

Denholme Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107282
Local Authority	Bradford
Inspection number	309364
Inspection dates	4–5 October 2007
Reporting inspector	Keith Bardon

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	192
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Judith Drake
Headteacher	Mrs Margaret Parker
Date of previous school inspection	19 May 2003
School address	Minorca Mount Denholme Bradford West Yorkshire BD13 4AY
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This small primary school serves a rural community with broadly average social and economic characteristics. The designated specialist provision, which forms an integral part of the school, currently accommodates 10 pupils with autistic spectrum disorder. Mostly as a result of the specialist provision, the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average and the number of pupils with a statement of special educational need is well above average. Most pupils are of White British heritage. A very small number of pupils are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. After a year in temporary positions the headteacher and deputy headteacher have recently taken up these posts permanently. The school holds the Activemark award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Denholme is a satisfactory school which is showing early but clear signs of improvement. This is due primarily to the focused leadership of the headteacher, who, with strong support from the deputy headteacher, has accurately identified the school's key priorities and set rigorous targets to ensure everyone knows what is expected of them. Pupils enter the Foundation Stage and leave at Year 6 with attainment that is a little below average. Pupils' achievements are satisfactory overall. Within this picture there are peaks and troughs. Pupils' skills at writing do not progress well enough and attainment is significantly weaker than in many other aspects of their learning. A recent fall in standards of reading in Key Stage 1 caused the school to examine closely how this was taught. Changes have been made, including the purchase of a reading scheme. Improvements are evident, but standards have further to rise.

While teaching and learning are satisfactory, the progress pupils make in lessons varies, depending to a large extent on how well the work is matched to the individual needs of the pupils. The school has established a clear system for assessing pupils' attainments, but teachers do not always use this information carefully enough to ensure that pupils of all abilities are sufficiently challenged or supported in their learning. Relations between staff and pupils are good and lessons are managed well. Pupils pay close attention to what is said to them and most concentrate hard to achieve the learning objectives teachers set at the start of each lesson. Good teaching in the designated specialist provision, which is sharply focused on each pupil's learning targets, ensures a good rate of progress relative to pupils' abilities. Pupils are cared for well and the academic guidance they receive is satisfactory. The arrangements to track pupils' achievement provide an accurate record of how well they are progressing but many staff have yet to make full use of the information they contain. The curriculum is satisfactory overall and good in the designated specialist provision. The many extra opportunities it provides are thoroughly enjoyed by the pupils.

Most pupils say that they enjoy school and like being with their friends. They feel safe and secure and get on well together. While most pupils are well behaved in lessons they have a tendency to sit back and wait for things to happen rather than look for ways to get involved. This is one of the reasons why learning is satisfactory rather than good. Pupils' understanding of how to stay healthy is well established, although some do not eat as sensibly as they could. They show respect for each other and for staff and willingly take on responsibilities when opportunities arise. Pupils acquire a satisfactory range of personal and academic skills in preparation for the next phase in their education and beyond.

The progress the school has made since the last inspection and its capacity to improve are satisfactory: the school's main objective is to raise standards. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have implemented improved systems to manage and monitor the school's work. Information gained from these arrangements has helped to identify the strengths and areas to be developed, but staff have yet to analyse closely how the changes they are making effect pupils' achievement. Governance is satisfactory and governors too are improving their ability to measure how well the school is performing. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

