

Drayton Park School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	130254
Local Authority	Milton Keynes
Inspection number	328520
Inspection dates	14–15 October 2008
Reporting inspector	Rob Crompton

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	270
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	62
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ms Lisa Alexander
Headteacher	Mrs Caroline Lewis
Date of previous school inspection	2 October 2007
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Bala Way Drayton Road Bletchley MK2 3HJ
Telephone number	01908 375137
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Pupils come from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds, the largest groups being those of White British and Bangladeshi heritage. Above average proportions of pupils are eligible for free school meals, learn English as an additional language or have specific learning and/or emotional difficulties. The number of pupils that change schools at other than the usual times is well above that usually found. The school has provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) in two Reception classes and a Nursery, where children attend on a part-time basis. The last inspection in October 2007 found that significant improvement was required in relation to pupils' standards and achievement and the school was issued with a Notice to Improve.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Drayton Park Primary School provides a satisfactory education for pupils and is improving across all areas. In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement. The recently appointed headteacher and deputy have played a pivotal role in moving the school forward. Previous weaknesses are being addressed effectively and strong shoots of recovery are emerging. Achievement is now satisfactory. Although attainment by the end of Year 6 in English and mathematics remains below average, standards have risen considerably from the exceptionally low levels of previous years. Indeed, pupils are now reaching broadly average standards in science.

Pupils are making better progress because the quality of teaching has improved and is consistently, at least satisfactory. Teachers, well supported by teaching assistants, plan lessons based on their clear knowledge of where pupils are and where they should be heading. Pupils, too, are increasingly aware of the next steps in their learning because they receive good feedback during lessons and through teachers' marking. Occasionally, however, the pupils find the work set too difficult or not challenging enough.

Many parents commented on how much their children enjoy school. This owes much to the newly designed, sound curriculum, which has several emerging strengths. Enrichment activities successfully stimulate pupils' interest and contribute to their good personal development. Pupils from a diverse range of backgrounds get on well together. They develop a good understanding of the importance of a healthy lifestyle and how to stay safe. Pupils make a good contribution to school life, for example by running the school tuck shop. Pupils develop good social skills and work well together. However, their literacy and numeracy skills are not secure enough to prepare them fully for their subsequent education and to enhance their future life chances.

Good care, guidance and support ensure that pupils feel welcome and valued. The two learning mentors provide sensitive support for new arrivals and vulnerable pupils, particularly those with emotional or behavioural difficulties. Pupils who need additional help and those at an early stage of learning English are well supported.

Leadership and management are good. Self-evaluation is rigorous and is helping the leadership team move the school forward at a good pace. Inclusion has a high priority. Strong links with outside agencies promote pupils' well-being effectively and the school plays an important part in the life of the local community. Governors are well informed and play a positive role in school improvement. The school's track record of improving standards demonstrates that it has a good capacity to improve further; as one parent neatly put it, 'The children now feel happy and secure in their learning environment. This is all down to the support and dedication of staff at Drayton Park. The school is still improving'.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children enter the Nursery with skills and understanding well below those usually expected of three year olds. Their social and language skills are particularly weak. Children settle in well because of the good care and support provided by staff. For example, support staff speak to children in their home language in order to make children feel comfortable, and then slowly

introduce them to English. Transition from the Nursery to the Reception classes is good because staff work closely and plan well together. Children make sound progress in their learning because of satisfactory teaching. However, most children do not reach the expected levels by the end of Reception. Children benefit from a satisfactory balance of teacher-led and free choice activities, which cover all areas of learning. Their personal development and well-being are good because staff are highly supportive and give regular and meaningful praise, which has a positive impact on children's confidence and self-esteem. Staff make detailed notes of the progress made by individual children to inform planning and move the children on. The headteacher currently leads the EYFS. She has identified appropriate priorities such as developing the outdoor area to promote better learning, improving the quality of teaching and learning, as well as enhancing partnerships with parents.

