

Dove First School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124121
Local Authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	328059
Inspection date	9 July 2009
Reporting inspector	John Horwood

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	First
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	80
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	Kevin Flower
Headteacher	Barbara Mitchell
Date of previous school inspection	14 June 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Dove Lane Uttoxeter ST14 5LA
Telephone number	01889 590203
Fax number	01889 590203

Age group	4–9
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average first school situated in a village location. There are very few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and no pupils are at the early stage of speaking English. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is around the national average. Early Years Foundation Stage provision is in a Reception class. The school has gained the International Award and has achieved level 1 towards Dyslexia Friendly status.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school. The vast majority of parents are pleased with all the school provides and parental views were typified by one comment which said, 'I could not have chosen a better school for my son.' Pupils say they enjoy school because teachers are helpful and they make lots of friends. They were very proud and excited when showing photographs of the many things they had done during the year. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The leadership of the headteacher is very strong but most other leaders have only been in post a short time and are not sufficiently involved in monitoring progress and ensuring that targets set are sufficiently challenging. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory, demonstrating the school's satisfactory capacity to improve further. The school makes a good contribution to community cohesion and pupils develop a caring understanding of the world they live in.

Children mostly enter school with the skills below those expected for children of a similar age. The Early Years Foundation Stage provision is good and children make good progress at the start of their education. They do not have sufficient all-weather outdoor learning areas to fully develop their skills and knowledge promoted so well in the classroom. From the time pupils enter Year 1 until they leave Year 4, standards in English, mathematics and science are broadly average and pupils achieve satisfactorily in relation to their starting points. Those with learning difficulties are given effective support so they make the same progress as their classmates. Pupils make good progress in developing their personal skills and their personal development and well-being are good. Systems to monitor and record progress are well established and these are used satisfactorily by leaders and by teachers in the majority of lessons. Teaching is always at least satisfactory but work is not always sufficiently challenging for all the pupils, especially the more able ones. Target setting is in place and most pupils are aware of their targets. The marking of pupils' work is regular and tells pupils where they have gone wrong. The good curriculum engages pupils fully through interesting and enjoyable activities. The provision for information and communication technology has improved significantly since the last inspection and its planned use across the curriculum is developing well. The range of extra-curricular activities is good and enriches pupils' learning and personal development. There are some outstanding examples of experiences pupils get through international connections which have opened their eyes to the wider world.

Pastoral care is very good, and safeguarding requirements, including those for internet security, are met. The school's strong links with external agencies contribute to the good support for pupils who find learning difficult for whatever reason. Pupils behave exceptionally well, enjoy school and are very knowledgeable about how to keep safe. Most pupils have good attendance records but the poor attendance of a very few pupils results in attendance overall being satisfactory. Pupils make an excellent contribution to the community, eat healthily and take part in sport with enthusiasm. The sound basic skills they acquire, as well as their good personal development, ensure they are satisfactorily prepared for their future.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children like coming to school. They enter school with limited skills in writing and calculation. They make good progress and reach standards which are generally above average. Children make most progress in communication, language and literacy. They quickly learn to get on well

with each other and with adults. They behave well and are often absorbed in the activities, such as the 'creative week' when they learn about people who help them in the local area. They participate enthusiastically in all the activities provided, listening to teachers and trying things out for themselves.

The curriculum covers each of the expected areas of learning well. Staff organise activities between indoors and out with good movement between areas helping children work independently and providing good opportunities for them to make choices. While children have good access to the outdoor areas, they do not have their own exclusive area and undercover learning areas are very limited. Teachers adapt the curriculum well to suit to individual needs, for example by providing work to stimulate boys' learning. Staff work well as a team and look after the children very well. They create a safe and secure environment where children can grow in confidence. This is greatly appreciated by parents who are very pleased with the current provision.

The Early Years Foundation Stage is led by an experienced and knowledgeable teacher who leads and manages the provision well. While the school is working hard to improve the outdoor provision, it is currently not adequate to give children all the opportunities they should have.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in English, mathematics and science by making consistent use of assessment data to ensure that work is always challenging for all pupils.
- Ensure all levels of management monitor progress regularly and set challenging targets.
- Develop the Early Years Foundation Stage outdoor area to support the good knowledge and skills across all areas of learning.

