

Dane Bank Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106217
Local Authority	Tameside
Inspection number	324351
Inspection dates	9–10 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Stephen Rowland

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)	219
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	23
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr G Beckingham
Headteacher	Mr M Cruden
Date of previous school inspection	14 June 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Thornley Lane South Reddish Stockport Cheshire SK5 6QG
Telephone number	0161 336 5896
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Dane Bank Primary School is an average-sized school on the boundary of Tameside and Stockport. The proportion of children and pupils eligible for free school meals is just below the national average. Most pupils are of White British heritage and very few have English as an additional language. The proportion of children and pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational needs, is average. Since the last inspection a new deputy headteacher has been appointed. The school has the Silver Eco Schools award.

There is privately managed extended childcare provision on the school premises, which was inspected separately and will receive a separate written report.

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 and improving school. After a period of reorganisation, the school's leadership has now established a strong sense of purpose and direction. This is having a positive impact on the work of the school so that standards and achievement are improving and good quality care and support have been maintained. Pupils speak very positively about their school and demonstrate a strong sense of loyalty. Parental comments on the school are overwhelmingly positive. For example one parent wrote, 'I would definitely recommend Dane Bank to any future parent.'

Children start in the Nursery with skills which are generally below those expected for their age. They make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage due to the good quality of teaching. Pupils continue to make good progress in Key Stages 1 and 2 and standards of attainment have improved steadily in both Key Stages. Standards are broadly average at the end of Year 6 and are rising, with provisional national test results for 2008 showing a strong improvement on the previous year. The school's rigorous internal tracking of pupils' progress indicates that this process of improvement is continuing and achievement is good overall. However, some more able pupils, although challenging targets are set for them, do not always meet these and hence do not achieve as well as they can. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are provided for well. As a result, they achieve well due to the quality of support they receive from their teachers and teaching assistants.

The quality of teaching is good overall with some examples of outstanding practice. Lessons are generally well planned with a variety of activities which promote good learning. Pupils enjoy their work and are fully engaged in what they are doing so that they make good progress. In some lessons, however, although learning is good overall, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to work in small groups or in pairs. As a result, independent learning skills are not developed effectively.

The behaviour of pupils is good. The school is safe and secure and pupils act in a considerate and respectful way to each other and to adults. They are very aware of how important it is to help others and, during the week of the inspection, were looking forward to their Red Nose Day activities. There are a number of active links with local and national charities. The school council provides a means for pupils' views to be communicated and allows them to play a part in the management of the school.

Pupils' learning benefits from a good curriculum and the many interesting activities which take place outside of normal lesson time. There are numerous sporting and exercise activities, an annual school production, which involves virtually all staff and pupils, and an active link with a school in Montigny-le-Bretonneux, Denton's twin town in France.

The school's effective leadership has enabled the staff to develop a shared understanding of good teaching and this has led to improvements in pupils' progress. A committed and knowledgeable governing body supports the school well. The sustained improvements in provision and standards since the last inspection show that the school has a good capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The quality of education provided for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good and improving. Children join the Nursery class with skills generally below those expected of their age, especially in communication, language and literacy. They make good progress overall. Most are working securely within the early learning goals expected for children of this age by the time they leave Reception but few are achieving higher levels than this. In recent years, girls have outperformed boys. Rigorous tracking of children's progress has enabled leaders and managers to pinpoint the causes of this and tackle them. Inspection evidence shows that, as a result, the attainment gap is closing rapidly. Children settle quickly into school routines, feel safe, grow in confidence and behave well. They show enjoyment in their learning because of good teaching and an exciting range of activities that take place in stimulating and nurturing surroundings. Children work well together. They learn to share equipment and move smoothly and safely from one activity to the next. A good balance is maintained between teaching children new skills and encouraging them to explore and learn independently within all areas of learning. Outdoor provision is used well to extend their learning. The leader of the Early Years Foundation Stage provides good leadership and management. Good levels of teamwork are securing continuing improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Meet the challenging targets set for more able pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2.
- Give pupils more opportunities to develop their skills as independent learners.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good overall. Pupils build well on the good start made in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They make good progress overall across Key Stages 1 and 2, although more able pupils do not always achieve as well as they should. This is because, in some lessons, they are not sufficiently challenged. Pupils in Key Stage 1 make good progress overall in their lessons, particularly in Year 2. This story continues in Key Stage 2 and, by the time pupils finish Year 6, standards are broadly average and improving. Performance is particularly strong for average and lower attaining pupils. In 2008, the school met the challenging targets it set for pupils to reach the nationally expected levels in the Key Stage 2 national tests and results in all subjects improved significantly on those achieved in 2007. Evidence relating to pupils currently on roll shows that this improvement is being maintained. It is due to the impact of purposeful leadership and management at all levels which is enabling teachers to track the progress of individual pupils and to take effective action to support them. The school has also worked hard to share good practice so that the quality of teaching and learning has steadily improved. However, targets for more able pupils were not met in 2008 and these pupils are not yet achieving their full potential. The school recognises this issue and is tackling it rigorously. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress, helped by good use of teaching assistants in lessons.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils enjoy school. One typical comment was: 'We'll all miss it when we go to secondary school, especially the teachers!' Attendance is now above average and improving due to the hard work put into ensuring that everyone understands the importance of getting to school every day. Pupils have a good understanding of right and wrong. Behaviour in classrooms and around the school is good. This demonstrates pupils' good moral and social development. They are also made aware of other cultures through assemblies and numerous links with outside bodies. This enables pupils to develop awareness of and respect for cultural diversity. It also provides for their spiritual development. Pupils feel safe in school and affirm that they are always able to find trusted adults to help them with any problems or concerns. They are aware of how to act safely. This is developed through visits to the school by the fire brigade and road safety officers. Pupils adopt healthy lifestyles through participating in the wide range of sporting and exercise activities available for them. The cheerleaders group is particularly popular. Most pupils choose from the range of healthy food options offered to them. Pupils are keen to take on roles and responsibilities such as play ground leaders and buddies, which help to develop the skills they will need in adult life. The school council and eco council are active and contribute well to the management of the school. The skills developed through these activities along with their good literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills, prepare pupils well for their future education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Good planning and varied and challenging activities mean that most pupils are engaged in their lessons and make good progress. Teaching and learning are good with some examples of outstanding practice. The pace of lessons is brisk and pupils are mostly presented with challenging and purposeful tasks. For example, in a Year 1 science lesson about plants, some pupils were given the opportunity to plant their own seeds whereas others constructed plants using construction materials. The school is well equipped with interactive whiteboards and these are used to enhance the quality of pupils' learning. In most lessons there is a good mix of class-based activities and individual or group work. However, in a few lessons teachers spend too much time on lengthy explanations and direction so that opportunities for pupils to extend their independent learning skills are limited. Questioning is good, although occasionally more able pupils are not sufficiently extended through the use of varied and challenging questions. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are supported well through the skilful use of teaching assistants and other adult helpers such as trainee teachers. Marking and other feedback is generally detailed and helpful and allows pupils to understand what they need to do to make progress. Pupils have a very good understanding of the targets set for them and value the help given to them to achieve these.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is broad and balanced and generally meets the needs of learners. However, opportunities for pupils to develop as independent learners are not routinely exploited. Links