The quality of provision for children in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. When children enter Nursery their attainment in communication, language and literacy, knowledge and understanding of the world and some aspects of mathematical and social development is mostly below expectations for their age. They make satisfactory progress but early reading and writing skills are still lower than expected nationally at the end of Reception. Most children work with increasing confidence but a significant minority do not gain the expected level of independence. Teaching is satisfactory overall. Resources are used well to create lively and stimulating classrooms. The curriculum is satisfactory but lesson plans often detail what children will do rather than focusing sharply on what they are to learn. Nursery and Reception staff work closely together to build children's skills systematically. However, this does not follow through into Year 1. This lack of continuity slows pupils' progress at the beginning of Key Stage 1. Teachers use satisfactory methods to monitor progress but tend to be over-generous in their assessments. There are very good links with parents and many express positive views about the level of care and their children's progress. Leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are satisfactory.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in reading and writing at the end of Year 2 and in writing at the end of Year 6.
- Improve the consistency of teaching and learning and make better use of assessment to match work to the needs of the pupils.
- Strengthen school self-evaluation procedures.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Standards are below average. Most pupils enter Year 1 with attainment that is a little below expectations for their age, particularly in communication and language. Teachers' assessments for Year 2 pupils in 2007 showed standards to be well below average in reading and writing and average in mathematics. The school accepts that results in reading and writing were not good enough and pupils had not made enough progress while in Key Stage 1. A better planned reading programme and more effective teaching is beginning to raise standards and improve achievement, but pupils have yet to reach their full potential. After two years at an average level, the school's national test results for Year 6 pupils declined in 2007. Seventeen of the 30 pupils who took the national tests had learning or personal difficulties. When this and pupils' low attainment at the end of Year 2 is taken into account progress was satisfactory and the targets the school had set were achieved. Writing continues to be the weakest element of pupils' attainment in Key Stage 2. As a result of the close support they receive, pupils in the designated specialist provision often make good progress against their learning targets. Other pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the small number who speak English as an additional language maintain a similar rate of satisfactory progress as other pupils.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Most pupils are happy at school, citing the good relationships they have with each other and the staff as the main reason. They have no concerns about bullying and find staff very approachable should they have a problem. Attendance is broadly average. Pupils' enjoyment of lessons varies, with those lessons that challenge and provide practical activities the most favoured. While most pupils are well behaved and attentive in class they are not inclined to contribute unless encouraged to do so. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. The pupils act responsibly in and out of class, show respect for others and work and play well together. While pupils' sense of self-worth develops steadily a significant minority lack confidence in their own abilities during lessons. Many pupils take regular exercise and know what constitutes a healthy diet, but this is not always reflected in what they choose to eat. Pupils enjoy taking on responsibilities, such as Year 5 pupils acting as play leaders to add to the enjoyment younger ones get from playtimes. Preparation for future learning and life is satisfactory. Pupils learn to work alongside others, become confident in the use of the computer and acquire satisfactory skills in literacy and numeracy.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, although somewhat variable across the school. Teachers use their subject knowledge effectively to set clear objectives for lessons and to help pupils understand what they have to do to succeed. The use of assessment is improving but there are too many occasions when the varying learning needs of pupils are not sufficiently taken into account. While resources are mostly used effectively, at times there are not enough visual supports to aid pupils' understanding and help them tackle the work easily. Computers are used well across subjects, for example, when Year 5 pupils used them to find information about unusual tropical fruits. The use of interactive whiteboards often brings lessons to life and boosts the pace of learning. Teaching within the designated specialist provision is good. The small number of pupils who attend the unit benefit from the calm supportive atmosphere where sensitive step by step learning ensures that pupils make good progress. Teaching assistants work well alongside class teachers and are particularly supportive of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Day-to-day guidance through teachers' marking has recently been a focus for development but there is still some inconsistent practice so pupils are not always informed about what they should do to improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum adequately provides for pupils' needs and enables them to achieve satisfactorily. There is sufficient emphasis on improving literacy and numeracy skills and provision for information and communication technology is good. Some pupils say that they would like more opportunities for practical work in lessons. Recent revision of the curriculum has led teachers to plan more purposeful links across subjects but this is at an early stage and the impact on achievement and standards is as yet unclear. Pupils enjoy a wide range of sports opportunities after school which has contributed to the school gaining the Activemark. There is less focus on how a sensible diet is also an important part of a healthy lifestyle. Rewarding learning

experiences are gained from events such as residential visits to France and theatre visits. Provision for personal, social, health education and citizenship is well established. Pupils learn about the hazards surrounding drugs and other substances and of the importance of secure relationships.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Staff know pupils well and pay close attention to their welfare. Health and safety procedures, including child protection, meet requirements. The level of pastoral care is good and parents agree overwhelmingly that their children are in safe hands. Academic support and guidance is satisfactory. The use of assessment information to track pupils' progress and set targets for their learning is still developing and, therefore, not fully showing the impact on achievement and standards. Care for pupils who have additional needs is good. The most vulnerable are supported well by all staff and trusting relationships have been built which enable pupils to learn alongside others. Pupils feel safe and cared for in school. Pupils report that playtimes are free from bullying and racism and they are given clear guidance about staying safe.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher and deputy headteacher are working with determination and common purpose to address the school's most pressing needs and establish a cohesive system of school self-evaluation. The present strategy gives an accurate overview of how well the school is performing, but does not provide the detail staff and governors need to evaluate in depth how the decisions they have taken are influencing pupils' achievements. The school has improved steadily since the last inspection, particularly over the last year. The quality of teaching is checked regularly, but procedures have not been established very long and lack a little sharpness. The setting of performance targets is becoming embedded and milestones for improvement scheduled to address any underachievement. Management at all levels is satisfactory and the school is calm and orderly. Subject leaders make a satisfactory contribution but often lack the management skills they need to use information about their subjects strategically. Governors are closely involved with the school and support its work. Following a detailed evaluation they have identified the need to make more thorough evaluations for themselves and are currently putting strategies in place. The designated specialist provision is managed effectively and the weaknesses identified in the previous inspection report have been comprehensively addressed. Links with external services and other agencies are satisfactory and improving.

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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?	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	3
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	3

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
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**

Thank you very much for the very friendly greeting you gave the inspectors when we visited your school recently. Lots of you smiled and chatted to us which made us feel comfortable and welcome. We thoroughly enjoyed finding out about the work you do and a special thanks to those who talked with us about the school.

We were pleased to hear that you are happy at school and that everyone gets on well. While there were lots of things we liked about the school, and could see you were making clear progress, we felt that with everybody working as hard as they could you could achieve even more. We know that teachers are making careful changes to help you do this. It was great to see how well the pupils with autism are included in the life of the school and how much good progress they make. Adults look after you well and it is important that you feel safe and know you can get help if you need it. When we were in lessons or around other parts of the school you were well behaved. You listen carefully in class and try hard to do what your teachers want you to. Do not be afraid to put your own ideas forward. You do not always have to wait for teachers to ask for them.

These are the things we think the school should do to get even better.

- Help everyone to write well and to help pupils in Years 1 and 2 become better readers. You can play your part by always producing your best writing, whatever it is you are writing about. Younger pupils should try to read as much and as often as possible.
- Find ways to make teaching and learning good in all lessons and make sure that everyone has work that encourages them to think and work hard. You can help by always thinking, 'I can do this'.
- Make sure everyone is clear about how to make the school even better.

Thank you once again for a very enjoyable two days and I wish you lots of luck in the future.