

Delves Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104170
Local Authority	Walsall
Inspection number	323981
Inspection dates	6–7 July 2009
Reporting inspector	Derek Watts

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	349
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mark Pulford
Headteacher	Victoria Russell
Date of previous school inspection	22 March 2006
School address	Bell Lane Delves Walsall WS5 4PU
Telephone number	01922 721112
Fax number	01922 722938

Age group	7–11
Inspection dates	6–7 July 2009
Inspection number	323981

© Crown copyright 2009

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

Delves is a large junior school. About half of the pupil population are from a White British background. Other pupils are from a range of ethnic backgrounds, with Indian being the next largest group. About a third of the pupils speak English as an additional language but none of these is at an early stage of learning English. An above average proportion of pupils are eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. These difficulties lie mainly in the areas of moderate learning, language, speech and communication. The school has experienced a number of staffing changes in recent years but the teaching force is now more settled.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Delves Junior is a satisfactory school. There are good features to its work. Strong pastoral care and a very positive school climate contribute well to pupils' good personal development and well-being. Community cohesion is promoted well and good partnerships with parents have been established. Teaching and the curriculum are satisfactory, as is pupils' achievement.

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. There are clear strengths in this area. The headteacher, with her staff, has created a very positive atmosphere for pupils to learn in. Care and pupils' personal development and well-being are promoted well. The impact of leadership and management on teaching and on pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Staffing changes have been managed well in recent years but these have led to some inconsistencies in provision. Self-evaluation is satisfactory, as is the school's capacity to improve. The school knows its strengths and has identified key areas for improvement. Some key leaders are new to their roles and there are clear plans to develop their monitoring skills. Recently, there have been clear improvements to assessment and writing.

Parents hold very positive views about the school and give it their support. The vast majority are really pleased with the care and education provided for their children. The positive ethos, approachability of staff, the care provided and additional activities receive particular praise. Typical parental comments from the questionnaires were, 'Staff are kind and caring towards parents and children', 'Staff are friendly and approachable', 'Varied extra-curricular activities' and, 'My child is very happy and settled.'

Pupils' personal development and well-being are real strengths. Pupils thoroughly enjoy school and this is reflected by their keen participation in activities. The school works hard to promote attendance, which is at average levels. Pupils are courteous and friendly and relate extremely well to others. Behaviour is outstanding in lessons and around the school. Pupils adopt healthy lifestyles and safe practices and show a first-rate understanding of healthy diets and the importance of regular exercise. They make good contributions to the school and to the wider community.

Most year groups enter the school with broadly average attainment. Standards by the end of Year 6 are usually average. The school has taken positive action to improve pupils' performance in writing. As a result, more pupils are attaining the higher than average Level 5. However, the school does not have a coherent approach to handwriting and presentation. As a result, pupils' presentation varies in quality. Provisional test results for 2009 indicate a dip in mathematics standards. The school is increasing opportunities for problem-solving work but there is scope to extend this approach further.

Teachers establish very good relationships with their pupils and manage them well. Lessons have a clear purpose. Explanations, instructions and questioning promote learning effectively. Tasks are not always sufficiently well matched to pupils' abilities and needs. Over-directed work can impede pupils' ability to work independently. Pupils are set learning targets in writing and mathematics so they know what to do to improve. These are sharper and more established in writing than in mathematics. The curriculum is enriched by a good range of additional activities, including clubs and visits.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise achievement and standards in mathematics by providing more investigative work and sharpening pupils' individual learning targets.
- Improve the consistency of teaching by ensuring that tasks are always well matched to pupils' abilities and provide opportunities for pupils to work independently.
- In the drive to improve writing, implement a consistent approach to handwriting and presentation. 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 achieve satisfactorily from their starting points on entry to the school. By the end of Year 6, standards are usually broadly average in English, mathematics and science. The school has rightly focused its attention on raising achievement in writing. Pupils write in a variety of styles and for different purposes. They are also applying and developing writing skills in other topics. For example, pupils in Year 3 produced clear written accounts of the Great Fire of London. In Year 5, pupils wrote interesting and informative accounts about the working lives of Victorian children. Provisional national test results for Year 6 in 2009 indicate that standards have dipped in mathematics. The school has rightly identified the need to increase opportunities to use and apply mathematics and problem solving to improve pupils' performance. Work in this area is developing well but the school recognises that investigative work could be extended by using a wider range of resources. In science, more emphasis is being placed on experimental and investigative work. This is having a positive impact on pupils' achievement. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make sound progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are enthusiastic and have positive attitudes to learning. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They show considerable consideration and respect for others. They value different cultures and beliefs. High expectations by staff, excellent relationships and a good system of rewards lead to outstanding pupil behaviour. Pupils adopt healthy lifestyles and participate in a range of physical exercise and show an extremely good knowledge and understanding of healthy diets. Those on the school council represent their fellow pupils well and have contributed to improvements to the playground equipment and facilities. Pupils make a good contribution to the wider community by raising funds for national and global charities. At Delves Junior, pupils are adequately prepared for the next stage of their education. They make sound progress in literacy and numeracy. Their personal and social skills are well developed.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teachers share the purpose of the lesson with the class so pupils know what they are expected to learn. Pupils are attentive and respond positively to teachers' clear and informative demonstrations and explanations. Questioning is used well to check pupils' knowledge and

