

Dove Bank Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120061
Local Authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	327190
Inspection dates	10–11 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Chris Kessell

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 under pilot arrangements; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	91
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs J Crane
Headteacher	Mr R Owen
Date of previous school inspection	14 March 2006
School address	Bagworth Road Nailstone CV13 0QJ
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Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out by one additional inspector. The inspector visited eight lessons, and held meetings with governors, senior staff and groups of pupils. The inspector observed the school's work, and looked at a wide range of school documentation, including school policies, improvement plans and evidence of the monitoring and evaluation including tracking pupils' progress. Seventeen questionnaires returned by parents were also analysed.

The inspector reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the effectiveness of the school's strategies to improve boys' attainment
- key factors for the significant improvement in pupils' attainment in 2008
- important features of pupils' successful learning
- pupils' understanding of the different cultures and beliefs found in modern society.

Information about the school

Dove Bank is smaller than most other primary schools. About two thirds of the pupils come from White British families. The remaining pupils are from Traveller communities. Although the school is situated in Nailstone, it serves two other local villages and two established Traveller sites. Many pupils travel to school by bus. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well above average. A significant number of pupils either leave or join the school during the academic year and this turnover is much higher than most schools experience. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage in Reception are taught alongside pupils in Years 1 and 2. Children's attainment, on entry to the school, varies significantly year-on-year but is generally below the levels expected and many children have weaknesses in their language and communication skills. A few pupils join the school in Years 1 or 2 with no pre-school experience.

Inspection judgements

Grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness

2

Capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Dove Bank is a good school that is popular with both pupils and parents. One parent summed up the views of many by saying, 'The headteacher and staff are friendly, caring and warm.' Pupils from all backgrounds get on exceptionally well with each other. Their outstanding behaviour and their enthusiasm for learning contribute well to the good progress they make in lessons. Pupils talk excitedly about their work and respond well to new challenges. As one Year 1 pupil exclaimed positively, 'We're going to be busy bees today.' The only downside to pupils' work is that exercise books are often untidy, especially pupils' handwriting.

Attendance figures are well below average. The school is conscientious in encouraging better attendance and communicating to parents the link between attending school regularly and good achievement. However, families are not contacted quickly enough when their children are absent. The best achievement is made by those pupils who attend school regularly, and standards are broadly average by the time they leave school. The school is effective at responding to the individual needs of pupils who return after absence. This is the result of the school's good tracking of pupils' progress and the individual support given to pupils.

The school is aware that girls do better than boys in their work. The school has addressed this issue by providing special writing lessons for boys. Inspection evidence shows that in lessons, boys generally make the same progress as the girls and are just as enthusiastic to take part in activities and answer questions. Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They settle into school quickly and become confident and enthusiastic learners. This was exemplified during the inspection when, despite the rain, they were outside gardening and 'writing' about their experiences.

Dove Bank is successful because it is well led by the headteacher who is supported well by all staff. Teamwork between teachers and support staff is a strong feature of every lesson. The school is very successful in developing a welcoming community where the pupils maturely and sensitively accept and appreciate each other's differences. However, pupils' understanding of other cultures, beliefs and religions is more limited. Realistic and challenging targets are set for individual pupils based on a secure analysis of their work and individual circumstances. Staff and governors have a good understanding of what the school does well and what needs to improve. Developments in the provision for information and communication technology (ICT),

improvements in pupils' attainment in writing and more rapid progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage indicate that the school has a good capacity to get even better.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve levels of attendance by contacting parents quickly when their children are absent.
- Encourage pupils to present their work more neatly, particularly their handwriting.
- Develop effective links with other communities so that pupils improve their understanding of other cultures, beliefs and religions.

How good is the overall outcome for individuals and groups of pupils?

2

Good attention is paid to pupils' individual needs. Consequently, pupils are made to feel important so they enjoy learning and make good progress in relation to their different starting points. Pupils' attainment varies significantly year-on-year because rates of absence and pupil turnover vary significantly between different year groups. For example, national test results in 2008 for Year 6 pupils were above average in English, mathematics and science. The vast majority of the pupils who remained in this year group had attended school regularly over a significant period of time and achieved well. Current standards in Year 6 are below average. Pupils from Traveller communities do not achieve the same standards as their classmates. This is directly related to their high levels of absence. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because they are given high quality support. Overall, all pupils work hard and are keen to develop their understanding of different subjects and improve their skills. They talk confidently about their work, whether it is the older pupils talking enthusiastically about the current book they are reading or Year 1 pupils learning specific mathematical vocabulary.

