

Dorney School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110220
Local Authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	325111
Inspection date	23 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Keith Sadler

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	197
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 Alan Fleming
Headteacher	Miss Paula Allen
Date of previous school inspection	24 April 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Harcourt Close Dorney Reach Maidenhead SL6 0DY
Telephone number	01628 620 871
Fax number	01628 782 073

Age group	4–11
Inspection date	23 March 2009
Inspection number	325111

© 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 two Additional Inspectors who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school. In addition, the following issues were investigated.

- Are the current Year 5 and 6 pupils on course to meet their targets and achieve well?
- Is the quality of teaching and learning sufficiently improved to lead to outstanding progress in Key Stage 2?
- How well do teachers with responsibilities contribute to the school's monitoring and evaluation processes?

Evidence was gathered from the school's analysis of pupils' progress, a scrutiny of samples of their work and observations of pupils in lessons. Discussions were held with staff, governors and pupils. In addition, the responses of 41 parents' questionnaires were analysed and their comments taken into account. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Dorney is an average sized primary school that is heavily oversubscribed. About one-fifth of the pupils come from the village, with most coming from outlying areas and neighbouring local authorities. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in the Reception class.

A large majority of pupils are of White British heritage and the proportion of pupils from other minority ethnic backgrounds, though much smaller than average, is increasing. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is average. Most of these have speech, language and communication difficulties. There is an after-school club which is managed by the school governing body. The school has gained a number of awards including the Healthy Schools award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Dorney is a good school. It has many outstanding features and is on an upward trend. Pastoral care and support are exemplary and, together with the highly supportive and harmonious atmosphere, enable pupils to thrive and develop into well-rounded, confident and thoughtful young people. Pupils make good progress and achieve well and their personal development is excellent. Behaviour is outstanding, attitudes to learning are highly positive and pupils have a deep understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle. This is reflected in the Healthy Schools award which pupils mention with pride. Pupils say that they feel safe in school and that relationships are excellent. As a school councillor said, 'We all look after each other in our school and we love to learn.' There is a strong sense of community cohesion, with excellent partnerships between the school, parents and other schools in the vicinity, particularly the local grammar schools which provide some specialist teaching. Pupils' horizons are broadening, and their understanding of the world is being enriched, by the school's twinning with a school for deaf pupils in Sri Lanka and by having 'email pals' with a school in Cornwall. Many parents commented on the school's responsiveness to community development which has led to a range of extended school services including parenting workshops and an effective after-school club. Parents are unanimous in their support for all aspects of the school and many express their delight at their children's all-round development.

In the previous inspection, the headteacher was seen to be providing inspirational leadership with a relentless drive for development. This is still the case and it is a key reason why the school has improved its provision and achievement, particularly at Key Stage 1, since the previous inspection. The quality of teaching and learning is good with some highly effective features. Teachers question pupils well and make excellent use of a wide range of assessments. They ensure that pupils are challenged by the activities provided and that relationships are positive. This results in classrooms having a calm and purposeful atmosphere. The highly effective focus on strengthening pupils' learning is paying dividends. Pupils enjoy taking responsibility for their learning. In consequence, they are clear about lesson objectives, what they have to do to meet them and also how this learning helps them to move towards meeting their individual targets. This was evident in an outstanding Year 6 lesson in which the teachers role-played scenarios relating to mathematical probability. They asked the pupils, working in pairs, to identify what the lesson objectives could be and what would enable the lesson to be successful. This captured the pupils' interest and imagination and they were able to determine a full range of objectives for the lesson, and unit of work, and to identify the things they would need to learn in order to make the lesson successful. However, there are some inconsistencies in the quality of teaching at Key Stage 2 and the headteacher is keenly aware of the need to ensure that variations are eliminated.

There have been considerable improvements in the quality of the curriculum since the previous inspection and it is now outstanding. An innovative and extensive programme of units of work has been devised and care has been taken to ensure that subjects are linked. Learning is invariably based on first-hand experience and the themes being studied are made relevant to Dorney pupils and also meet regulations. These developments are complemented by a number of focused learning weeks such as for science, the arts - including visits from artists - mathematics and books. Pupils say that they enjoy these because they delight in learning alongside other pupils. Learning is enlivened by many visitors to the school and also by many trips out of school. In addition, there is an excellent range of extra-curricular activities. These

are very well attended. A number of parents also commented positively on how much they appreciate the after-school club which is also enjoyed by pupils. The school's curricular planning is highly successful, following a thorough review. It centres on developing pupils' learning skills as well as building their knowledge and understanding, and is made progressively more demanding as pupils move through the school. As a result, by the time they reach Year 6, pupils have highly developed life skills as well as good basic skills, which ensure that they are well prepared for their move to secondary education.