between subjects are now well established in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 so that pupils are offered an interesting and engaging curriculum, which develops a sense of enjoyment of learning. This process is also developing in Key Stage 2 so that pupils are learning to see the links between different areas of knowledge. The school's concentration on developing literacy, numeracy and ICT skills prepares pupils well for the next steps in their education. The curriculum supports the personal development and well-being of pupils successfully. Pupils appreciate the personal, social and health education and social and emotional aspects of learning programmes and develop a good understanding of healthy and safe lifestyles. There is a very rich range of enrichment and extra-curricular activities and take up rates are high. The school's steel band entertains parents and pupils as well as going on tour in the local area. There are a numerous educational visits. Links with the French partner school are particularly strong with many pupils having a French pen pal. Enrichment activities make a significant contribution to pupils' enjoyment of school as well as broadening their horizons.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Health and safety policies and procedures are in place and safeguarding procedures meet current government requirements. This includes checks on adults employed at the school to work with pupils. The learning mentor gives valuable support to an increasing number of pupils with emotional problems and their parents/carers, allowing these pupils to take full advantage of their education. Support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good. Transition arrangements in the Early Years Foundation Stage ensure children settle quickly into school life. Effective links have been established with local secondary schools to ease the transition of pupils during Year 6. There are strong links with outside agencies such as the educational welfare officer, psychiatric service and the school nurse. These links enable the school to effectively meet the needs of a variety of different pupils, particularly those facing barriers to their progress. Support for pupils' academic development is good. Progress is accurately tracked and discussed regularly with staff and pupils. As a result, pupils know what is expected of them and what they need to do to reach their targets. Marking is regular and thorough. Teachers' comments in books are helpful in showing pupils what they need to do to improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher, supported by the deputy headteacher and other senior leaders, has set a clear direction for the school and has secured improvements in pupils' progress and personal development. This team works very effectively together and is fully supported by the rest of the staff. All members of staff have a clear understanding of what the school is aiming for and how its objectives can be achieved. Much has been achieved since the last inspection, although these are early days since the reorganisation so that the full impact of the changes has yet to be realised. Planning is based on thorough and honest self-evaluation, which includes monitoring of teaching and learning, so that the school has a good knowledge of itself and how to improve further. All pupils are valued equally and effective measures have been taken to ensure that discrimination is eliminated. Policies have been implemented to ensure that community cohesion is promoted. However, although evaluation of these policies has taken place, the school's leaders have identified that their impact is not yet consistent. The governing body has a good

knowledge of the school and its members are able to provide support and challenge when appropriate. The school's finances are managed well and resources and staffing are deployed effectively. This, along with the improving picture of pupils' progress, demonstrates good value for money.

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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?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
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?	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
The extent to which 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 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?	3
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**

Thank you for making us so welcome at your school. We greatly enjoyed our visit to you. We were very impressed with your excellent manners and how polite and helpful you were. We judged Dane Bank to be a good and improving school. Some of the things we thought to be good were:

- most of you make good progress in your learning because of good teaching
- you behave well
- everyone in the school looks after you well
- the good variety and clubs and activities you take part in such as the steel band and your partnership with the school in France
- your enthusiasm for looking after the environment through the Eco Council
- your understanding of your targets and how you work hard to achieve them.

We asked your school to do two things to make it even better. These are:

- to make sure that the most able pupils are always given work to help them to learn as much as they can
- to make sure that you all have opportunities to work independently so that you know how to learn without the teacher always having to work with you.

By working hard, behaving properly and by getting into school every day you can help your teachers to make Dane Bank an even better school.