

Deanwood Primary Education Technology School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131391
Local Authority	Medway
Inspection number	315798
Inspection dates	30 April –1 May 2008
Reporting inspector	Joan Greenfield

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	174
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Vacant Position
Headteacher	Robin Halls
Date of previous school inspection	22 September 2003
School address	Long Catlis Road Parkwood Gillingham ME8 9TX
Telephone number	01634 231901
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Deanwood is smaller than the average primary school. Numbers on roll have declined over the past few years but are becoming more stable. The school has a higher proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities than most schools. Most pupils are White British. A small number are from a range of minority ethnic heritages, although none is at an early stage of speaking English. The school is an extended school, providing wraparound care from 08.00 to 18.00 through a breakfast club and an after-school club. An inspection of this extended care in January 2008 judged the provision to be good.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Deanwood provides pupils with a satisfactory standard of education. It has several good features, including effective care and support, which help pupils develop good personal qualities. Most parents are positive about the school's work, noting its 'open-door' approach and commenting favourably on how well staff know their children. Typical comments include: 'It is a lovely school – it has a community feel about it'; 'every effort is made to ensure children are happy'; and that the school 'is moving from strength to strength'.

Pupils clearly enjoy coming to school. They have a good understanding of how to keep safe and lead healthy lifestyles, and they contribute well to their school and local community. Pupils are prepared satisfactorily for their future lives. Most pupils behave well but a small number, several of whom have specific needs, do not settle to work as effectively as other pupils. As a result, behaviour, although satisfactory, is not quite as strong as other aspects of their personal development. The school has effective strategies to ensure good behaviour but they are not applied consistently by all staff.

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and standards are broadly average. Standards are better in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 than in Key Stage 2, where the quality of teaching, although satisfactory, is variable. Good teaching in Reception and in Key Stage 1 is accelerating progress so that it is now good. The school has successfully tackled weaknesses in English and mathematics at Key Stage 1 and the school's assessment information shows that standards are set to rise substantially this year. This improvement is not yet evident in all Key Stage 2 classes because of inconsistencies in setting out expectations, managing pupils' behaviour and in the marking of pupils' work. Nevertheless, in other classes, good teaching enables pupils to make rapid progress. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive carefully focused support and make good progress.

The curriculum meets pupils' needs satisfactorily and is enriched by a good range of visits, visitors and extra-curricular activities. Staff monitor pupils' progress rigorously. However, the targets set for groups of pupils in a class, although helpful, are not specific or challenging enough to ensure individual pupils make better than expected progress.

Under the effective and determined leadership of the headteacher, the school is steadily improving and shows signs of becoming a better school than it currently is, as there is a clear focus on raising standards further. The strengthening of the leadership team, together with robust systems for checking the school's work, are providing an effective platform for accelerating the school's progress. Improvements are clearly evident in the good provision for children in the Foundation Stage and when they transfer into Year 1, as well as in one of the Year 4/5 mixed-age classes.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children make a good start in the Reception class. On entry, their skills and experiences are typical for their ages. A broad and exciting range of experiences, together with the careful tracking of their progress, ensures children do well in most areas of learning. By Year 1, nearly all are working securely within the goals expected of children of this age. Their attitudes to learning and the way they relate to one another and to adults are particularly strong. Their writing skills are slightly weaker than other elements but the emphasis placed this year on

helping them to link sounds and letters is giving them a good foundation for reading and subsequent writing. The good teaching actively engages children in their learning. Leadership of the Foundation Stage is good, with effective use made of the teaching assistant to support and assess learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise achievement, especially in Years 3 to 6, by having higher expectations of what pupils are capable of attaining.
- Improve the consistency of teaching, particularly in managing some pupils' behaviour and in the marking of their work.
- Set individual pupils more specific and challenging targets to help them make faster progress.

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

Children in the Reception class make good progress from their starting points and nearly all are working well within the goals expected for their age by Year 1. Pupils are building effectively on this good progress during Years 1 and 2. Pupils in Year 2 are on course to do better than the school's performance in the national tests last year, when the results were below average, having dipped from the above average results in the previous two years. The school's results for 2008 are expected to rise considerably, especially in the proportion attaining the higher Level 3.

The Year 6 test results in 2007 were broadly average, a significant improvement over those in 2006. Current standards are below average in Year 6, reflecting the ability of the cohort, the range of difficulties that some of them have and disruptions to their learning in previous years. However, they are making satisfactory progress. In other year groups, standards are broadly average. Although improving, handwriting and the presentation of work remain relatively weak as teachers' expectations are inconsistent. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because their needs are carefully identified and effective support is provided.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The calm ethos within the school provides a secure environment in which pupils can develop and flourish. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils clearly enjoy school, as reflected in their good attendance. Almost all are friendly, polite, respectful to adults and welcoming to visitors. They feel safe in the school and know that the occasional incidents of inappropriate behaviour are dealt with swiftly by staff. Behaviour is satisfactory, with most pupils responding well to the school's expectations. A few pupils find it difficult to settle down to work in class, especially when there is a change of teacher or the teacher's expectations are unclear.

