

Dunham-On-Trent CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122758
Local Authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	327791
Inspection dates	12–13 January 2009
Reporting inspector	Marina Gough

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	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	98
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 David Montgomery
Headteacher	Mrs D E Hayes
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	Laneham Road Dunham-on-trent Newark Nottinghamshire NG22 0UL

Age group	4–11
Inspection dates	12–13 January 2009
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The school is situated in a small village and takes children from outlying villages. The socio-economic circumstances of the pupils is mainly favourable and few pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. Most pupils are White British. Levels of mobility are low. Only a small number of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. These difficulties are mainly related to speech and language. Pupils join the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) either at the start of the autumn term or the start of the spring term, giving them two or three terms in the EYFS depending on where their birthdays' fall. One of the buildings on the school site is used by an independent play-group, and most of these children feed into the school's EYFS. The school has acquired several awards for aspects of its work over recent years including the Active mark, Healthy Schools' Award, and the Extended Services Award.

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 dynamic and vibrant school that is characterised by its very strong sense of community, its warm and welcoming atmosphere and its ability to solve problems creatively. Since the last inspection the school has improved at a good rate and has addressed the issues raised at that time as well as achieving many of its own development priorities. The school knows itself very well and the inspection findings closely mirror the school's own evaluation of its strengths and relative weaknesses. The school is well placed for continued improvement because of the imaginative leadership of the headteacher and the commitment and enthusiasm of the staff.

Standards and achievement are good. From an average starting point in the EYFS, pupils progress well so that standards at the end of Key Stage 1 are above the national average, and standards at the end of Key Stage 2 are well above the national average. Standards are particularly high in writing throughout the school because this has been a focused area of development for some time. In mathematics, whilst standards in number are often very high, there is a weakness throughout the school in the pupils' understanding of measure. This is mainly because there are not enough opportunities for pupils to learn this aspect of their work through practical tasks which have meaning for them.

Teaching and learning are good. Pupils have a real thirst for learning, and their excellent attitudes and behaviour mean that lessons flow at a good pace with a good deal of very positive interaction between teachers and pupils. A real strength of teaching is the way staff use computer technology to bring learning to life and encourage the pupils to use computers as a tool for learning. The use of homework in Key Stage 2 is outstanding; it encourages the pupils to be creative and to manage aspects of their own learning.

Pupils' relationships and their love of learning are one of the school's major strengths, reflected in their outstanding personal development and well-being. They are kind, confident and enthusiastic about learning which they say is 'fun'. Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to stay safe and healthy and of the contribution they can make to the local community. The school council provides a strong pupil voice and has an excellent impact on the life of the school. Pupils thoroughly enjoy coming to school. The school provides an excellent range of visits and extra-curricular activities that very effectively support pupils' personal and social development, and extend their understanding of the wider world. Pupils are well cared for and know that they can approach any adult with their problems or share important occasions.

The headteacher is an outstanding leader who is constantly reflecting on the school's achievements and planning the next steps. Other key management roles, including those of the deputy, the special needs co-ordinator and the EYFS leader have only very recently been redistributed following the retirement of a member of staff and so these roles are in transition at present. The headteacher fully involves staff, governors, pupils and parents in key decisions about the school and so there is a real sense of pride in the school's achievements that comes from shared ownership. Parents are very pleased with what the school offers and find it easy to communicate with staff. Governors are well motivated and committed, but because many of them work, their monitoring activities are limited. Nevertheless, they are well informed and effectively fulfil their role of 'critical friend' to the headteacher.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The EYFS provides a good start for children of all abilities. However, the current arrangement of taking children into school on a full-time basis at two points in the year means that some children only have two terms in the EYFS whilst others have three. The school's tracking shows that this difference can make a real impact on the standards these children attain, especially for those children who have had little in the way of pre-school experience. The attainment on entry is very variable and for the current group is around the national average. Children in the EYFS thrive in the mixed age class where they follow the excellent example of behaviour set by the Year 1 pupils. Teaching is good, and activities are well matched to the children's age and ability. The teacher and teaching assistant work very well as a team, interacting with the children where necessary and encouraging independence as much as possible. Their on-going assessments are very thorough, enabling children who are experiencing difficulties to be picked up quickly. However, there is not enough access for the children to continuous and free-choice play activities. The outside learning area has improved significantly since the last inspection. However, the school has not yet completed work that will ensure children are totally secure in the area between the building and the play area so that the children can move freely between the two.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide pupils throughout the school with more practical activities in mathematics to enable them to gain a better understanding of measurement.
- Complete plans to provide more secure access for children in the EYFS between the classroom and outside learning area.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards when children join the school in the EYFS can vary considerably depending on how much pre-school experience the children have had and their natural ability. Children make good progress in the EYFS and their attainment is generally at the level expected for their age when they transfer to Year 1. In Key Stage 1, pupils of all abilities progress well and achieve standards in reading, writing and mathematics that are typically above the national average. This good progress continues throughout Key Stage 2 enabling pupils to leave school at the end of Year 6 having attained standards in English, mathematics and science that are well above the national average. The standard of pupils' writing is often very high for all age groups. Pupils develop their ideas well and use a wide and imaginative vocabulary. In mathematics pupils have strong number skills but lack experience of using measurement in real and meaningful contexts. As a result, although they are able to calculate using standard units of measurement, their estimates of measure are often very inaccurate. The school provides well for pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. These pupils achieve well and benefit from the additional support they receive from their teachers and teaching assistants.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The pupils' behaviour and attitudes are outstanding and are the main reason why this is such a happy and welcoming school. Pupils love their learning and tackle all activities with enthusiasm

