

Danesholme Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121903
Local Authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	314143
Inspection date	10 October 2007
Reporting inspector	Helen Barter

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	319
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Christopher Garrett
Headteacher	Denise Durham
Date of previous school inspection	7 July 2003
School address	Motala Close Corby NN18 9DT
Telephone number	01536 741732
Fax number	01536 741732

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector over one day. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: the quality of the Foundation Stage provision and how well children make progress from starting in the nursery, the effectiveness of strategies to ensure that all groups of pupils achieve as well as they can across the curriculum, and how well the school's leadership evaluates the school's performance in order to develop the school further. Evidence was gathered from:- discussions with the headteacher, senior leaders, governors, teachers, and pupils; lesson observations; scrutiny of pupils' work; analysis of assessment data. 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 a large infant school. Most pupils are of White British heritage, but one tenth are from a range of other minority ethnic backgrounds and this proportion is increasing. The school has seen a recent and significant increase in the proportion of pupils who are newly arrived to Britain and who have limited or no spoken English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average. Children start school in the Nursery or in Reception with skills and abilities that are broadly at the level expected for their age.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Danesholme Infant School provides pupils with an outstanding quality of education. Rich learning experiences and a caring environment help pupils to develop well both academically and personally. The school's many strengths are the result of excellent leadership and management. The headteacher leads from the front and her commitment and enthusiasm inspires all adults working in the school to provide a high quality of education for the pupils. Senior leaders, those with subject responsibilities and the governing body all work equally hard towards the same goal of helping pupils achieve to the best of their ability. The school is modest in its evaluation of its own effectiveness because it strives constantly to improve further. Already judged to be 'very effective' at the last inspection, the school has moved forward and is well placed to continue to improve.

Parents have high regard for the school. Many remark on the caring and thoughtful guidance their children receive to help them make such outstanding progress in their learning. 'I am thrilled with the teaching and support my son is receiving', and, 'I've noticed a big difference in my daughter's learning, her reading skills are brilliant' are just two comments which are typical of many others made.

Pupils achieve exceptionally well because teaching is of consistently high quality in every year group and the curriculum fully meets the needs of infant learners. Teachers plan interesting, lively lessons so pupils work with enthusiasm, a sense of purpose and an eagerness to please. Teachers ensure that pupils extend their literacy and numeracy skills in all of their activities. They also provide plenty of imaginative, practical lessons, which help pupils to broaden their knowledge and understanding. Creativity, such as through learning African drumming, is effectively encouraged to nurture the development of pupils' individual skills. Role-play, music and drama are used to generate interest and to enhance opportunities for pupils' writing, speaking and listening. The teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants and their use of information about pupils' work to plan the next steps for learning are significant strengths and have a direct impact on pupils' outstanding achievement.

Excellent progress starts in the Foundation Stage because children acquire very good learning habits and routines from an early age. From this very positive start, pupils make outstanding progress in Years 1 and 2 and reach exceptionally high standards by the end of Year 2. Pupils of all abilities and backgrounds achieve exceptionally well because the school knows them all as individuals, tracks their progress in fine detail and ensures that support is given if they are in danger of slipping behind. The school is never complacent about its standards and questions its own practice rigorously when occasionally some pupils do not do as well as they are expected to. This means that slight dips, such as those seen in boys' writing in the past, are addressed so that all pupils can work to their potential.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. 'School is fun' and, 'teachers are really, really nice and kind and help you to learn' are typical comments made. Pupils feel safe and secure and develop a remarkable degree of self-confidence. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Extremely strong and warm relationships ensure that all pupils thrive and flourish. Pupils happily take turns and share and they respect each other. They speak with maturity to adults about their work and are very proud to show how well they are learning in their books. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary because they clearly understand the rules and are helped with sensitivity to overcome any personal difficulties.

Pupils willingly take on responsibility as 'monitors' and are very keen to help others, such as making sure that the playground is a fun place to be for everyone. Attendance is satisfactory and improving because of the school's good work with parents to help them understand the importance of their children's regular attendance at school.

The school gives outstanding care, guidance and support. It has very effective systems to protect all pupils, and uses its positive partnerships with parents and outside agencies to support the most vulnerable pupils. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are supported very effectively in class and through carefully planned individual and group work. Targets for these pupils are precise and meticulously monitored so that they make rapid gains in their learning and often exceed the expectations set for them. Pupils that are more able achieve exceptionally well because work planned for them offers challenge and frequent opportunities to learn and think for themselves. Pupils who speak English as an additional language also progress very well because teaching staff support them effectively in the classroom. Staff put a great deal of time and care into helping newly arrived pupils, many of whom speak limited or no English, to settle into school and overcome their social difficulties. Currently, only a few staff have the expertise to assess and support the specific linguistic needs of this growing group of pupils.

Pupils know that there is an adult they can turn to if they have a problem, confident that it will always be sorted out. They understand about keeping healthy and safe because the school plans times when these issues are explored. Pupils receive very good help to improve their work through frequent discussions with staff and through marking in their books. They feel encouraged to do well, are happy to 'have a go' when something is difficult and ask for help when they are stuck. All of this results in pupils who are very keen to learn and are exceptionally well equipped for the move to junior school.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children's achievement in the Nursery and Reception classes is outstanding because staff understand how young children learn, and teach them exceptionally well. Staff monitor children's progress carefully. The children rapidly develop their skills so that by the time they enter Year 1, nearly all meet their early learning goals and a significant number exceed them. Links with parents are very good and used well to gain knowledge of children's skills when they start school and to encourage support for children's learning at home. Frequent and well-focused assessments help staff to support each individual child and skilfully plan exciting activities that develop their curiosity in learning. There is a strong focus on promoting children's personal and social skills so they play and learn together well through exciting inside and outdoor activities. The building blocks for children's literacy and mathematical skills are put firmly in place in everything they do and this has a significant impact on the progress children make as they continue through the school.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop staff expertise in assessing and supporting the needs of the growing numbers of newly arrived pupils who have limited or no spoken English.

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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	3
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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

11 October 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Danesholme Infant School, Corby, NN18 9DT

I would like to thank you all for making me so welcome when I came to visit your school. It was such a pleasure to see you working so hard, behaving well and really enjoying being at school. You should be very proud of your school because it is an outstanding place to be!

These are some of the really great things about your school:

- Because you work so hard and learn so well, you do much better than most other children of your age.
- You are growing up to be sensible and caring children. You know how to look after yourselves and be kind to other people.
- Your teachers work well together to make sure that you learn everything you should and that you get all the help you need.
- The adults make sure you enjoy learning interesting and new things. The children in Nursery and Reception have great fun and lots of exciting things to do.
- Everybody cares for you and makes sure you are well and happy.
- All the adults want the very best for you. They work very hard to make sure that Danesholme Infant School is one of the best schools.

Even though your school keeps on getting better and better, and you and your parents are very happy, it wants to do even more to help you. To help them I have asked them to make sure that they know exactly how to help the children who are new to the school and who do not speak very much English. You can help by being especially kind towards those children and showing them what to do. I know you will because you are very friendly and keen to help everyone.

I wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours faithfully

Mrs Helen Barter Lead inspector

Annex B

11 October 2007

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Mrs Helen Barter
Lead inspector