

Dunchurch Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125763
Local Authority	Warwickshire
Inspection number	315308
Inspection dates	11–12 December 2007
Reporting inspector	Alison Cartlidge

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	154
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Helen Walker
Headteacher	Maureen Mrowicki
Date of previous school inspection	30 June 2003
School address	School Street Dunchurch Rugby CV22 6PA
Telephone number	01788 810292
Fax number	01788 810919

Age group	4-7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The pupils come to the school from the village of Dunchurch and the surrounding area. The attainment of most children is within the levels expected for their age when children start in the Reception Year. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. The Nursery attached to the school is managed by the school's governing body but was not part of this inspection. Five out of the six teachers have joined the school in the last two years.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy their lessons and achieve well at this good school. One parent spoke for many by saying, 'Dunchurch Infant School is a loving and wonderful place for our children to be.'

Children make a good start to their education in the Reception classes. Good teaching continues in Years 1 and 2 enabling pupils to make good progress and to reach above average standards by the end of Year 2. Pupils are especially good at reading, and develop an extensive scientific knowledge. Standards in writing are improving, although they are not as high as they are in reading and mathematics. Recent improvements in the way writing is being taught enable pupils to produce some good stories and plays. Pupils' factual writing, for example writing descriptions and reports about science investigations, is much less well developed. This is because teachers do not always expect enough from pupils in this work.

Teachers meet pupils' differing needs well in most lessons, although there are a few occasions, especially during whole class work, when expectations are the same for all pupils, and when this happens learning slows. All members of staff are caring and help pupils to feel safe at school. They form good relationships, safeguard pupils well, and provide them with good guidance and support. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution towards supporting groups, particularly pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Pupils' behaviour is good overall, although during whole class discussions some pupils call out and find it difficult to listen. Pupils take responsibility well by looking after each other, helping the teachers, and supporting charities. They have an excellent understanding of how to stay healthy and discuss, in depth, how a healthy heart provides other muscles with a good supply of oxygen. The good curriculum includes interesting educational visits and various visitors extend pupils' knowledge well by sharing their expertise.

Leadership and management are good because the headteacher, senior management team and governors work together well to improve provision and standards and to ensure that the frequent changes in teaching staff do not adversely affect pupils' progress. The school is constantly developing and consequently the capacity to improve is good. As one parent said, 'Many improvements have been made within the school for the children's benefit.' For example, pupils now develop good skills in information and communication technology (ICT). Whilst there is a wealth of information on pupils' progress in each class, there is no central record to help leaders get a quick overview of how well different groups of pupils are achieving in each subject. Nevertheless, senior leaders understand most of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Parents support their children well, especially in reading, and most find the school to be friendly and welcoming.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children in the Reception Year make good progress because teaching of basic skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT is good and friendly members of staff make learning fun. By the start of Year 1, most children are working at, or beyond, the expected levels for their age. Children have particularly good opportunities to develop their knowledge of letters and talk confidently about 'short vowel sounds'. There is a good mix of independent and teacher led activities, and a clear pictorial timetable helps children to learn class routines quickly. Occasionally, some activities do not engage the children's interest successfully and when this happens, they flit

between tasks and do not learn well enough. Teaching assistants support groups of pupils well and help to maintain thorough assessment records. Good leadership and management ensure that provision is reviewed regularly and successful action is taken as needed. For example, the school has identified correctly that the breadth of provision is better indoors than outside and is working to provide more outdoor activities.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase opportunities for pupils to develop their factual writing.
- Improve pupils' listening skills during whole class discussions.
- Provide information on pupils' progress in a format that makes it easier for leaders to evaluate the progress of different groups of pupils.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards by the end of Year 2 are above average and pupils' achievement is good. Children make good progress in the Reception Year and most are working at, or beyond, the expected levels when they start in Year 1. Good progress continues in Years 1 and 2, including for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Pupils do especially well in reading and parents support them well in this subject. As one parent said, 'There is an active approach to parents and the school working together to maximise learning.' The school is improving standards in writing successfully. Pupils produce some interesting creative writing, but their factual writing is not always good enough because they have fewer opportunities to develop these skills.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils thoroughly enjoy attending this school. As one pupil said, 'I love school.' Attendance is above average because the school works successfully with parents to reduce term time holidays. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils understand that Christmas is not just about receiving presents and they respect people from different cultures. Pupils become confident and well spoken individuals who work together sensibly. They behave well most of the time, including towards the end of term when they are excited about taking part in their Christmas plays. However, there are occasions when some pupils call out in lessons and this slows learning.