understanding of new work. When assessment is used effectively, activities and tasks are well tailored to pupils' abilities and needs. However, assessment is not consistent and so tasks are not always suited to pupils' needs. Opportunities for pupils to plan and work independently are occasionally missed because the activities are too adult directed. Worksheets are not always sufficiently challenging and these can impede pupils' ability to plan and organise their own work. Teaching assistants are well deployed and make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning, particularly for those who need additional support with literacy and numeracy.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is promoting satisfactory academic progress for pupils. It makes a good contribution to their personal development and well-being. Provision for English, mathematics and science is satisfactory. The school has made good progress in improving provision for writing. However, there is not a clear policy and consistent approach to the teaching of handwriting. The school is developing links between subjects. These add meaning and relevance to pupils' learning. Themed events such as Roman Day, World Book Day and Science Day are popular and successful. The school offers a good range of additional activities, including clubs and visits. These are much enjoyed by pupils. Popular clubs include athletics, cricket, football, dance, netball, origami and percussion instruments. A Year 6 residential visit provides exciting outdoor activities and develops team-building skills. Health and safety education is promoted very effectively across the curriculum.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Good pastoral care and the school's very positive atmosphere underpin pupils' good personal development and well-being. Good partnerships have been established with parents and other outside agencies. Procedures to ensure that pupils are protected and safe are effective. Pupils feel well cared for and are confident that there is always a grown-up they can turn to if they are upset or have a problem. As the parents said, 'The school really takes care of our children.' Effective strategies have been devised to monitor and promote pupils' attendance. Academic guidance for pupils is satisfactory and improving. Pupils are set personal learning targets in literacy and numeracy and so they know what they need to do to improve. This target-setting process is sharper and more established in writing than in mathematics.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher and two assistant headteachers have provided stability to the school in times of staffing changes. Strong partnerships with parents and good pastoral care have led to good personal development for pupils. With a more settled staff, senior leaders are keen to improve teaching and raise pupils' achievement from satisfactory to good. Self-evaluation is satisfactory. A range of appropriate approaches are used to monitor the school's performance. However, some key leaders are new to their post and have not yet had the opportunity to monitor teaching. There are insufficient opportunities for teachers to observe others' practice. There are clear plans to address these issues.

Community cohesion is promoted well. The school has a good understanding of the community it serves. There are strong partnerships with its infant and secondary schools. The school has worked hard on extending its partnership with parents and this is having a positive effect on parents' support of their children's learning. Different cultures and religions are promoted well through the school's curriculum.

The governors are supportive and have a clear understanding of the school's performance. They are proud of the school's strengths and are fully aware of the need to improve teaching and pupils' achievement.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	----------------

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

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/or disabilities make progress	3

¹Grade 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

How good are 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	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
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	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of 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

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	3
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	3
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**

8 July 2009

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Delves Junior School, Walsall WS5 4PU

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 found. Yours is a satisfactory school. There are good features.

These are the main strengths of the school.

- You really enjoy school and the activities provided.
- Your school is a friendly and very pleasant place to learn in.
- Behaviour is outstanding in lessons and around the school and you get on well with others.
- A good range of additional activities is provided, including clubs and visits.
- You have a very good understanding of how to keep healthy and fit.
- Staff take good care of you and provide good support.
- You make a positive contribution to the school and wider community.
- The school has good partnerships with parents.

There are three areas the school has been asked to look at and to improve further.

- Some of you could make more progress in mathematics with more problem- solving work and sharper learning targets.
- Teachers should ensure that activities are always well suited to your abilities and give you more chances to work independently.
- A consistent approach to handwriting and presentation would help to improve your written work. Finally, thank you once again for all your help. We wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours faithfully,

Derek Watts

Lead inspector