

# Dundale Primary School and Nursery

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	117286
<b>Local Authority</b>	Hertfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	312557
<b>Inspection dates</b>	1–2 December 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Derek Watts

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	242
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Steve Keil
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Janet Langdon
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	25 April 2005
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Bettys Lane Tring Hertfordshire HP23 5DJ

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	1–2 December 2008
<b>Inspection number</b>	312557

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

The majority of pupils in this average sized primary school come from a White British background. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is about average but pupils are not evenly distributed into similar size age groups throughout the school. Their difficulties are wide ranging and include the areas of behaviour, dyslexia, moderate learning, speech, language and communication and physical. A higher than average proportion of pupils has a statement of special need. There is Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provision for children in Nursery and Reception. Five newly appointed teachers joined the school recently.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

The overall effectiveness of Dundale Primary School and Nursery is satisfactory. There are good aspects to its work. Effective care, guidance and support and a very positive school atmosphere lead to good personal development and well-being for pupils. Pupils enjoy a stimulating curriculum, which is enriched by a wide range of additional activities. Pupils' overall achievement is satisfactory though there are clear signs that this is improving.

Pupils really thoroughly enjoy school and this is reflected by their keen interest in activities. They are courteous, friendly and relate well to others. Pupils are well behaved in lessons and around the school. They adopt healthy lifestyles well and know how to keep themselves safe. Pupils thrive on the additional responsibilities given such as serving on school council and the Eco council. They make good contributions to the school and to the wider community.

Pupils make satisfactory progress overall from their starting points in Nursery, which are generally at the level expected for their age. Provisional test results in 2008 indicate that standards by the end of Year 6, are above average in mathematics and average in English and science. Pupils made good progress in mathematics and made satisfactory progress in English and science. Not enough pupils attained the higher levels in writing and science in 2008. The school has taken positive steps to improve writing and current assessments show a higher proportion are now progressing towards higher levels. In science, however, this is not yet evident because there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to plan, carry out and report their own investigations. Most pupils with specific needs make good progress because of the good care and support provided.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. There are examples of good and outstanding practice, particularly in Years 5 and 6 and, overall, this is an improving picture suggesting the school's recent improvements to the monitoring and development of teaching are beginning to have an impact. When teaching is good, pupils are challenged well, tasks are well matched to needs and learning maintains a brisk pace. However, this good practice is not consistent across the school. In some lessons, the pace of instruction and the levels of challenge are not as high and learning slows. The curriculum is exciting, well planned with a full range of interesting activities including clubs, visitors, trips and work placements.

Parents hold extremely positive views about the school. They are very pleased with the care and education provided for their children. The headteacher's leadership, care and support, the school's ethos, approachability of staff and the additional activities receive considerable praise. Typical comments from the questionnaire included, 'The school is well led with lovely friendly staff', 'Strong leadership from the headteacher', 'The school has shown great support to my SEN child' and 'Extra curricular activities are brilliant'

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall but with clear strengths. The headteacher personally provides good leadership. Self evaluation is rigorous and there is good attention to pupils' personal development, care, the curriculum and the partnership with parents. The headteacher is well supported by the deputy headteacher. However, some key leaders are new to their posts and their roles, particularly with regard to monitoring and developing teaching, are not yet fully established. Governors are supportive, and the new Chair is aware of the need to be more questioning about pupils' achievement. The school has a satisfactory capacity to improve.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 3

Most year groups enter the school with knowledge and skills broadly in line with those expected but this general picture masks some wide ranging variations. Children settle quickly into routines and enjoy their learning. They make good progress in personal and social skills because of the good attention to their welfare and the positive relationships with their staff. The EYFS leader has only been in post since September but is already improving the provision. New assessment systems are being implemented but assessment is not yet established enough to fully inform teaching and learning. Leadership and management of the EYFS are satisfactory. Teaching is satisfactory and a suitable range of activities is planned to cover the areas of learning. In language work, however, adults questioning is not always fully effective in challenging the more able. By the end of Reception, standards are broadly in line with those expected in most areas of learning.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Raise achievement and standards, particularly for the more able in science.
- Ensure that the high quality teaching, containing challenging tasks and well paced learning is more widely spread throughout the school.
- Strengthen assessment procedures and teacher's questioning skills in EYFS.

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 by the end of Year 2 are usually broadly average in reading writing and mathematics. Standards dipped in reading and mathematics in 2008 but this group of pupils made satisfactory progress from their starting point. Since the last inspection, standards by the end of Year 6 have generally been average in English, mathematics and science. Provisional results for 2008 indicate above average standards in mathematics and broadly average in English and science. Positive steps are being taken to extend pupils' writing skills, particularly for the the more able. Not enough pupils attain the higher levels in science and the school is aware of the need to strengthen investigative work in science. In 2008, most pupils who needed support with literacy and numeracy reached expected standards in English and mathematics by Year 6. This represents good progress. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities also make good progress because of the good quality support and guidance provided.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 2