Pupils make sensible choices about diet and have a good understanding of the importance of regular exercise, with many participating regularly in the wide range of after-school clubs. This is recognised by the Healthy Schools award. Through participation in the student council and

undertaking a wide range of responsibilities, pupils make a good contribution to the school and wider community. Pupils' good personal qualities and sound basic skills ensure that they are prepared satisfactorily for their future lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Pupils' progress remains satisfactory because the quality of teaching throughout the school varies too much, ranging from a small amount that is unsatisfactory in Years 3 to 6 to much that is good and sometimes outstanding. Relationships are positive, and teachers and teaching assistants work closely together to ensure a consistent approach. Teachers share the lesson's focus with pupils, but some of the objectives are not sharp enough. The most effective learning takes place when teachers check and reinforce pupils' understanding on a regular basis throughout the lesson. This was done particularly well in a Year 1 class. Weekly planning is satisfactory but does not show clearly how pupils are to be challenged in individual lessons. As a result, the pace of some lessons remains rather pedestrian and does not always hold the pupils' interest and attention. Many pupils say that they are capable of doing much harder work than they do currently. In a few lessons, learning is less effective because some pupils' distracting behaviour is not tackled effectively enough to settle them quickly back to work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum engages pupils positively in their learning by teaching basic skills such as literacy and numeracy through different subjects and themes. This practical approach, with a mixture of discrete lessons and themed topics, suits the needs and aptitudes of the pupils and supports their personal development well. The guided play in Reception is particularly successful, as is the provision for pupils who require additional support. Following a review of the curriculum, the school is strengthening the existing framework to improve the balance across all curricular areas. The need to have mixed-age classes on occasions, because of the variation in the number of pupils in a year group, constrains curricular planning. Pupils are able to participate in a wide range of extra-curricular, especially sporting, activities, which contribute to their healthy lifestyles. A good range of visitors to the school and visits enrich the curriculum and pupils' experiences well.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Parents are right in their view that the school takes good care of pupils. Safeguarding and health and safety arrangements are rigorous. Vulnerable pupils and those with learning and other difficulties receive carefully targeted support, which enables them to settle into school well. The school is particularly effective at using outside agencies, such as the behaviour support team and youth service outreach workers, to support individual pupils. Links with the pre-school on site and with secondary schools ensure that points of transfer are smooth.

The arrangements to track pupils' progress are thorough. The school sets targets for groups of pupils in literacy and numeracy but these targets are not specific enough to challenge individual pupils and encourage them to make faster progress. The most effective marking, seen for example in one Year 4/5 class, gives pupils clear guidance on how well they are doing

and what they need to do to improve their work. Elsewhere, whilst supportive, marking is not always specific enough to guide pupils' next steps in learning to help them make faster progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher provides clear vision and direction for the school's development and has remained resolute in the face of some challenging circumstances, including several staff changes and absences. As a result, the school is improving steadily and accelerating the drive to raise standards through setting itself more challenging targets. The appointment of a new deputy headteacher, and a refocused senior leadership team, which is working more effectively together, is increasing the rate of improvement, seen particularly in the Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1 but not yet so evident in Years 3 to 6 because of staffing changes. Some senior leaders are still developing their roles. The good range of procedures used to check aspects of its work, including teaching and learning and pupils' progress, means that staff and governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for further development. The governing body provides a good balance between encouragement and challenge to the leadership team. The school's improvement plan sets out clearly the school's priorities. Many of the initiatives, which are correctly focused, have begun to have a good impact, especially on the provision for the younger pupils. However, they have not been in place long enough for their full effect to be felt right through the school. The school's capacity to improve further is good.

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

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ 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	2
The behaviour of learners	3
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?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

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?	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 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	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

2 May 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Deanwood Primary Education Technology School, Gillingham, ME8 9TX

Thank you for being so friendly and welcoming when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed our discussions with members of the school council as well as looking at your work in lessons and in your books. This letter is to tell you what we found out about the school.

We think that you receive a satisfactory education at Deanwood. There are clear signs that it is getting better. The school helps you to develop as friendly, helpful and well-rounded young people because the staff look after you well and give you the right kind of support, especially if you have any problems or difficulties. You have a good understanding of how to keep safe and healthy and you make a good contribution to the school and local community. Most of you behave well in lessons and around the school but at times a small number of you do not behave as well as you should or concentrate hard enough in lessons.

Most of you are making satisfactory progress in your learning and reaching broadly average standards. Children in the Reception class and in Years 1 and 2 are making faster progress than those of you in Years 3 to 6. This is because the teaching lower down the school challenges you more and helps you to learn at a faster rate. Some of you in Years 3 to 6 said that you are capable of doing harder work and we agree with you! Adults who run the school know what needs to be done to improve the school further and they are making sure that the right steps are taken to do this. We have asked the staff to do three things to make the school even better than it is.

- Ensure that teachers expect more from you, especially those of you in Years 3 to 6, so that you make faster progress than you currently do.
- Improve the consistency of teaching and ensure that teachers manage behaviour more effectively and that their marking gives you more help on how you can improve your work.
- Set you more specific and challenging targets to help you make faster progress.

We hope that you will all do your very best to continue to work hard and support your school.

Yours sincerely

Mrs J Greenfield Lead inspector

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Lead inspector