

Darley Dale Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112591
Local Authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	325640
Inspection dates	3–4 December 2008
Reporting inspector	Mary Hinds

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)	186
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	Mrs Diane Peet
Headteacher	Mr Peter Hughes
Date of previous school inspection	10 January 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Greenaway Lane Hackney Matlock Derbyshire DE4 2QB
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Darley Dale is smaller than most primary schools. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below the national average. Almost all the pupils are from a White British background. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or difficulties, including pupils with a statement of special educational needs is below the national average. Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provision is provided for children in the Reception class. The school has a private nursery on-site that has been inspected separately. The school has gained the Basic Skills Quality award, the Football Association Charter Mark, Healthy Schools, Eco School-Green Flag award and Active Mark.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

It is evident from pupils' good achievement and standards and their excellent personal development that this is a good school. It has a number of outstanding features. The headteacher is the driving force in ensuring that the work of the school is clearly focused on providing the best opportunities for all pupils. Staff are committed to ensuring that all pupils receive exciting learning challenges and a highly creative and interactive curriculum. Expectations and morale are high and there is a very strong team spirit. Parents are very supportive of the school, which is encapsulated in one parent's comment: 'I cannot praise Darley Dale highly enough. It is a safe and caring environment and I am delighted that we have been able to be part of that community'.

Children make a good start in the Reception class. Most achieve and sometimes exceed expectations for their age by the time they enter Year 1. This good achievement continues in Key Stage 1 and standards are consistently well above average in reading and writing and above average in mathematics. Pupils continue to make good progress so that by the time they leave Year 6 their achievement and standards are good. Pupils do particularly well in mathematics and science but their progress in English is less consistent from year to year.

Pupils feel very safe and secure because they are well cared for with good attention to individual needs. Teachers set challenging targets to help pupils improve their work. Although there is some good practice in involving pupils in the setting of learning objectives and assessing their own work, this is not consistently applied in all year groups. The pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are exemplary. They have a very good understanding of how to stay safe and healthy and many participate in a wide range of sports and games at playtime and in after school clubs. The quality of teaching and learning is good and sometimes outstanding. This results in the good progress that pupils make. The curriculum is excellent because it is relevant and exciting, brings learning to life and maintains pupils' enthusiasm and motivation.

Leadership and management are good. The good performance of the school is the direct result of the dedication and commitment of both the headteacher and all the staff. The headteacher is determined to ensure that pupils' achievement and standards are consistently good or better. However, the tracking of pupils' progress is not as effective as it could be. The headteacher has rightly focused on ensuring all pupils develop as outstanding citizens which is very evident in their outstanding behaviour and attitudes to their learning and to the school community. The school provides good value for money. Governors have recently reorganised their committees in order to become even more effective in their role and they provide good support and challenge to the school.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children make a good start in the EYFS because transition and induction arrangements are good. This positive start to their education continues, enabling them to develop into happy, confident and independent learners. The high quality pastoral and academic care ensures that all children make good progress because staff have a very good understanding of early years education and ensure that all individual needs are met. Leadership in the EYFS is good. There are regular assessments, which promote effective learning, and by the end of the Reception class, the majority of children are achieving well and in some cases exceeding the expected

learning goals. Mathematical development is a particular strength where children have real life, challenging problems to solve. The staff have rightly identified that some aspects of writing need to be improved and they have already implemented some focused strategies, which are beginning to make an impact. Learning is very practical and exciting with lots of opportunities for imaginative and cooperative play which really develops language and investigative skills. There are insufficient opportunities for children to use the outside learning area independently. However, there are plans for a purpose built EYFS unit and Key Stage 1 building to resolve this issue.

What the school should do to improve further

- Sharpen procedures for assessing and tracking pupils' progress so that clearer information can be used to inform both staff and pupils on how well pupils are achieving throughout all year groups and in all core subjects.
- Share existing good practice so that all pupils can assess their own work and improve academic guidance to help them identify their next steps in learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children enter the Reception class with a wide range of skills. They make good progress because all adults know the children very well, and provide good levels of challenge. Throughout Key Stage 1 this good progress continues and so by the time pupils reach the end of Key Stage 1 standards are well above average in reading and writing and above average in mathematics. Standards for all groups of learners are above average. This is because there is systematic teaching of key skills in literacy and mathematics and well matched learning activities to meet individual needs.

This good progress is maintained in Key Stage 2 in mathematics and science and, consequently, standards in science have remained well above average for the last five years. The most recent data indicates that more pupils have gained higher levels in mathematics and their achievement has improved. Although pupils make slower progress in English, standards remain above average. The school recognises the need to build on existing good practice in order to have greater accuracy in the assessments of pupils' work so that teachers and pupils know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve still further. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities progress well and they benefit from the effective support and encouragement of teaching assistants.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils are enthusiastic and highly appreciative of what the school offers them. They have a zest for learning and this is shown in their enthusiasm and their mature attitudes. Their good attendance is a reflection of how much pupils really enjoy their education. Behaviour is excellent in lessons and around the school. Pupils are well mannered, respectful of each other and polite to visitors. As a result of the school's excellent curriculum and the good teaching that they receive, pupils have a good understanding of how to keep healthy and safe. The school council makes a very effective contribution to the school and its wider community. Pupils support various charities through a variety of sponsored events. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very strong; the school does much to encourage the pupils to improve their understanding of cultural diversity by twinning with schools whose intake is more culturally

