

Didsbury Road Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106098
Local Authority	Stockport
Inspection number	324330
Inspection dates	22–23 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Sarah Drake

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	452
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr T Walker
Headteacher	Mr T Kendrick
Date of previous school inspection	21 June 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Didsbury Road Heaton Mersey Stockport Cheshire SK4 3HB
Telephone number	0161 4322240
Fax number	0161 4429956

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This school, which is almost twice the size of an average primary school, serves a geographically wide, socially and economically mixed area. The proportion of pupils eligible for a free school meal is well below the national average and the proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. A broadly average proportion of pupils have a statement of special educational need. The proportions that belong to minority ethnic groups and that speak English as an additional language are also average. Few pupils are at an early stage of learning English. The school offers Early Years Foundation Stage education in the part-time Nursery class and two full-time Reception classes. Many children only access either the Nursery or the Reception Early Years provision. The school holds the Healthy Schools award and, since the previous inspection, has gained the Activemark, extended school status and Financial Management in Schools recognition. It is part of the British Council's Connecting Classrooms initiative.

A private after-school club operates on the premises. This was inspected independently and its report is available on the Ofsted website.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good, highly popular, school which has outstanding features. These relate to the provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and to the quality of pupils' personal development. 'My children have visibly changed since being here – more confident, aware of the importance of kind and caring behaviour and have learned lots' is typical of parents' many positive comments.

Pupils achieve well and they consistently reach above average standards in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6. They make good progress in Key Stage 2, but their progress in Key Stage 1 is satisfactory. Standards at the end of Year 2 have been broadly in line with the national average for a number of years, as are children's age-related skills when they join the school. Pupils thoroughly enjoy attending their school. They form excellent relationships with each other and with adults which help to create an extremely happy, supportive environment in which each can thrive as an individual. The strength of pupils' personal development, which has been sustained since the last inspection, demonstrates how central a part this plays in all the school's work. Pupils' excellent understanding of how to keep themselves safe and healthy means that they take sensible decisions, while still having fun in everything they do. Adults actively seek pupils' opinions, for instance, regarding their likes and dislikes about different subjects. Regular newspapers, published by Year 6 pupils, help to keep everyone up-to-date with what is happening. The school operates as a very orderly, harmonious community.

Adults in school know the pupils well as individuals and provide them with the good quality care that helps them to grow in self-esteem. Academic guidance, too, is generally well-tailored to the individual's needs, especially the verbal feedback to pupils. The good curriculum is well-enriched with many popular clubs and visits, including residential trips for pupils from Year 4 upwards. Good quality teaching overall, underpins the good progress that pupils make. All teachers plan lessons carefully and manage their classrooms well. Pupils' excellent behaviour means that lessons run smoothly. However, in small number of lessons throughout school, a lack of pace and precision means that time is not always used to best advantage. The quality of teachers' marking is also inconsistent.

Good quality leadership has successfully guided the school to move forward since the last inspection and provides it with good capacity to improve further. Under the clear direction of the headteacher and deputy headteacher, staff's strong, cheerful teamwork ensures that priorities are tackled together and a sense of momentum is maintained. The school provides its pupils with an enjoyable education which enables them to move into the wider world with confidence, maturity and high self-esteem. It provides good value for money.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children join the school with the skill levels expected for their age. They quickly settle and, during their time in the setting, which is one year in either Nursery or Reception for most children, they make outstanding progress across all areas of learning. This is because staff encourage them to be independent, curious and creative learners. By the end of Reception, although children's personal development and 'all round' skills are above those typical for their age, their communication, particularly writing, skills are closer to expectations. Excellent teaching means that all adults capitalise well on opportunities to engage children in conversation. They