What the school should do to improve further

- Further accelerate pupils' achievement in order to raise standards in English, especially in writing, and mathematics.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by ensuring a more consistent match between pupils' needs and the level of challenge in lessons.

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

From a low start, children make satisfactory progress in the EYFS but, as they start Year 1, their attainment is generally below that expected. A new emphasis on teaching letters and sounds in Years 1 and 2 is bearing fruit. This is particularly helping pupils learning English as an additional language to develop basic literacy skills. Overall progress through Key Stage 1 is satisfactory. However, the standards reached by the end of Year 2 are below average in reading, writing and mathematics. As a consequence of good management, positive progress has been made in accelerating achievement through Key Stage 2. This is also the result of a concerted effort to track pupils' progress meticulously, identify the gaps in their learning and provide highly focussed support. Provisional national test results in Year 6 rose significantly in 2008 with almost double the proportion reaching the expected levels than in previous years. Although standards remain below average, they are no longer exceptionally low. Current Year 6 pupils are on course to reach broadly average standards in reading and science but weaknesses remain in writing and mathematics.

The many pupils who arrive at the school at various times of the year, including those learning English as an additional language, receive targeted support. As a result, there is no significant variation in the progress of these pupils and those who join the school earlier.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The welcoming and friendly ethos of the school reflects the good personal development of the pupils. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. They show respect and empathy for one another and value the school's cultural diversity. Through art and music, they develop a good understanding how these have significance and meaning for different

communities. Pupils are polite and courteous and they behave well in lessons and around the school. They have a good sense of right and wrong and respect the views of others. The great majority of pupils enjoy school, respond well to the staff and participate enthusiastically in lessons. They make a good contribution to the smooth running of the school and willingly take on responsibilities, such as peer mentors, playground buddies or membership of the school council. Although pupils say that there is still occasional bullying, they have confidence that teachers will sort out any problems and they feel safe and secure within the school environment. The level of attendance is now broadly average, having improved as a result of good procedures to follow up absences introduced by the new management team.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall and inspectors observed some good or better lessons. Teachers work hard to ensure that classrooms are vibrant and stimulating. Lessons are well planned. The pace is usually brisk and learning outcomes are made clear to pupils so that they have a good understanding about what they are meant to learn. Interactive white boards effectively engage pupils. 'Talk Partners' are used well to develop pupils speaking and listening skills, as well as to develop their vocabulary. Many teachers skilfully use questions to explore and build on what pupils already know, but in some lessons, these opportunities are missed because questions demand simple one-word responses. Support staff are well qualified and provide good support for pupils with learning difficulties or those new to English, so that they make satisfactory progress in line with their peers. Pupils' targets are displayed clearly in all classrooms as well as in their books. This, together with teachers' conscientious marking of work, helps pupils to understand their next steps for improvement. The school has done much work to ensure that all lessons have appropriate challenge for all pupils. However, this approach is not consistent across the school and pupils' progress slows when sometimes they find the work set either too difficult or too easy.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

A promising start has been made in developing the curriculum. The school has recently begun to link subjects together in order to make learning meaningful for pupils. This is having a positive impact on pupils' motivation, engagement and the quality of their work. Developing literacy skills through relevant and appropriate contexts is at the core of the newly designed curriculum. For example, during their history work on invaders and settlers, children practise and consolidate their literacy skills by writing imaginatively about the life of a Viking. In order to improve learning for those pupils new to English, each unit of work starts with a focus on language which is then reinforced during the topic. Having identified weaknesses in pupils' problem solving in mathematics, plans are being adapted to include more opportunities for them to practise these skills. Good links have been developed recently across subjects. For example, during a topic about Africa, pupils read stories from different cultures, in geography, they discuss contrasting localities and they play African drums in music. Pupils say they enjoy these activities, but it is too soon for the school to evaluate the impact of these promising initiatives on raising achievement. Pupils' personal development is well supported through team building days in Year 6, educational trips and visitors. A good range of after-school clubs enhances their experiences. The school has strengthened provision in Information and