diverse. Many pupils are proud to represent the school in events such as a local arts festival and a variety of sporting activities. The exemplary way that pupils develop their academic life and social skills prepares them very well for the next phase of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching is good. A significant proportion of lessons observed during the inspection were outstanding. Strong features in all lessons are the teachers' enthusiasm, high expectations, interactive learning, and positive relationships. All teachers challenge pupils within a supportive atmosphere that enables pupils to make good progress. Teachers go the extra mile to ensure that learning is fun and exciting. Their planning is effective in meeting the needs of all pupils. In the best lessons, teachers encourage pupils to find out things for themselves, to take risks and to reflect and develop an understanding of what they are learning. Pupils respond with great enthusiasm and concentration and they make good gains in their learning. Teaching assistants, who participate fully in lessons, play a very positive role in boosting good progress, especially for those requiring additional assistance. Although the school has some good examples of pupils assessing their own work, this is not applied consistently in all classes.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is outstanding as it ensures that all pupils are valued and that they succeed. It makes meaningful connections in learning and is creative and responsive to the needs of all pupils. There are excellent opportunities for pupils to develop their basic skills in very practical and enterprising ways. As a consequence, pupils are highly motivated and very aware of how special their curriculum is. One pupil commented 'ours is not an ordinary curriculum, it's special to us because it's got the 'wow' factor'. The school has recently introduced French into the Key Stage 2 curriculum and this adds to pupils' enjoyment and good learning. The curriculum is further enriched by an outstanding range of additional activities which cater very well for the needs of all pupils. The use of information and communication technology skills provides a very strong element to teachers' subject planning and this is further developed by the good use of interactive whiteboards. Residential visits and the twinning of the school with pupils in other environments and social backgrounds increase pupils' knowledge and understanding of different cultures.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Staff provide high quality care and this is a strength of the school. Each pupil feels wholly valued and secure because teachers know them individually and their ideas and views are taken seriously. Their concerns often form part of the school improvement plan; for example, they would like more outside learning opportunities which the school is developing. This contributes to the pupils' outstanding personal development. The school has exemplary links with parents, carers, external agencies and the local community. This ensures that pupils make good progress and that individual pupil needs are clearly understood. Procedures are in place for the safeguarding of pupils and for risk assessments. Health and safety requirements are met. Pupils

who require additional support, whether emotionally or because of a specific learning difficulty, make good progress because staff provide individual programmes which are tailored to their needs. Most children know their targets. However, marking is less effective in indicating to pupils the precise next steps in their learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher is very well supported by the deputy headteacher and the leadership team. They have a good understanding of how well the school is performing and know what they need to do to ensure continual improvement. This is particularly the case in mathematics and science where standards have risen. Improving pupils' writing remains a challenge that the school is working hard to remedy. Although self-evaluation has many strengths and is focused on improving standards and achievement, it is not sufficiently robust in providing accurate data on how well pupils are progressing. The tracking and assessment procedures do not always accurately assess pupils' learning and progress. The school has recognised this and plans to implement a more realistic and accurate assessment and tracking system. The school contributes well to community cohesion through a highly inclusive school ethos. This outstanding commitment to equality creates a sense of value and purpose for everyone. There are very effective and well-established links with the local community and the school now has international links, for example with a French school. The governing body knows the school well and has a good understanding of its strengths and areas for development. Governors monitor and evaluate the work of the school and there are now focused visits shadowing the leadership team. All staff are very dedicated, and given the proven impact of leaders in raising achievement, the school demonstrates a good capacity to improve.

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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?	1
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?	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?	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	1
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**

5 December 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Darley Dale Primary School, Matlock, DE4 2QB

Thank you for your warm welcome and for being so helpful when we inspected your school recently. We thoroughly enjoyed meeting you and all the people who make your school so good, and also seeing what you achieve in school. We were extremely impressed with your very mature attitudes and behaviour. You all obviously get on well together and help one another. You clearly enjoy coming to school and you really benefit from the tremendous support and care you get from all staff and helpers.

You go to a good school, which has many outstanding aspects to celebrate. It is obvious that you are very proud of your school. The headteacher, staff and governors have all worked extremely hard to help you learn and achieve so many different things. The teachers give you challenging targets and they provide you with many exciting activities, which mean you learn and have fun at the same time. Pupils in Class 6 were amazing when they were using laptops to write their own crosswords and the younger children were brilliant detectives using metal detectors to find buried 'treasure'.

Some of you are developing skills in being able to see what is good about your work and what you need to do to improve. We have asked your teachers to make sure all of you do this so you are all able to take even more responsibility for your own learning. To enable you to be even more successful, we have asked the school to be more accurate when they check to see how well you are progressing from the time you begin school to when you leave.

With best wishes for your future

Yours sincerely

Mary Hinds

Lead inspector