Children learn to help each other from the time they start school in the Reception Year. They are keen to take responsibility by being 'star of the week' and this helps them to make a good contribution to the community. Older pupils carry out other helpful tasks diligently and the school council chooses the charities it supports. These activities and good basic skills prepare pupils well for the next stage of their education. Pupils are clear about dangers and about how to avoid them. For example, pupils talk knowledgeably about the internet and road safety. They feel that instances of teasing and bullying are rare and that members of staff deal with them quickly and effectively.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers provide interesting 'hands on' activities ensuring that most pupils enjoy school. For example, pupils in Year 1 enjoy using maps to find routes. Teachers promote their good subject knowledge by emphasising new vocabulary and consequently pupils are very knowledgeable and articulate. Resources, such as ICT, support learning effectively. For example, in a Year 2 science lesson the teacher used the interactive whiteboard well to support a discussion on electric circuits. Members of staff use praise well to strengthen relationships and to make pupils feel valued. Teachers meet pupils' differing needs well in most lessons, although there are occasions, especially during whole class work, when this is not as good as it could be. Teachers have lower expectations for pupils' factual writing than for creative writing, resulting in a noticeable difference in quality. Skilful teaching assistants provide valuable support for small groups, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Teachers in different year groups get together to plan a balanced and interesting curriculum. The school groups pupils by ability in literacy and numeracy. This increases the level of challenge in most lessons. The school provides intervention programmes to support pupils who are struggling to keep up with other pupils. The school promotes the creative arts well. For example, pupils express themselves well through drama in the Christmas plays. Improvements in the curriculum are closing the gap between reading and writing standards. However, there are still not enough opportunities for pupils to practise different types of writing. Provision for children in the Reception Year has improved since the last inspection and, in all year groups, ICT has become an integral part of many lessons. Educational visits to places, such as the fire station and toy museum, enrich the curriculum well and enhance learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

All members of staff know the pupils well and provide caring support for their pastoral needs. Procedures for safeguarding the pupils are robust, and members of staff identify vulnerable pupils and monitor their progress carefully. One parent said, 'I am very pleased that the school takes account of, and caters for, the needs of every child and their family.'

Teachers carry out thorough assessments to show how well pupils are doing and use this information well when planning work. Good support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities enable these pupils to progress well. Pupils know their individual targets and receive helpful verbal advice in lessons. However, teachers' marking is not consistently good and does not always show pupils the next steps in learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Despite many changes in teaching staff, the headteacher and senior management team ensure that the school continues to improve and pupils make good progress. The school's systems for self-evaluation are good. There is an accurate and shared understanding of the school's strengths and priorities. There is a wealth of information on how well pupils are doing, although this information is not collected together to show, at a glance, any differences in pupils' progress. This makes it more difficult for senior leaders to gain a quick overview of success. The school sets and achieves challenging targets each year.

There are good links with parents and outside agencies and these are successful in supporting the pupils' personal and academic development. Whilst most parents are very positive about the school, some feel that there are too many requests for voluntary contributions. The school acknowledges that this is particularly true in the run up to Christmas.

Governance is good. Enthusiastic governors carry out their responsibilities thoroughly and monitor the school's work carefully, enabling them to provide a good level of challenge. Resources are utilised well to improve provision and standards.

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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?	2
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 effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
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	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
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

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
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

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?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	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	2
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

13 December 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Dunchurch Infant School, Rugby CV22 6PA

Thank you for welcoming us to your good school and for sharing your work with us.

Here are some points about your school.

- ?
- You make good progress, but you could write better descriptions and reports. ?
- You are polite and friendly and take responsibility well. ?
- Teaching is good and members of staff make learning interesting. ?
- You study a good range of things and are good at using the computers. ?
- All adults in school are kind and caring and they look after you well. ?
- Your headteacher, other teachers and governors are working hard to make your school even better. ?
- Your parents and carers are pleased that you enjoy coming to this school.

What we have asked your school to do now.

- ?
- Help you to write better descriptions and reports. ?
- Make it easier to check quickly that you are all doing well.

What you can do to help your teachers.

- ?
- Listen to your teachers and each other more carefully during whole class discussions.

We thoroughly enjoyed talking with you about your work and hope that all the Christmas plays went well. We are glad that you enjoy coming to this friendly school and wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Alison Cartlidge Lead inspector

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