Pupils are enthusiastic about school and have positive attitudes to learning. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils are well behaved in class and around the school. Relationships between adults and pupils and between pupils are very good. Attendance is broadly average. Pupils adopt healthy lifestyles and are well aware of the importance of healthy diets and taking regular exercise. Those on the school council take their responsibilities seriously and have contributed to the development of playground facilities. The ECO council

have helped to design and construct the nature trail in the grounds as well as taking effective action to promote recycling and the saving of energy. Pupils make a strong contribution to the wider community by raising funds for national and global charities. They are well prepared for the next stage of their education. By the time they leave the school, pupils have well-developed personal and social skills. They possess good numeracy and sound literacy skills. All pupils in Year 6 had work placements for one day recently. They gained a valuable insight into the world of work as the school linked up with a variety of local businesses, professions and trades.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teaching is satisfactory overall as shown by its impact on pupils' overall progress. Teaching is improving and there are examples of good and outstanding practice. Pupils know what they are expected to learn because the purpose of the lesson is shared with them at the start. Teachers have established good relationships with their pupils and manage them well. In Year 5 and 6 mathematics lessons, in particular, the teacher's expectations of learning were high and high quality explanations promoted learning well. Questioning was also used skilfully to challenge the pupils' and check their understanding. Pupils responded enthusiastically and showed a good understanding of solving fraction problems. In other lessons, particularly when assessment information is used effectively, tasks are well matched to pupils' needs. As a result, in these lessons, pupils are challenged well and they make good gains in their learning. However, activities and tasks are not always sufficiently well matched to all pupils' needs, particularly for the more able, and not all lessons proceed at a brisk pace and learning slows. Teaching assistants are well deployed and make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning, particularly those with specific needs. The marking of pupils' work is usually constructive and helpful.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The school has designed and developed an interesting curriculum. There are good links between subjects which add meaning and relevance to pupils' learning. Pupils have good opportunities to write in different styles and for different purposes, for example, interesting biographies of Nelson Mandela and detailed reports of their work placements in Year 6. There are good opportunities for pupils to solve problems in mathematics and this has a positive impact on achievement and standards. However, the development of investigative skills in science is only satisfactory. Pupils are using information and communication technology (ICT) well to support their learning. For example, Year 5 pupils produce multimedia presentations of topics such as, the water cycle, The Thames and The River Amazon. The teaching of French in Years 3 to 6 adds an interesting dimension to pupils' cultural and language development. A wide range of additional activities is offered and this is much appreciated by pupils and their parents. Popular clubs include the ECO club, football, ICT, orienteering, recorders, tennis and yoga. Pupils have good opportunities to learn a musical instrument. A successful residential visit to the Isle of Wight provides exciting outdoor activities which develop pupils' knowledge and skills in geography and history. Health and safety education is promoted effectively throughout the curriculum. The woodlands, pond and nature trail within the school's spacious grounds contribute well to pupils' learning and enjoyment.

## Care, guidance and support

### Grade: 2

The school's very positive and welcoming atmosphere underpins pupils' good personal development. There are effective procedures to ensure that pupils are protected, safe and secure. Consequently, they feel very well cared for and know that there is always an adult they can turn to if needed. Pupils and their families are well supported. As a parent wrote, 'The headteacher shows great empathy and makes it her business to understand family circumstances and great support is provided when needed'. Good behaviour is achieved through clear expectations and consistently implemented procedures. Parents commented, 'Any behaviour problems are dealt with immediately and effectively' and 'Discipline is good and a positive approach is adopted'. The school works hard to promote good attendance. An effective partnership has been formed with the Attendance Improvement Officer. Pupils with specific needs receive good support and have full access to the curriculum. Effective systems to assess and track pupils' attainment have been established. Pupils are set success criteria or indicators to guide their learning. They know what they are working on to improve. Targets and guidance to help pupils acquire scientific skills are less well developed.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

The headteacher provides good leadership. With her staff, she has successfully created a positive school atmosphere, good personal development and well-being for pupils and an exciting curriculum. She clearly has the confidence and respect of parents, staff and pupils. Typical comments made were, 'The school is very welcoming to children and parents alike', 'The headteacher knows every pupil by sight and name' and 'Wonderful headteacher'.

The deputy headteacher provides good support and leads by example with high quality teaching in the classroom. The headteacher and deputy are focused on improving teaching to raise achievement further. New teachers are receiving good support and have settled well. The monitoring and development of teaching is improving practice but it has not yet led to consistently good teaching across the school. The leaders of mathematics and EYFS are new and their roles are developing well but they have not been in the school long enough to have had a full impact on provision and on pupils' achievement.

Community cohesion is promoted well, as demonstrated by the school's very positive atmosphere. There are good partnerships with parents and outside agencies. Introducing Year 6 pupils to work places in the community is an interesting initiative. During the inspection, Friends of Tring Church Heritage gave a drama production of local life in Tudor Times. The curriculum effectively promotes pupils' understanding of the wider national and global community.



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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	3

### Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

### 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/or disabilities make progress	2

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<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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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
The extent to which 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	2

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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

## 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	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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	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**

3 December 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Dundale Primary School and Nursery, Tring, HP23 5DJ

Thank you so much for welcoming us into your school and showing us your work. We enjoyed our visit and would like to tell you what we have found. Yours is a satisfactory school. It has some good features.

These are the main strengths of the school.

- You really enjoy school and the activities offered.
- The school is a very welcoming and pleasant place to be in.
- You are making good progress in mathematics.
- Behaviour is good in lessons and around the school.
- Your headteacher leads the school well.
- You have a good understanding of how to keep healthy and safe.
- The staff take good care of you and give you good support.
- Those of you who need extra help are well supported.
- The school offers a good range learning experiences with of additional activities including clubs, trips and visitors.
- You make a good contribution to the school and wider community.
- Your parents are pleased with the school and give it good support.

There are three things that your teachers could work on to improve the school.

- Some of you could make more progress and reach higher levels, especially in science.
- In some lessons, teachers could challenge you more and make sure that learning moves on at a quicker pace.
- Teachers in Nursery and Reception need to strengthen the ways they check your progress and could sometimes ask you harder questions.

You can help the school, by continuing to work hard, particularly at science. We wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Derek Watts

Lead inspector