A small proportion of the 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

As a result of sound teaching and learning, pupils make satisfactory progress. When pupils leave in Year 4, standards are generally average, although there can be some year-by-year variation. Pupils with learning difficulties make satisfactory progress because they are provided with effective support. However, higher attaining pupils are not always challenged sufficiently. Standards in Year 2 are currently average in reading, writing and mathematics.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and the school operates as a harmonious community. Their spiritual development is enhanced through stimulating assemblies that bring religion to life through active participation. There are very strong links to the nearby church where many pupils attend. Through the curriculum, and opportunities, such as the 'Comenius Project', the pupils gain a strong cultural understanding to compensate for the limited cultural mix in the area. They communicate their feelings in a responsible manner and they show respect for their peers and adults. Through their outstanding behaviour and their respect for others, pupils show they know right from wrong. Within lessons, their behaviour allows all pupils to concentrate on learning for which they show good attitudes. Attendance is

close to the national average. Pupils said there is no bullying in the school but they know what to do if any occurs. They make healthy choices of food and look forward to sports activities. This is reflected by the recent Activemark award. Pupils make an outstanding contribution to the school and wider community. They enjoy being school councillors and playground leaders, and taking on responsibilities such as helping in assembly. They are very active with eco-issues and with fund raising for charities of their choice.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

There are many good features within the teaching, such as subject knowledge and relationships. However, not all teachers have been in post long enough to use school systems to fully support their teaching. Although pupils all make satisfactory progress, the assessment data are not consistently used to match the work to individual needs to help them make the greater progress they may be capable of. Pupils want to learn and pay attention in lessons. They are willing to engage in their learning and this helps them make satisfactory progress. They understand what they have to do because teachers all explain things clearly to them. All lessons are made to be interesting. In some lessons, the pace is too slow and too long is spent teaching the whole class. Pupils who find learning difficult are well supported by the teaching assistants and the strategies provided for them. Teachers mark work regularly but comments are not always made about how to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is enriched with planned learning opportunities to develop knowledge of the world around us, as well as giving pupils as many opportunities as possible. The headteacher carried out an audit of the local community and is very aware that pupils need to gain a wider understanding of different cultures and faiths. Through very good partnerships with other schools and churches, many opportunities are provided for visits and direct contact with people from beyond the immediate community. Parents really appreciate opportunities pupils have, such as visiting Sweden. The music content of the curriculum was highly praised by pupils. Good individual plans are provided for those with learning difficulties to ensure they get the support they need. There are good opportunities for the gifted and talented pupils to develop their special skills, although they are not always sufficiently challenged in lessons. The provision for personal, social and health education is good and pupils are made aware of health and safety issues. Opportunities for extra-curricular activities are wide and varied and well attended.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The high level of commitment of staff ensures good quality care throughout the school. Child protection and safeguarding procedures are securely in place. Health and safety requirements are met. There are good systems for managing behaviour and monitoring attendance. The school works hard to improve the attendance of the small number of pupils who do not attend regularly, but with limited success. All staff work well to ensure all pupils are included in activities. Pupils who need extra help are provided for effectively and make the same progress as others. Academic guidance is good. The very good relationships ensure that pupils do ask

for help and this is given willingly by the teachers. Pupils are well supported when they join the school with good systems in place to help them settle quickly. They say they are well supported in moving into the middle school. Communications with parents are good, ensuring staff and parents work together to support the pupils.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher has a clear vision for the school to give pupils the best opportunities. Subject leaders are not sufficiently involved at achieving this vision because of the short time they have been in post. Actions from the previous inspection have been satisfactorily addressed but further work is needed to ensure a more visible impact on standards. Self-evaluation shows that leaders really understand the school's strengths and areas for development. These are addressed in the school development plan. Governors provide satisfactory support to help the school raise standards. Leaders and managers have a good understanding of what is needed to promote community cohesion. From an initial audit, the headteacher has introduced activities to develop pupils' understanding as well as to build links with the community. Governors have developed an action plan and created a sub committee responsible for community cohesion.

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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?	2
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	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
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	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?	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?	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?	2
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**

10 July 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Dove First School, Rocester ST14 5LA

Thank you for welcoming us to your school. We enjoyed talking to you, looking at your work and seeing how your school is helping you learn. We were impressed by how well you behave in lessons and how polite you are to visitors.

Your school is providing you with a satisfactory education. These are some of the strengths of your school:

- You enjoy being at school and find your lessons interesting.
- You behave exceptionally well and develop good personal skills.
- The staff care about you and look after you well.
- Relationships throughout the school are very good.
- There is a good range of clubs, activities and visits including that fantastic trip to Sweden.
- Your headteacher and staff are working hard to improve your learning further.

In order to improve the school further, we have asked the headteacher, staff and governors to do the following:

- Ensure that the work teachers set you provides sufficient challenge and helps you make as much progress as you can.
- Ensure that leaders all get involved with monitoring how well you are learning and set you challenging targets.
- Improve the outdoor learning area for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

You can help the school by continuing to work hard. We wish you all the best for the future.

Yours faithfully

John Horwood

Lead inspector