

Dalestorth Primary and Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122490
Local Authority	NOTTINGHAMSHIRE LA
Inspection number	314308
Inspection dates	25–26 September 2007
Reporting inspector	Dorothy Bathgate HMI

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	272
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Neil Walker
Headteacher	Mr John Loker
Date of previous school inspection	13 October 2003
School address	Hill Crescent Sutton-in-ashfield Nottinghamshire NG17 4JA
Telephone number	01623459339
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average size primary school. Pupils enter the school with knowledge, skills and understanding that are below expectations. Most of the pupils are of White British heritage. The number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is very low, with only a few who speak English as an additional language. Socio-economic circumstances are challenging for some families. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/ or disabilities and those eligible for free school meals is average.

The school has gained the Quality In Support Services (QISS) award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Dalestorth Primary is an outstanding school that provides its pupils with an excellent education inside a calm, safe haven. The headteacher has successfully cultivated a 'can do' culture where pupils are encouraged to 'buy into the dream' of success and realise their full potential. All staff and governors share his vision, drive and determination to succeed. Leadership and management are outstanding and there is a strong commitment to provide children with the best education possible. Parents' views of the school are overwhelmingly positive. Relationships with parents are a significant strength of the school. One parent wrote, 'I have an excellent rapport with teachers and cannot praise highly enough their dedication and integrity.'

The school gives a high priority to developing pupils' self-confidence and self-esteem in a secure, friendly, happy environment. Consequently, pupils do well in their work, thrive and grow up as confident young people who make sensible choices about living healthy and active lives. Pupils say they enjoy school because 'everything is fun'. However, their enjoyment is not reflected in attendance rates because too many parents are taking families on holiday in term time.

As a result of outstanding teaching, pupils make excellent progress throughout the school. Standards have risen significantly in recent years and are now well above average overall by the end of Year 6 and are exceptionally high in science. All pupils do so well because their teachers are highly skilled at tracking their progress, identifying their needs and setting challenging targets. The teachers make excellent provision for all groups of pupils. Highly experienced teaching assistants support those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities very effectively. The pupils' positive attitudes to learning also help them to succeed. Pupils take a pride in their work and demonstrate a passion for learning. They live and learn in a calm working environment that is conducive to promoting a good work ethic. Relationships between adults and pupils are excellent. The curriculum is outstanding, well balanced and skilfully matched to the pupils' needs and interests. There is a clear emphasis on developing good basic skills as well as some excellent opportunities to inspire ambition for the future through field trip work and residential experiences. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary and they enjoy taking on responsibility. Pupils and parents recognise the very high standards of care that the school provides for pupils of all abilities, including those with learning difficulties or disabilities and those who are among the most able. All pupils benefit from carefully chosen targets that give them guidance on how to improve their work.

The school is extremely well placed to improve further because there is an excellent understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development, as well as a passionate commitment from staff and governors to promoting the well-being of all pupils. This is summed up by one pupil who said, 'Dalestorth is an unforgettable experience!'

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

The overall effectiveness of the Foundation Stage is outstanding. Whilst children enter the nursery with knowledge, skills and understanding that are generally below expectations, their communication, language, literacy skills, and personal, social and emotional skills are much lower. The outstanding teaching, care and curriculum enable children to make rapid progress. As a result, by the time they enter Year 1, many children are at expected levels. Much of this

success is due to the rigorous monitoring of each child's progress and subsequent adjustments to provision. Pupils make very good progress in all areas of learning, and exceptional progress in their personal, social and emotional development. They quickly learn to take turns, to share and to work together because these experiences are integrated with all their learning activities. The richness and variety of the curriculum provides these very young children with constant pleasure, excitement and adventure. There are exemplary partnerships with parents. The recently introduced induction initiative, 'Early Start' provides both children and parents with excellent support as they prepare for this new chapter in their lives. Leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are outstanding.