and pleasure. They explain very well how to keep safe and healthy and are very caring of others. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Pupils contribute much to the community of the school and to the local community. They have a good deal of empathy for the plight of those less fortunate than themselves. Attendance is average. Many pupils have a good rate of attendance, but a few farming families take holidays during term time because of work commitments. The pupils' economic well being is enhanced by opportunities for them to run their own projects for the school fairs, and by the many opportunities provided in school for them to take responsibility, make decisions and consider the views of others. The school council does an excellent job and has been responsible for key areas of development within the school such as choosing and costing the playground markings.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is lively, purposeful and builds well on what the pupils already know and can do. Teachers plan well so that activities meet the needs of all pupils. Teaching assistants are effective and provide sensitive support for individuals and small groups. Information and communication technology has come a long way since the last inspection and is now a real tool for both learning and teaching, bringing lessons to life, and enabling pupils to gain experience of the wider world. The use of homework to support learning is excellent in Key Stage 2 where imaginative and creative tasks fire the pupils' interest and allow individuals to excel and demonstrate their particular strengths. Pupils receive good levels of verbal feedback about their work, and as a result, marking in books is sometimes very brief and uninformative to parents.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school has updated its curriculum so that subjects link together well and provide a meaningful context for learning. French has been introduced throughout the school. This subject supports the pupils' cultural development well and is popular with all age groups. The school still tends to teach literacy and numeracy in the mornings and this does not always make the most imaginative use of this prime learning time. The statutory curriculum is enhanced by an excellent range of visits and clubs which support pupils' personal development and provide additional opportunities for pupils to take part in sporting activities. A strong personal, social and health education programme helps pupils to understand their role within the wider community and to consider ways in which they might contribute to the well-being of others.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils benefit from excellent relationships with all adults in the school. They agree that they can approach any member of staff if they have a concern and they are also well informed about national support groups for children. Governors pay good attention to matters of health and safety, although they have not been sufficiently proactive in making arrangements to enable children in the EYFS to move freely and independently between their classroom and outside learning area. Child protection procedures are good and staff are aware of the procedures to be followed in the event of an incident. Support for pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good and is given in a sensitive way so that individuals are not marked out as

being 'different'. Pupils have a good understanding of what they need to do to improve their work further and know which targets they are working towards.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school benefits from the imagination and skills of an experienced and highly effective headteacher. She has led the school extremely well since the last inspection, maintaining a very good balance between consolidating existing practice and initiating new priorities. Other leadership roles have only recently been filled following the retirement of the previous deputy. At the time of the inspection the co-ordinators for EYFS, special educational needs and the deputy headteacher had been in post for only five days and so their leadership roles are still very underdeveloped. The co-ordination of subject areas is distributed amongst the small teaching staff in such a way that all subjects and the progress of all groups are regularly monitored and reviewed effectively without individual staff becoming overburdened. The school's programme for monitoring by staff and governors is planned well in advance and closely reflects the priorities identified in the school improvement plan. Governors fulfil their roles well, especially that of 'critical friend' to the headteacher. Financial planning is good and the cost-effectiveness of major spending decisions is measured well against improved standards and provision. Links with the local community are a strength of the school and provide a firm foundation for developing extended links.

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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	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	1

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?	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**

14 January 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Dunham-on-Trent CofE Primary School, Newark, NG22 0UL

Thank you very much for making me feel so welcome when I visited your school a short time ago. I really enjoyed talking to you and finding out what you think about your school. I was very impressed by how well you all get on with one another and the excellent way you behave in class and at playtimes. You all try very hard in lessons and are keen to answer questions and to do your work.

You make good progress as you move through the school and I am pleased to see that by the time you get to Year 6 you are attaining standards in English, mathematics and science that are well above average. I thoroughly enjoyed looking at your books and could see that your writing is of a very good standard. Your stories are well written and you make a good effort to use words imaginatively. However, when I spoke to you about your mathematics work I discovered that many of you are a little unclear about measurements of length, weight and capacity. I have asked your teachers to provide more practical opportunities for you to explore these areas so your understanding improves. Your teachers and teaching assistants do a good job in helping you to learn and provide interesting and exciting activities. I especially like the way you use laptops to help you with your work. You told me that you can ask for help from any of the adults in school and that you feel safe. Your teachers encourage you to be healthy and I know you all like the many sporting activities that are provided.

I think your headteacher is doing an excellent job in running the school and she is helped very much by the rest of the staff. The governors do their work well but I have asked them to make sure they complete the work that they have planned so that the Reception children can go by themselves from the classroom into the outside play area.

I hope you enjoyed the pantomime!

Best wishes

Marina Gough

Lead inspector