Communication Technology (ICT) to ensure it is used effectively across other subjects. For example, pupils use their desktop publishing skills to create information leaflets in geography.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school takes very good care of its pupils. Strong partnerships with parents and outside agencies help to ensure their welfare. The care pupils receive in school extends to their parents and families. Pupils new to the school are warmly welcomed, sensitively inducted into school routines and settle quickly. Pupils who need extra help with their work benefit from carefully targeted support. Teaching assistants play an active role in supporting them in lessons and by teaching small groups or individuals outside the classroom. The school provides useful guidance for parents on importance of their children going to school regularly and this is reflected in the improving attendance of pupils. Enhanced tracking of progress enables staff to set challenging targets for individual pupils. Teachers' written comments increasingly celebrate pupils' achievements and point out precisely what they need to do next. However, this approach has not been established long enough to ensure all pupils are fully aware of the next steps in their learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The main reason for the school making good progress in the year since the last inspection is the drive and relentless commitment to improvement of the headteacher and deputy. They have inspired staff and parents, galvanised the support of governors and established a strong sense of purpose. Teaching alongside colleagues, they provide excellent role models for staff, particularly those relatively new to the school.

They have overseen improvements to pupils' achievement, to the tracking of their progress, and the planned intervention for those requiring additional support. More emphasis on involving pupils in their own learning has generated a renewed enthusiasm. Pupils' achievements are regularly celebrated which enhances their self-esteem. The school abounds with colourful displays of work, alongside useful prompts for pupils' learning. Community cohesion is promoted successfully. Regular support meetings assist families, and before and after-school provision is much appreciated by parents. There is a close partnership with the community link officer.

Curriculum themes, such as the Year 5/6 study of Africa, enhance pupils' understanding of other communities both in Europe and globally. Drawing on a wealth of assessment information, senior staff accurately evaluate the school's strengths and weaknesses. This informs the good quality development planning and is strongly focused on raising standards. The governors' role in holding the school to account has been enhanced due to the much clearer information they receive about pupils' performance. A number of subject coordinators are newly in post and they are still developing their skills in strategically directing developments. However, the school's track record in raising standards, the well established cycle of self-review and development planning, and the expertise of key staff mean that there is good capacity for further improvement.

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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	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
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?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

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	2
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?	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	3
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	3
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**

03 November 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Drayton Park School, Bletchley, MK2 3HJ

Thank you for making my colleagues and myself welcome during our inspection visit. You told us that you enjoy school and we could see that for ourselves. We found that the school has overcome the weaknesses it had and is now satisfactory overall. Adults continue to care for you very well, and help you develop positive attitudes to learning. You behave well, help around the school and are learning important skills, such as how to stay safe and healthy.

When the school was inspected a year ago, many pupils were not doing as well as they should and standards were too low. Everyone has worked hard to help you make better progress and we were pleased to see how keen you are to improve. The adults' efforts and your hard work are paying off because standards are rising. There is still room for improvement, however. In English, many of you are getting better at reading but find writing more difficult. The more you practise, the more confident you will become. Try to include ideas the teachers give you. In mathematics, the main thing for you to concentrate on is how to solve problems. This depends a lot on you knowing your number facts and tables in the first place of course, so keep trying to learn them off by heart.

When looking at your books, we saw how much individual help teachers are giving you and this is helping everyone to see what they need to learn next. Some pupils were a little unclear of their targets, so make sure you read the teachers' comments before you start the next piece of work. Teachers try to make lessons as interesting as they can and set work at different levels to match where you are. You told us that sometimes the work is too easy and sometimes too hard, so we have suggested that teachers continue to try to pitch the tasks at the right level for different groups.

The headteacher, deputy and governors are all working hard to ensure the school continues to improve. We are sure that, with everyone pulling together, the school can continue to get better.

We wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Rob Crompton

Lead Inspector