Pupils enter the Reception class with skills broadly in line with those typically found. Their good progress ensures that attainment is above expected levels when they enter Year 1. By the time that they reach the end of Year 6, standards are above average. This shows good progress and achievement overall. Pupils make excellent progress in Years 1 and 2 and, as a result, standards are above average in national assessments. In 2008 Year 2 standards were exceptionally high. This is because teaching in these year groups is consistently outstanding. Progress has been variable in Key Stage 2, but is accelerating quickly as provision has strengthened. Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 were exceptionally high in 2006 and, after having dipped to average levels in 2007, provisional test results for 2008 show an improvement to above-average levels in 2008. However, this is not the whole picture because progress is accelerating as the quality of teaching and learning improves and the legacy of some satisfactory achievement in the past is being overcome. As a result, current Year 5 and Year 6 pupils are making rapid progress and are on course to attain high standards. Successful work last year to raise writing standards, particularly for boys, has resulted in clear improvements, as shown by higher results in the Year 6 national tests in 2008. Even so, the school is aware that the number of pupils gaining the higher levels, particularly in mathematics and science, needs to be lifted to the above-average proportion of pupils that achieve them in English.

The school has exemplary and rigorous systems for tracking how well pupils are doing that use a wide variety of assessment methods. This is a major factor in the pupils' strengthening achievement. These data are analysed carefully and result in challenging individual targets. Any pupils who start to fall behind are identified very quickly and the school provides immediate help and support to ensure that progress improves. There is particularly good support for the pupils who have speech, language and communication difficulties and, as a result, they make good progress towards their targets.

Leadership and management are outstanding because provision and progress have been strengthened since the previous inspection. The headteacher continues to provide outstanding leadership and she is supported exceptionally well by staff with responsibilities. Staff know that their opinions are valued, which results in close teamwork and high staff morale. A reorganisation of the coordination of subjects has led to the school taking an innovative team-based approach. This is working very well and includes governors in each of the three teams. These teams take direct responsibility for checking progress and standards in their areas and also for constantly seeking ways to improve. They make an excellent contribution to the highly developed and rigorous self-evaluation procedures. This results in the school having a clear view of itself and enables an accurate and precise programme of improvements to be implemented. Governors understand the school well and give it good support. The many improvements in provision have led to the improving, and potentially outstanding achievement of pupils at the end of Year 6. These, linked to a school-wide determination to develop, demonstrate an outstanding capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The Early Years Foundation Stage is well led and is working successfully to ensure that children get off to a good start in this stage of their education. The outstanding relationships between staff, children and parents contribute much to the children's all-round development and their enjoyment of school. Adults place a very strong emphasis on the needs of children as individuals and the welfare provision is outstanding. As a result of these many strong features, children settle into school quickly and happily, showing an enthusiasm for learning.

Adults assess children's skills and knowledge carefully. This begins early on when they visit children in their many pre-school settings and then by making home visits. Within the Reception class, adults continue to make regular evaluations of children's skills and knowledge to check their progress and plan the next steps of their learning. The combination of good teaching and learning, effective assessments and the provision of interesting learning activities results in children's good achievement, very good behaviour and children who are keen to learn. Adults make learning meaningful and fun both inside and outside the classroom. Children are encouraged to explore things for themselves and to work in a more formal way with adults. There is still room for providing children with more choice when they make their own selections.

When children join the school, their skills and knowledge are similar to those typically found, though their social skills and their ability to count are often of a higher level than expected. Children's good progress leads to higher than average standards in all areas of learning by the end of their Reception year. Children do especially well in learning to read, which reflects the many opportunities for reading and their growing understanding of how to link letters and sounds when they read new words. Role play is regularly planned but the range of resources needs to be developed even further to lift this towards outstanding.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make sure that the exemplary features evident in outstanding lessons are developed in all classes.
- Raise the number of pupils gaining the higher level in mathematics and science at the end of Year 6.

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?	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?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

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?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
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	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	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?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
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**

02 April 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Dorney School, Maidenhead, SL6 0DY

I am writing on behalf of the inspectors to thank you for making us so welcome when we inspected your school. We really enjoyed watching you learn and talking with you about your school. We were particularly impressed to hear about how you met your rowing coach's son, who brought the Olympic gold medal that he had won in Beijing to show you. I hope that you get the chance to watch the Olympic rowers when they come to Dorney in 2012.

We think that yours is a good school and it is getting better! We agree with your parents who wrote to say that all the adults look after you exceptionally well and make sure that you feel safe and secure in school. Your behaviour is excellent, you have a love of school and learning, and you make sure that everyone gets on well together. You make good progress in your learning and reach above-average standards by the time you leave the school. Well done!

Your teachers do a good job. They make sure that lessons are interesting and the activities they give you are exciting and they help you to enjoy your learning. You told us that you particularly enjoy the special weeks such as book, maths, science and art weeks and that your teachers plan these well for you. We enjoyed looking at the art work that you did with your visiting illustrator and also the silk paintings.

Your headteacher is outstanding and she is helped by all the other adults to make sure that your school improves and your progress is speeding up. They are very keen to make sure that your school gets better and better and you can help them by continuing to help each other always and by working hard to meet your targets!

We have asked your headteacher and staff to do two things. They are to make sure that all lessons are as good and exciting as the best ones, and to help more of you to gain level 5 at the end of Year 6, particularly in maths and science.

Thank you once again for making our day so enjoyable.

Yours faithfully

Keith Sadler

Lead Inspector