Because they are well looked after, pupils feel safe. This is also the view of parents and carers. Pupils know that if they have any worries or concerns, there is an adult they can turn to. They have a good understanding of road safety, which is particularly important as many of them have to catch buses to and from school. They know how to stay safe when using the internet. Pupils are fully aware of the issues that affect their health, including the importance of a good diet and exercise. They acknowledge that they have plenty of opportunities at school to exercise regularly but admit to eating unhealthily on occasions. Pupils are keen to take on responsibility and are especially effective at raising money for charity. They work well together in groups when requested and interact well with each other and visitors. With good progress in basic skills in English, mathematics and ICT, they are adequately prepared for the next stage of their education and future life.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and their progress	2
How well do pupils achieve and enjoy their learning?	2
To what extent do pupils feel safe?	2
How well do pupils behave?	1
To what extent do pupils adopt healthy lifestyles?	2
To what extent do pupils contribute to the school and wider community?	2
Pupils' attendance	4
How well do pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	3
What is the extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development?	2

The quality of the school's work

Pupils make good progress because the quality of teaching is good. The parent who wrote that 'lessons are exciting and varied' was very accurate. Teaching assistants make a good contribution to pupils' learning by working with groups of pupils or with individuals. Pupils enjoy answering questions although occasionally, teachers do not provide sufficient challenge for higher attaining pupils who can sometimes find questioning easy. Overall, pupils receive good quality feedback about their work and how to improve. All adults interact with pupils effectively and much of the oral feedback provided to pupils is of high quality. Teachers' marking often provides pupils with good advice on how to improve their work, although this practice is not always consistent across the school. Pupils all receive individual learning targets in English and mathematics. As they get older, pupils become more and more confident with these and can explain the work they have to do to move from one National Curriculum level to another. Another good feature of many lessons is the time given to pupils to assess their own understanding of the work they are completing.

The school's curriculum is good. It contributes effectively to their personal development and good progress. There is good provision for literacy, numeracy and ICT. Pupils undertake topics that enable them to cover an appropriate range of subjects. However, the curriculum does not provide pupils with sufficient opportunities to use their local community to develop their understanding of different subjects. Enrichment activities are wide ranging. Pupils are provided with a good number of popular extra-curricular activities and there are regular visits and residential trips. Visitors to school, such as the fire service, contribute successfully to pupils' knowledge of staying safe while a number of sport coaches provide specialist support.

¹ Grades for attainment are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; 4 is low

These are the grades for the quality of provision

High quality teaching and purposeful learning	2
Effective assessment	2
An appropriate curriculum which meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, provision through partnership with other organisations	2
Support, guidance and care	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and staff have high expectations which are communicated in a friendly and supportive manner. There is a strong focus on the pupils doing as well as they can so that they feel that they can succeed. Staff work as a team to monitor, evaluate and reflect on the quality of provision they offer and how well pupils are doing. The quality of teaching and learning is regularly monitored by the headteacher, who provides teachers with good feedback, identifying strengths and areas for development. Pupils' progress towards their learning targets is monitored thoroughly so that if pupils are not on track they can be provided with additional help and support. Strategic planning is effective, although medium- and long-term targets for development are often not sharp enough. Adaptability is a key feature of the school's leadership and management which cascades through all levels of staffing. High pupil turnover and long-term absence often means that classes change regularly. This is managed particularly well, so that pupils from all backgrounds are able to succeed and enjoy schooling.

Governors have a good understanding of the school community and the challenges it faces. They offer good support to the school but are also prepared to challenge staff if necessary. Good emphasis is placed on the pupils' health and safety, and governors carry out regular risk assessments. At the time of the inspection, the school fulfilled safeguarding requirements. Clear systems are in place to review all policies, and governors visit the school regularly to undertake monitoring. Governors contribute to strategic planning and self-evaluation although this is mainly driven by the headteacher. The school regularly seeks the views of parents often through questionnaires. Most recently, parents' views were sought about the school's induction procedures into the Reception class. There are however, vacancies for parents on the governing body.