encourage them to think and to make connections between what they already know and new things that they are learning. Teaching assistants readily take the lead when planning exciting experiences for children outdoors. The current pirate theme really fires children's enthusiasm; they build ships, solve puzzles to knock down towers, write messages in bottles, plan routes to find treasure and carefully sieve sand, searching for 'magic' glitter shapes and coins. Inside and outdoors, activities are very well planned to meet children's differing needs. Daily sessions focusing on letters and sounds help to boost early literacy skills, enabling the children to approach reading and writing activities with confidence. Adults' caring approach ensures that happy chatter and warm relationships abound, with high quality support for the more vulnerable or those with additional learning needs. Staff use their close observations and recording of individuals' progress to adjust the planning of activities. Children are fully involved in their own assessments, taking photographs with digital cameras and helping staff to upload the images into letters for parents. Excellent leadership and management mean that the provision is of top quality throughout. Parents are fully involved, well informed and highly supportive, as demonstrated by one's comment, 'Our daughter's academic progress has been phenomenal but, most importantly for us, her confidence has rocketed.'

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and achievement in Key Stage 1.
- Eliminate inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and learning, including the effectiveness of marking.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well over the years that they spend at the school. They mostly join Year 1 with skills above those expected for their age, although their communication skills are closer to those expected. In Key Stage 1, pupils' progress is satisfactory. For the past five years, results in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 have been slightly above average, with a peak in 2007. In 2008, the pupils who speak English as an additional language made very good progress. Current standards are broadly in line with national averages and few pupils are writing at the higher Level 3.

Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 2, due to the generally good and often outstanding teaching, so that standards are usually above average by the end of Year 6. Over three years, results in English and science had been stronger than in mathematics, but the school's effective actions led to a significant rise in this subject in 2008. In that year over half of pupils gained the higher Level 5 in English and in mathematics, and over three quarters did so in science. Current pupils are working at above average levels in all subjects. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language make good progress alongside their peers due to the good quality support that they receive.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development creates a happy, tolerant community where they grow in self-confidence and awareness of others' needs. Pupils are willing to reflect on their own and others' lives, and their behaviour is excellent. They are pleased to take on responsibilities such as library or recycling monitors, playground leaders and school councillors, and even the youngest are keen to have their say on behalf of their peers.

