

Great Doddington Primary

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121821
Local Authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	327576
Inspection date	24 September 2008
Reporting inspector	Paul Canham

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)	132
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	20
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Karen McLester
Headteacher	Jan Nesbitt
Date of previous school inspection	10 October 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Church Lane Great Doddington Wellingborough NN29 7TR
Telephone number	01933 225814
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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

Most of the pupils at this smaller than average primary school are from families of White British heritage and there are a few pupils from minority ethnic groups. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. Children join the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) into a Reception class at the start of the school year.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school's overall effectiveness is satisfactory. The headteacher provides the school with a strong lead and determination to raise standards. However, senior staff have yet to become fully involved in monitoring the school's work, and in helping to identify key areas for improvement. Governors are keen to strengthen their monitoring role and to find out in more detail how well the school is performing. A number of initiatives have been introduced in English, including a new range of reading strategies to engage boys, which have already led to improvements to pupils' performance in this subject. The school is looking to improve the rate of progress made by pupils in mathematics by giving them closely targeted support earlier in Key Stage 2. Pupils have positive attitudes and say that they enjoy school. These factors make an important contribution to their progress, particularly in good lessons, although such lessons have yet to have a full impact on raising standards in all subjects.

Standards are broadly average and pupils achieve satisfactorily. Children start in Reception with a range of knowledge and skills that is usual for their age, although their skill levels vary substantially from year to year. These children make good progress, especially in physical development, and knowledge and understanding of the world, and reach average standards by the end of Reception. Achievement is satisfactory in Key Stages 1 and 2, with good progress in English and in classes towards the end of Key Stage 2. This uneven picture of achievement reflects the variation in the quality of teaching, which is satisfactory overall, but inconsistent. Some lessons capture pupils' interest and motivate them with stimulating and well-paced activities. On occasions, not all pupils are involved because the pace is slow and activities do not push them far enough. The use of worksheets, which often include tasks that are not closely matched to pupils' capabilities, inhibits progress and provides few opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy and numeracy skills across all subjects.

The small size of the school helps staff to know pupils well. The pastoral care is a particular strength and has a positive impact on pupils' personal development. This is evident in their mature and helpful approach, politeness, and good behaviour. Pupils know a lot about keeping healthy and safe and try hard to live up to their knowledge of these things. Good attention is given to meeting the needs of those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Academic guidance is not as strong. Whilst some pieces of writing are marked in some detail, the day-to-day marking of pupils' work rarely provides sufficient guidance on what they need to do to improve. Assessment procedures have been strengthened and the school has a good knowledge of pupils' progress, although this information is not always used well enough to plan activities that closely match the capabilities of all pupils.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children make a good start to their learning in Reception because it provides them with a spacious, stimulating and positive learning atmosphere. As one parent wrote, reflecting a typical view, 'I am really impressed with the transition from play school –very good relations with the village playgroup.' Teaching is good; children achieve well in all areas of learning from starting points that vary significantly, and reach broadly average standards.

The well-planned curriculum ensures that children benefit from using covered and outdoor areas. Activities include a good mixture of teacher-led tasks alongside opportunities for children

to explore and investigate for themselves, so gaining confidence in their own abilities. There is a strong focus on communicating with children in a variety of ways, including singing and dancing. Many activities encourage thinking and reasoning with the help of creative stories from different cultures, along with well-targeted questions that are pitched at just the right level. The use of different shapes helps children with problem solving and the development of their use of everyday words. There are many opportunities for children to play together, work cooperatively within small groups, and to learn how to behave. These strategies successfully promote children's personal and social development and their interest in learning. Children's attitudes to work are good and they delight in organising themselves and showing what they can do. Children are aware of safety considerations and know the reasons why it is better for them to work in small groups.

Assessment information is used well to identify particular educational needs and to group children within similar ability groups. Close monitoring of how children are learning ensures that activities build positively on what they already know and can do.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that senior staff are fully involved in monitoring and evaluating standards and the quality of teaching, and key priorities identified by the school.
- Ensure that day-to-day assessment of pupils' work provides pupils with clear guidance on what to improve and that assessment information is used to plan work for the differing needs of pupils in each class.
- Ensure that pupils are given sufficient opportunity to consolidate and develop their literacy and numeracy skills across a range of subjects.

A small proportion of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory, but which have areas of underperformance, will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

The rise in standards in 2007 points to satisfactory progress and an arrest of the wide fluctuations during the previous two years. This improvement was largely sustained in 2008, when the school exceeded its targets in both English and mathematics, and is being maintained in the current school year. All groups now achieve satisfactorily, including pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. During lessons, progress is sometimes good, but not often enough to lift achievement further. It is too early for improvements to have had a full impact on standards, which are broadly average in the current Years 2 and 6. The school has identified the need to ensure that all pupils reach at least their expected levels in writing and mathematics. In particular they have recognised the need to improve the standards of higher ability pupils and reduce the discrepancy between the performance of boys and girls in both Key Stages. However, both of these groups were seen to make similar gains in lessons during the inspection. While progress in mathematics is satisfactory, it has not improved to the same levels as those in English, and the school is now tackling this issue with a greater focus on the progress of pupils early in Key Stage 2.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

One parent expressed a typical view in the comment, 'My son loves coming to school.' Pupils' attitudes to learning are good because of the positive relationships between adult and pupils, and between pupils of all ages. Attendance is average, and pupils say that they like coming to school because they feel safe and enjoy participating in the practical activities. The pupils' enjoyment of school is seen in their willingness to contribute to class and group discussions, and in their friendly, caring and supportive approach towards each other. They also contribute well to the wider community through their involvement with the church, but also in consideration for those who are less fortunate than themselves. Older pupils are keen to carry out a number of duties and are particularly helpful towards the younger pupils at lunchtimes.

