

# Cavendish Junior School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	112659
<b>Local Authority</b>	DERBYSHIRE LA
<b>Inspection number</b>	310967
<b>Inspection dates</b>	6–7 November 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	John Brennan

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	130
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Gordon Simmons
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Sue Armenante
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	7 October 2002
<b>School address</b>	Edmund Street Newbold Moor Chesterfield Derbyshire S41 8TD
<b>Telephone number</b>	01246 450691
<b>Fax number</b>	01246 451655

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<b>Age group</b>	7–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

Cavendish is a smaller than average junior school serving an area of Chesterfield that is socially and economically disadvantaged. The proportion of pupils claiming free school meals is above average. The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage. In most years, pupils join the school with skills and abilities that are broadly average. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or other disabilities is above average. The school is newly federated with a nearby infant school from which pupils join the junior school. In September 2007 the headteacher of the infant school also became headteacher of the junior school and, together with one governing body, oversees both schools. The school has received National Health Promoting School status and has an Eco award and Basic Skills award.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Cavendish is a satisfactory school, giving satisfactory value for money. It has some good features. It has improved well since the previous inspection having dealt successfully with most substantial issues that were raised. It meets with increasing success in reaching the challenging targets it sets itself and has good capacity to improve further. Although standards are improving and progress is accelerating, overall standards are broadly average and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. However, while the school views all aspects of its work as being good, the inspection found some aspects to be satisfactory. This reflects satisfactory self-evaluative practice and satisfactory leadership and management.

The school has established good partnerships with parents and pupils so that confidence in the school is high. The process of federation has gone well. No matter which 'headteacher' is in charge, the school continues to run smoothly. There are signs, through initiatives such as joint training on managing behaviour, that federation is already proving beneficial. Cavendish is a busy school, sometimes too busy. Not all changes have been given sufficient attention to work successfully. The new headteacher, with the help of the assistant headteacher, has set a clear and manageable agenda for the future. However, improvement planning is at a very early stage with subject leaders, governors, and the senior leadership team yet to put the flesh on current plans to take initiatives forward.

Pupils' personal development is good. Pupils are helped to become good citizens and try hard to achieve the accolade that comes with being chosen as a 'Super Student.' Attendance rates are average and pupils enjoy school because of the successful efforts make school life enjoyable and stimulating. The curriculum and the care, support and guidance offered to pupils are good. There are lots of clubs for pupils to join and a greater emphasis has been given to practical activities and work that joins subjects together to make learning interesting. This is particularly effective in writing and information and communication technology (ICT). For example, younger pupils, having visited Eyam, wrote short movie stories using computers, then added their own sound effects to bring their stories to life. Such work is not universally the case, with pupils still having too few opportunities to carry out problem-solving work in mathematics. Within the school's supportive environment, pupils who have learning difficulties do particularly well. As one pupil said, 'If you get stuck with your work you get help.'

Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. It is stronger in English, especially writing, than in mathematics, so that standards are higher in English than in mathematics. Teachers manage pupils well and establish good relationships with them. However, learning is not always broken down into small enough steps to guide what pupils are to do and to draw all pupils into class discussions. As a result, there are occasions when some pupils switch off and sit quietly rather than join in.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Develop problem-solving skills in mathematics through improvements to teaching and learning and the curriculum.
- Ensure that lesson plans break learning down into clearly defined and measurable gains in skills and knowledge that help maximise pupils' contribution to lessons.
- Ensure that leaders at all levels contribute to a strategic plan that is focused sharply on measurable outcomes.

A small proportion of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but 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 but it is accelerating so that standards are rising. Results in the national tests have gone up in each of the past three years and in 2007 were high. However, this year group started the junior school at an unusually high level, and such results are the exception rather than the rule. The school's own data and work in books shows that standards, except in English, are broadly average. Pupils are doing well in English and standards are above average. A concentration on acquiring basic literacy and mathematical skills is suiting pupils with learning difficulties in particular. They make good progress, to the extent that, as they move through the school, many no longer need support to work successfully. Standards in mathematics and science are average and achievement is satisfactory. However, pupils' abilities to solve mathematical problems and to be investigative in science lag behind their basic mathematical skills and scientific knowledge. Recent changes to the organisation of science are beginning to work. However, too little attention has been given to problem-solving in mathematics. This is hindering pupils' progress, especially that of middle and higher attaining pupils.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils behave well, are friendly and generally get on with each other. When tasks require it, pupils are able to talk about their work, explain their ideas, collaborate with each other and make decisions. Pupils have a good understanding of how to live healthily. Fruit is becoming an increasingly popular option at playtimes and there are good opportunities, through clubs and in the curriculum, for pupils to be active. The rather cramped outside play area makes this difficult to achieve at playtimes and can result in some aimless play. However, pupils report that there is little bullying and they know what to do should they come across such behaviour. Through the School Council and because adults regularly seek their views, pupils have a prominent voice in school. They willingly take responsibility for its smooth running. The 'Green Team' sees to it that pupils also take responsibility for the wider environment. Occasions such as an Indian week help pupils acquire an understanding of life in multicultural Britain. They know and respect difference. This is indicative of their good spiritual, moral and social and cultural development.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teachers manage pupils well and establish good relationships with them. Classrooms are calm, enabling both pupils and teachers to go about their work undisturbed. Good partnerships have been established with teaching assistants who make a strong contribution when pupils are working in groups. Improved assessment procedures help identify what pupils are to achieve by the end of a series of lessons. However, a lack of clarity in the short term goals, with a tendency for too much teacher talk, and questions that are not demanding enough, means that

