as ensuring they achieve academically. Child protection, health and safety and risk assessment procedures promote a safe working environment. Parents and pupils agree that children are looked after well and bullying is not an issue. Attendance rates are well above average. Pupils love school and appreciate all that the school provides. From an early age pupils learn about healthy foods and, increasingly as they get older, they find out more about healthy lifestyles. They are keen to attend clubs and appreciate the opportunities to take part in adventurous activities on residential visits. Pupils take on responsibilities very willingly and have ample opportunities to express their views and concerns.

The school does not rest on its laurels. The leadership of the school strives to move forwards. For many years it has assisted other schools through its 'Beacon' school status. Recently the headteacher has been actively involved in helping other schools with particular difficulties.

The school is passionate about finding ways to further enhance pupils' learning. It has recently formulated innovative and exciting plans to introduce handheld computers, initially into Year 3, to assist learning in lessons as well as at home. This initiative has been shared with parents. Developments such as these, together with exceptional leadership and strengths in the quality of teaching and learning and the sustained high achievement and standards, provide the school with excellent capacity to maintain its undoubted strengths and continue to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Provision in the Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception) is outstanding as is the leadership and management. Children start in the Nursery with skills below the level expected for children of their age. Few children when they start school have well developed skills in personal, social and emotional development and in communication, language and literacy. Progress in the Foundation Stage is brisk. Children respond extremely well to highly effective teaching, the stimulating learning environment and wide range of activities. Teachers and teaching assistants take responsibility for teaching focussed groups and the checking of children's learning and their progress is very thoroughly assessed. A strong emphasis on developing reading skills in a structured way helps all children to grasp basic reading skills by the end of the Reception Year. Tried and trusted methods which rely on regular daily reading at school and at home are particularly effective. The wide choice of reading scheme books and library books, alongside practising the sounds of letters and groups of letters, all help the children to make superb progress. Children are happy and secure and settle into school routines quickly. They make rapid progress in all aspects of their personal and emotional development. Parents are supportive and staff work hard to involve them in their children's learning.

What the school should do to improve further

There are no significant areas for improvement. The school's improvement plan clearly identifies what it needs to do to maintain its great strengths and to improve even further.

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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?	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

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

I really enjoyed the day I spent with you. It was a privilege to inspect your school as The Deans provides you with an outstanding education. This is because it is led and managed exceptionally well by the headteacher, who is very ably helped by the deputy headteacher, other staff and the governors. There are no significant areas for improvement. Your school knows what it needs to do to maintain its great strengths and to improve even further.

I was very impressed by your exemplary behaviour and interest in lessons. You told me that you enjoy being at school, feel safe and are proud of your school. Your attendance is well above average - so keep it up. Staff look after you extremely well and I was pleased that you all get on so well together. The standard of your work by the time you leave the school is exceptionally high because you are taught extremely well and make superb progress. Very few schools in the country achieve standards by the end of Year 6 as high as yours. The Deans is constantly trying to find ways to further improve your opportunities. For example, it has recently made exciting plans to introduce handheld computers into Year 3 to assist your learning in lessons as well as at home.

I appreciated talking to you about your work and watching you learn. I trust that you will continue to work with the staff and your headteacher to help them to continue to improve the school. I wish you well for the future.