What the school should do to improve further

- Work with parents to improve attendance by reducing the number of authorised absences caused by families taking holidays in term time.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Achievement and standards are outstanding because of the excellent teaching and care that the school provides for each child. Standards in recent years show a steady trend of improvement at both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. By the end of Year 2 in 2007, standards were above average in reading and mathematics and average in writing. By the end of Year 6 in 2007, standards were well above average in English and mathematics and were exceptionally high in science. Standards in writing are highly commendable. Initiatives such as the 'Boys Achievement Project' have been immensely successful in raising standards, particularly at Level 5. In 2007, almost three quarters of the pupils attained Level 5 in English, mathematics and science, which is well above the national average. The work of pupils currently in Year 6 demonstrates that the school is set to maintain these very high standards. Progress is tracked and monitored rigorously and any identified weaknesses are quickly remedied. Consequently, almost all pupils are doing as well as they can. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities make very good progress towards their personal targets because of the high quality support they receive.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are outstanding. Dalestorth is a happy and welcoming school where strong relationships exist at all levels within the school community. Pupils thoroughly enjoy their learning and consequently behaviour is exemplary. Pupils' self-esteem develops very strongly. Pupils collaborate very well with others in a variety of activities and acquire a sound foundation of skills and attributes for their future well-being. Pupils feel they are well cared for and protected in the school. A good personal, social and health education programme helps pupils to understand how to keep fit and healthy. Although not a Church school, the school has strong links with the local parish church. This provides pupils with opportunities to sing in the church and local hospice, to donate harvest parcels to members of the local community and to participate in local inter-school festivals organised by the church. Although most children attend regularly, too many are taken on holiday during term time. The school is doing all it can to promote good attendance. It is working with parents to bring about rapid improvement through a range of initiatives including individual attendance action plans.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Teaching and learning are outstanding, enabling children to achieve very well. Teachers have high expectations and pupils respond well to the challenges set for them. Teachers know their pupils very well and make learning fun by matching activities to pupils' interests and abilities. There are many strong features of teaching and learning. A key strength is their skill at diagnosing pupils' individual needs. They use the outcomes of assessment very effectively to target their questioning during whole class teaching sessions and to plan tasks that are well matched to individual needs and abilities. Consequently, pupils make excellent progress in lessons. Teachers' subject knowledge is excellent. The energetic and enthusiastic approach of staff inspires high levels of motivation from pupils. Pupils with learning difficulties and/ or disabilities enjoy good support and consequently they achieve as well as their peers and participate as fully as possible in all lessons.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is outstanding and has several distinctive features. Across the school, there is a strong emphasis on developing the pupils' self-esteem through an extensive programme of activities designed to stimulate, motivate and raise pupils' future aspirations. An annual trip to London provides older pupils with a rich and highly enjoyable experience of music, art and culture far beyond their local horizons. This is complemented by a wide range of clubs and sporting opportunities during the year. Year 6 pupils enjoy the challenge of performing a Shakespeare play as their end of year drama performance. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) and physical education (PE) are excellent. Religious Education (RE) has improved significantly since the previous inspection and pupils particularly enjoy workshop days where they participate in a wide variety of hands-on, interactive activities. A high number of teaching assistants are deployed effectively to provide tailored support. The school is part of a local cluster of schools that are beginning to develop the core offer of extended services to enhance the curriculum. This includes breakfast club, a range of after-school clubs and activities, homework support and parental support.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support are outstanding and contribute strongly to pupils' progress, enjoyment and well-being. Child protection procedures are fully in place. Arrangements for ensuring health, safety and welfare are robust and risk assessments are undertaken regularly. There are highly effective partnerships with parents and range of local agencies that safeguard the needs of the most vulnerable pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/ or disabilities. Academic guidance for pupils is of the highest quality. Practical guidance is given to pupils through individual targets that provide challenge at all levels. Marking is excellent and tells pupils what they need to do better.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Leadership and management are outstanding. The headteacher's leadership is excellent and has been a key factor in ensuring the school has continued to make rapid progress since the previous inspection. He ensures that all staff and governors share a clear vision and a commitment towards placing the needs of all pupils, regardless of their abilities, at the heart of the day-to-day life of the school. Consequently, equality of opportunity for pupils is outstanding. The school's processes for self-evaluation are robust and take account of the views of staff, governors and parents. Its self-evaluation is accurate. This leads to effective action being taken to remedy any identified weaknesses and the continuous raising of standards through sharp, focused school improvement planning. The professional development of all staff is a high priority. Performance management is successfully linked to improving pupil's academic success. There is regular monitoring and evaluation of teaching, which is effective in raising standards. Governors are involved in all aspects of school life and fully understand their role in providing appropriate challenge, allowing no room for complacency.

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	2
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**

27 September 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Dalestorth Primary School, Sutton-In-Ashfield, NG17 4JA

Thank you for making me so welcome a few weeks ago when I visited your school with two other inspectors. We thoroughly enjoyed our visit and it was a pleasure to speak to many of you in classes, at break and lunch times, as well as in some small groups. We particularly enjoyed sharing in some of your lessons and were thrilled at your exceptionally high standards of writing! It was also good to see you enjoying your Book Fair week, which we hope was a real success!

You are right to be very proud of Dalestorth Primary School. It is an outstanding school! Your behaviour is excellent and you work hard in all of your lessons. The youngest children enjoy many exciting and adventurous activities and I really enjoyed watching the nursery children dance and move to 'Sticky Kids'. The older children demonstrate excellent ICT skills and use these effectively to support their learning in literacy and numeracy. You told us how much you enjoy the good quality PE lessons. You all have an excellent understanding of how to keep fit and healthy. Well done! Dalestorth is an exciting school to be in because everyone matters and every day counts!

I could see just how much you enjoy life at Dalestorth Primary and so I was rather puzzled to discover that some of you have very high absence rates. You told us that this is because you often go away on holiday in term time. This means that you miss important work and need to catch up once you are back at school. This can be difficult for both you and your teachers. I have asked your headteacher to work with your parents to try to find some solutions. You can help by wanting to be at school every day and by helping your parents to understand that family holidays are really best enjoyed in school holiday time.

Thank you again for such a lovely time at your school. Keep up the excellent work so that you can 'live the dream!'

With best wishes for the future

Dorothy Bathgate HMI