The school is very successful in ensuring that pupils from significantly different backgrounds get on well with each other. Pupils mix well, and play and work together in a positive and supportive environment that celebrates the differences that exist between them. Currently, the school does not have robust enough strategies to enable pupils to interact with other children beyond the school and local community.

These are the grades for leadership and management

Communicating ambition and driving improvement	2
Promoting equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination	2

Ensuring that safeguarding procedures are effective	2
Ensuring that the governing body provides effective challenge and support so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities are met	2
Promoting the school's relationship with parents and carers, including their involvement in decision-making about matters relating to learning and well-being	2
Developing partnerships with other providers, organisations and services	2
Ensuring the school contributes to community cohesion	3
Deploying resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Reception children are taught in a mixed-age class along with pupils from Years 1 and 2. They make good progress because the adults they work with have a good understanding of their needs and provide them with a good range of activities that are suitable for their age and abilities. The current group of Reception children started school with knowledge, skills and understanding that are expected for their age. As they are achieving well, they are on target to reach above average levels by the end of this academic year. As in the rest of the school, the children's behaviour is excellent. They learn and play well together, following a good balance of well-organised activities that they work at independently or with adults. Just occasionally, children are not sufficiently challenged when working independently. Children are confident, for example in showing visitors their work and talking about the different things that they do. Adults have high expectations, ensuring that the children listen carefully. A good emphasis is placed on developing the children's language and communication skills. Children are saturated with language, with a strong focus on learning new sounds and reading and writing.

Good planning is backed up by regular observations and assessments of the children. Adults know the children well and relationships are strong. Parents are given good opportunities to become involved in their child's learning. As part of the induction procedures for example, parents are provided with time to try out activities from the six areas of learning offered to their children. Adults take good care of the children. For example, when working outside in the rain, all children, wear suitable clothing so that they keep warm and dry. The teacher in charge has worked hard to improve the provision. Children's progress has shown steady improvement over the last few years.

How good are the outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2
What is the quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2
How effectively is the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	2
Overall effectiveness: how well does the setting/school meet the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2

Views of parents and carers

Parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire were all overwhelmingly supportive of the school. They regard the school as welcoming. Parents acknowledge that the school communicates with them well and provides a good education and support. They are pleased the pupils are offered a range of extra activities such as school clubs. There were no criticisms of the school.

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. In 2007-8, 15% of schools were judged to be outstanding.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well. In 2007-8, 49% of schools were judged good.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils. In 2007-8, 32% of schools were judged satisfactory.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves. In 2007-8, 5% of schools were judged inadequate.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Achievement:	an overall measure of the pupils' success in their academic learning. The term combines attainment and progress. Pupils might make good progress, for example, but if their attainment remains low, inspectors may judge that their achievement is only satisfactory.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.



12 March 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Dove Bank Primary School, Nailstone, CV13 0QJ

Thank you for being so friendly when I visited your school. I particularly enjoyed joining the assembly and listening to you sing on the second day of my visit. I hope those of you who went on the residential visit had a great time.

This letter is to let you know what I found out about your school. You go to a good school and your behaviour is outstanding. In lessons, you make good progress because you are taught well and you are enthusiastic about your learning. However, not all of you come to school regularly enough. I have asked your headteacher, the staff and governors to improve attendance. I was impressed by your hard work in lessons and how keen you were to answer questions. You all try so hard but I have asked the school to show you how to improve your presentation.

The school is well led and managed by the headteacher. He is well supported by all of the other staff, who make a great team. All of the adults in the school care about you and make sure you are well looked after. This is the reason that many of you told me you feel safe and secure at school. It is fantastic that you all get on so well with each other. You work well in groups and support each other in lessons. It is interesting to see the many displays around the school that celebrate the different and varied lives that you lead. Your knowledge of other groups of people beyond the school and local villages is not so strong. I have also asked the school to help you develop an even greater understanding of how people live in other villages, towns and cities.

You can help the school improve even more by coming to school all of the time, continuing to behave well and making sure you present all of your work neatly.

Best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Chris Kessell
Lead inspector

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