Pupils talk eagerly about the headteacher's recent visit to Lesotho and show a good understanding of how global communities have differences, but also similarities. They are overwhelmingly positive about their school and provide explanations such as, 'Our teachers put lots of enthusiasm into things.' They particularly appreciate the many clubs. Attendance levels are good. Pupils cite regular exercise, drinking lots of water and eating fresh fruit as important aspects of a healthy lifestyle. They understand the need to wear reflective clothing at night and older pupils have a good awareness of cyber bullying and what to do should they become a victim. Pupils participate in local community activities and they are generous fund-raisers. Their self-motivation, positive attitudes to learning and excellent social skills, combined with above average educational standards equip them extremely well to support their future well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching is strongest in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 2. Throughout the school, lessons are well organised and start promptly. Pupils' excellent attitudes and behaviour mean that they take part sensibly in practical activities and engage in well-focused discussion in pairs or small groups. Pupils are good listeners and keen to contribute their knowledge and ideas. Detailed lesson planning takes pupils' differing needs into account, and often provides imaginative activities that spur pupils' interest. Overall, teaching assistants provide valuable support in lessons for those with additional learning needs. Interactive whiteboards are used effectively to confirm the lesson objective, to make notes and to clarify explanations. Teachers make sure pupils know what they are expected to do, generally assess pupils' progress well and many use their good subject knowledge very effectively to guide pupils' thinking so that they extend their understanding. In the small number of lessons that are less effective, the pace can be slow or tasks too easy, so pupils lose concentration. Sometimes insufficient time remains at the end of a lesson for pupils to consolidate their learning. Across the school, marking of pupils' work ranges from a stamp or comment such as 'well done,' to more detailed guidance that points to the next steps for learning. This means that teachers' expectations are not always clear enough and opportunities are missed to help pupils move their learning forward.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The interesting, enriched curriculum enables pupils to achieve well academically. It is exceptionally successful at supporting their personal, social and health education. Pupils from diverse backgrounds have good opportunities to explore their own and different cultures across a wide range of subjects and through whole-school events, such as Cultural Diversity week. Of particular note is the innovative 'rotation' system which effectively supports children's transition from the Early Years Foundation Stage throughout Year 1. Setting arrangements and booster sessions for English and mathematics are helping to raise standards in Key Stage 2. Individually adapted work ensures that pupils who find learning more difficult, whatever the reason, can achieve success. Information and communication technology forms an integral part of lessons across many subjects. French for older pupils, visits, visitors and extra activities all add interest that fosters pupils' enjoyment of learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Parental comments such as, 'Every child is valued and feels part of a special school family,' confirm the good quality care, guidance and support provided for pupils. Staff are interested in pupils as individuals and, consequently, pupils are confident to go to them if they have concerns. The required procedures are in place to ensure child protection, health and safety. Good provision to support those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities or who are at the early stages of learning English ensures that they make progress at a similar rate to their peers. Good procedures help pupils to settle into school and to move between key stages, including in-depth preparation for those moving to secondary school. Pupils are increasingly involved in assessing their own work and, therefore, growing in their understanding of how to improve it. Procedures to track pupils' academic progress have strengthened over recent years but there are inconsistencies across the school in the use of targets for pupils to aspire to.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher and deputy headteacher work together as a well-established and effective team that provides clear direction and is responsive to change. The leadership has made good progress since the last inspection in the analysis and use of the information that it holds about pupils' progress, but is fully aware that there is still room for further fine-tuning here. Leaders at all levels now play a much stronger part and accept accountability for their areas of responsibility. Regular meetings of staff teams within the school ensure that all are involved in evaluating their areas of responsibility, identifying priorities and contributing to whole-school development. Governors are well informed about the school through both the headteacher's detailed reports and their own visits. While providing good quality support, they are also prepared to hold the school to rigorous account, particularly in relation to pupils' achievement. Resources are used to good effect. Efficient financial and day-to-day management means that this large school runs smoothly. The school promotes community cohesion well within its own walls, the wider neighbourhood and, particularly, through its strong links with schools in Uganda and Lesotho. The great majority of parents are highly supportive of the school and their children's education, and generous in raising funds that enhance the curriculum. They appreciate that, 'the school team's real commitment to ensuring children are happy and well educated,' ensures equality of opportunity and underpins the atmosphere of harmony and content that pervades the school.

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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?	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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

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/or disabilities make progress	2

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?	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
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
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 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

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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Inspection of Didsbury Road Primary School, Stockport, SK4 3HB

Thank you very much for your friendliness and welcome to the team when we recently came to inspect your school. We all enjoyed our visit and are grateful to all of you who helped us to understand what it is like to be a pupil there.

Yours is a good school which helps children in the Early Years Foundation Stage to get an exceptionally good start to their education. Its other greatest strength is the way that all staff work together so well to encourage you all to mature into self-confident, sensible young people who really enjoy learning. Your behaviour is excellent. You have a very good understanding of how to stay safe and healthy. You are keen to take on responsibilities and you carry them out well. You make good progress in your learning and reach above average standards by the end of Year 6. This is because most lessons are interesting and your teachers give you good quality personal and academic support. You are very well prepared to move on to secondary school.

Your headteacher, governors and senior teachers have good ideas about how the school could improve – and I know that they seek your advice, too, about this. We have identified two things that we think will help.

First, we have asked the school leaders to make sure that pupils in Years 1 and 2 make similar good progress in their learning to pupils in other parts of the school.

Second, we would like the leaders to make sure that pupils throughout the school enjoy consistently good quality teaching and that, when teachers mark your work, they give you clearer advice about how to improve it.

I hope that you all continue to enjoy learning and to play a really responsible part in the community as you do now. And remember to leave plenty of time for fun too!