pupils can be left with too little to contribute. As a result, their thinking is not always tested or deepened. Teaching and learning in mathematics is not as successful as English. In particular, too little emphasis is given to investigative mathematics and in practical tasks too many decisions are made for pupils. Within mathematics sets, work is not sufficiently matched well enough to pupils' abilities. Marking is less forward-looking than it is in English, where training on the teaching of writing is working well. Good use is made of reading material as a model for writing and to help pupils craft, draft and redraft their writing over a series of lessons. Tasks are motivating and marking is evaluative, letting pupils know what they need to do to improve.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

Teachers are increasingly adept at making links across subjects to give purpose to learning. A recent reorganisation in science has given a greater emphasis to investigative science, and reflects a more practical approach to the curriculum as a whole. However, problem-solving in mathematics is still seen as an add-on to the curriculum, rather than part of everyday learning. The use of themed weeks allows for a concentrated burst on topics such as healthy eating. A thorough programme for pupils' personal development helps them to make the most of their time at school. There is a good range of clubs for the pupils to join and the uptake is high. Trips and visitors to school enjoy a high profile, allow for some first-hand learning, and act as a spur to work in several subjects.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils say they feel safe and that there is someone to talk to should they have any concerns. Good systems to track progress help identify pupils whose learning needs a boost. This, in turn, helps to direct support programmes and the work of teaching assistants. The school has also turned its attention to pupils with particular talents or gifts and, through 'master classes' in subjects such as science, provides some additional provision. Assessment information is beginning to be used well to help pupils see for themselves how to improve their work. Good procedures are in place to monitor attendance. Systems, such as those for child protection, to ensure pupil safety are in place and reflect government guidelines. However, a few policies have not been revisited for some time and are in need of revision.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The school's pursuit of a long list of priorities has meant that some initiatives have been more successfully led and evaluated than others. Where training and development time have been given a high priority, such as in writing, changes have been successful. However, efforts to improve mathematics have been less widespread and successful. Monitoring of the impact of change has not always concentrated on the benefits made to pupils' learning.

The new headteacher and the longer established assistant headteacher have quickly built a close and effective relationship. Aided by an accurate analysis of performance, they have worked together well to quickly gain a view of what needs to be done to improve the school and the practice of leadership further. As one senior leader said, 'We are singing from the same hymn sheet.' Although some new roles have been assigned, plans to take the school's well-chosen

priorities forward are embryonic, and there is no overarching strategic development plan. While governors have led the process of federation well and find some things out themselves about how well the school is doing, this practice is not yet widespread. For example, their role in development planning has been more one of reviewing the draft plan rather than helping put it together and monitoring aspects of its implementation for themselves.

Leadership at all levels work well with parents and pupils. Parents are regularly consulted and, through a good range of workshops on various subjects, are helped to become involved in their child's learning. Regular pupil conferences enable the school to test out their views and to see if work such as that on bullying has been successful.

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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?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	2
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

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

8 November 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Cavendish Junior School, Chesterfield, S41 8TD

Thank you for welcoming me to your school when I visited it recently. You were all very friendly and it felt like I was visiting one big family. I thought you would like to know what I thought of your school.

The headteacher, staff and governors of your school are working hard to make it the best school it can be. The new partnership you have with the infant school is going well. You too play your part well. It is good to hear of children in Year 5 forming friendships with children at the infant school. You get on well with each other and look after the school and the environment. You behave well in lessons and at playtimes. This is not always easy at playtimes because the yard is small but in the main you manage this well.

There are lots of clubs for you to join and you told me how much you enjoy these. Events, such as the recent trip to Eyam, have helped make school life fun. I was impressed with some of the work that you did as a result of this trip. The stories on the computer were very good. You clearly enjoy lessons like this. There seem to be lots of ways for you to do good writing but I didn't think the work you are asked to do in mathematics is as interesting. I have asked the school to give you more mathematical problems to solve and to help you to do these well. You can help in this by trying hard and thinking carefully when you have to make decisions or plan what to do.

Some of you talked to me about your targets and many of you are trying hard to achieve them. There were times in lessons when it wasn't always clear what you were to learn or what the target was for each lesson. I asked the school to make lesson targets clearer. You can help by joining in with the questions and answers and thinking hard about how your work might meet the targets for the lesson.

Your school is at a new and exciting beginning. The new headteacher and staff have lots of ideas to take your school forward. I asked them to write these down and to put their new ideas into place as soon as possible. In this way your school can get better still.

Thank you once again and good luck in the future.

John Brennan

Lead inspector