Pupils are well aware of the benefits of being active, and many enjoy the after-school sports clubs. Pupils' good behaviour ensures that lessons are orderly and productive. Pupils say that the school council provides them with opportunities to represent the views of others and have a say in the running of the school. It also gives them opportunities to raise money for a charity of their choice. Pupils' strong personal skills are valuable assets for the future, and improving skills in literacy and numeracy provide a sound basis for later life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching is satisfactory overall, but there is evidence of good teaching in some classes. However, variations in the progress made by pupils through Key Stage 2 reflect inconsistencies in teaching, which the school is determined to overcome. Classes are managed effectively and relationships are consistently good, with teachers and teaching assistants working well together to provide well focused support for small groups. At its best, as seen in small-group work involving pupils in Years 4 and 5, teaching was challenging and motivated pupils to learn. Where teaching materials are stimulating, as, for example, in Reception, the children forged ahead in their learning. However, opportunities are sometimes missed to vary the content of questions to different ability groups or to give the more able demanding tasks early in the lesson. Assessment information is not always used well enough to adapt tasks to pupils' abilities.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum provides a sound balance between a focus on literacy and numeracy and the development of pupils' creative and performance skills. However, it does not give sufficient guidance on how different subjects relate to each other, or how basic skills of literacy and numeracy can be developed and consolidated through all subjects. For example, the over-reliance on worksheets in several subjects limits the opportunities for extended writing, and those written tasks which are undertaken are not used to reinforce points which have been taught in English lessons. The school makes good use of visits and visitors to enrich the pupils' experiences and extend their learning. Pupils think that the wide range of extra-curricular activities are good and name music, lace making and sport as those they most enjoy. The school knows it still has more to do to boost pupils' writing and mathematical skills with a greater

focus on independent working. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used well to support learning, although there is scope for further use in curriculum planning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Within this small school, staff know pupils well and provide good personal support and pastoral care, which contributes substantially to the school's friendly and welcoming atmosphere. The caring ethos underpins the school's work and gives rise to good relationships between pupils and staff, and amongst the pupils. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive good quality care and attention, particularly through the help of support staff, who make effective use of detailed individual education plans. Arrangements to safeguard and protect pupils are comprehensive and firmly established. Academic guidance is satisfactory, but has areas for improvement. Although pupils' work is marked regularly, teachers' comments rarely help pupils to understand how they can improve their work. Examples of poorly presented work are too easily accepted and spelling mistakes remain largely uncorrected. Pupils are given targets, but these are not always known by pupils and not consistently reinforced in the marking of their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The school has successfully created an ethos where pupils' personal development features strongly. The large majority of parents are pleased with most aspects of the school's work and, as one parent wrote, 'Parents are well informed with weekly newsletters.' The headteacher provides the school with determined leadership. Her accurate analysis of the school's strengths and areas for development provides a strong focus on raising achievement and standards. The school improvement plan includes quantifiable indicators against which to measure the success of actions but some lack precision and clarity. The school is securely placed to bring about improvement, although the role of senior staff has yet to be fully developed and the capacity for moving the school forward is, therefore, only satisfactory. The recently appointed chair of governors, along with other members of the governing body, are keen to develop a better understanding of their role and become a source of challenge and support for the school. The school has developed effective links with the local community, including with the local secondary school and parish church.

The school has dealt well with some issues highlighted in the previous inspection, for example, raising standards in English and improving the use of ICT to support teaching, although the role of subject leaders has yet to be fully addressed.

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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?	3
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?	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

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?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	3

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	3
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	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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**

25 September 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Great Doddington Primary School, Northamptonshire, NN29 7TR

- We very much enjoyed our visit to your school and thank you for making us feel so welcome. This letter is to tell you about some of the things we found out while we were with you. Importantly, yours is a satisfactory school, where staff work hard to help you make progress. We were pleased to hear that you like your school, especially all the clubs – sports activities seem to be very popular. The large majority of your parents are happy with the school, too. You behave well and get on with each other and this means that everyone can concentrate on their learning. Your progress as a whole is satisfactory, although some of you are making good progress, and it is expected that you will reach standards that are usual for your age. Here are some important things about your school:
 - Those of you in Reception make a good start.
 - You enjoy your lessons and work hard when activities are interesting, and you all have a chance to take part in practical activities and answer questions.
 - The headteacher and other staff are making improvements and these are helping you to make faster progress.
 - In some lessons you make good progress with your learning, but this is not always the case and you could be challenged to do even better.
 - All staff take good care of you, and make sure that you know what to do to keep safe.
 - You have a good understanding of what makes for a healthy lifestyle and you feel safe and secure in school.
- This is what your school has been asked to do to make things even better:
 - Ensure that the staff who help to run the school keep a close check on how well you are doing so that they can help you do even better.
 - Provide you with a clear indication of what you need to do to improve your work, and to make sure that the work is always at just the right level for each one of you.
 - Help you to improve your literacy and numeracy skills through all the subjects you are taught.

You can help your school to improve by continuing to participate actively in your lessons. We wish each one of you every success in your future education.

Yours sincerely, Paul Canham Lead inspector