

Dalton School Junior Infant and Nursery

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131849
Local Authority	Kirklees
Inspection number	328651
Inspection dates	16–17 September 2008
Reporting inspector	Ronald Cohen

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)	471
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	Mrs Michelle Malik
Headteacher	Mrs Gillian Lindop
Date of previous school inspection	18 January 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Mayfield Avenue Dalton Huddersfield West Yorkshire HD5 9HN

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	16–17 September 2008
Inspection number	328651

Telephone number
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Dalton School Junior, Infant and Nursery is much larger than average. It has an increasingly high proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. This includes eight pupils who attend the visual impairment unit. The school offers Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provision. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is average and this reflects their social and economic background. Over two thirds of the pupils are of White British heritage but a growing number are from minority ethnic backgrounds. Very few are at an early stage of learning to speak English as an additional language. Since the last inspection, many staffing changes at senior level include the headteacher, appointed in April 2008, and the deputy headteacher, appointed in September 2008. The school has gained the Healthy Schools Award and the Artsmark Gold.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Dalton is a satisfactory school. It has strengths in its pastoral care for the pupils and in their personal development and well-being.

At Key Stage 1, pupils achieve satisfactorily and reach standards at the end of Year 2 that are broadly in line with the national average in all subjects, although mathematics is markedly weaker. In 2007, standards at the end of Year 6 were generally below the national average. They were well below in mathematics. Recent initiatives, particularly in mathematics, have halted the decline. Standards in the 2008 teacher assessments show a marked improvement, although writing fell away a little from the 2007 result. The present Year 6 is on track to continue an upward trend. Thus, overall, pupils attain standards that are broadly in line with national averages. This represents satisfactory progress for the vast majority of pupils, several of whom have not spent all their primary education at this school.

Pupils' behaviour and attendance are good. Pupils are considerate towards each other and respectful to adults. Older pupils have many roles and responsibilities and make a significant contribution to school life. Pupils say they enjoy their lessons and feel safe and well cared for. They are confident they will receive help if they need it.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. There are examples of good teaching and learning in the school but a lack of consistency slows down pupils' progress. Pupils of higher ability are not always fully challenged. The pastoral care pupils receive is very good and contributes significantly to their good personal development.

There is a very caring ethos in school. Many parents expressed a gratitude for the school's systems for identifying their children's special needs and delivering high quality provision to meet them. They are particularly grateful for the work done in the visual impairment unit, especially the way the unit allows their children to engage successfully in general classroom activities.

The school has a good understanding of the needs of the local community and responds positively to them through, for example, the weekly toddler group and home visits for new pupils. The good curriculum provides pupils with opportunities to develop shared values and understand the needs and feelings of others. It is enhanced through the school's achievement of the Healthy Schools Award, Artsmark and Activemark Gold. There are good partnerships with other schools and outside agencies to support the work of the school.

The leadership style is inclusive and supportive and has already made a positive start. Initiatives are, however, in the early stages of implementation and their impact is not yet fully secure. Leadership and management are satisfactory and there is a satisfactory capacity to improve. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision for children in the EYFS is well planned and delivered, meets the needs of all children and enables them to make good progress. They are well cared for and their welfare and well-being are always given top priority. There are very strong links between the Nursery Unit and Reception classes to ensure that progress is seamless. There is a good balance of teacher-directed tasks and activities for children to choose from which provide a rich range of

learning opportunities for all children. A strong emphasis is placed on developing children's independence and children quickly develop positive attitudes and learn to relate well to each other. They enjoy the very wide range of activities provided for them, although in inclement weather, children do not always use the full range of outdoor provision. The EYFS team is well led and managed. It operates effectively to maximise opportunities for learning and provide a varied and stimulating environment. Children are carefully monitored throughout to ensure they are making progress. They enter the EYFS with skills broadly similar to those of children nationally. However, by the time they leave the Reception year, their progress is good and their attainment in all areas of learning is above what is expected nationally. Good induction procedures ensure children get the very best start to their education and careful liaison with teachers in Year 1 enables children to move smoothly into the next phase of their schooling.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in mathematics.
- Ensure that all teaching and learning is of a consistently high quality.
- Ensure the more able pupils are fully challenged.

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

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory in Key Stage 1 and 2 so that by Year 6 standards are broadly average. A number of the more able pupils leave before the end of Key Stage 2 and the school increasingly takes in pupils who enter the school with levels below the national norm. These pupils have not had the benefit of the EYFS provision and, although they make satisfactory progress, the standards they attain are often lower than pupils who have had the whole school experience. The school's systems for measuring pupils' progress show that some pupils, particularly the more able, do not always achieve as highly as they could. The school is beginning work to provide a greater level of challenge for these pupils. Despite the decline in mathematics having been halted, as a result of steps the school has taken, there is still more to be done to raise standards in the subject. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress overall and this reflects the high level of care at the school.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. The strong emphasis placed on developing social and emotional skills results in confident pupils, who are eager to grasp the many opportunities to take responsibility for their school and the wider community, such as helping as a play-leader at lunchtimes or organising activities for the toddler group before school. Members of the school council speak enthusiastically about their ideas for playtime activities and appreciate the support they receive. Pupils know they can make a difference to their school community and have a good understanding of different religions and cultures. They feel safe in school and clearly understand the difference between right and wrong. Under the skilled guidance and extra support of adults pupils work successfully together and behave well. They are cheerful and polite and clearly enjoy coming to school. This is reflected in their attendance, which is above

average. Pupils have a good understanding of the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle and take part in a wide range of sporting activities. Benchball at lunchtimes is a particular favourite. As one pupil commented, 'It keeps you fit and it's fun too!'

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall and consistently good in the EYFS. In the best lessons in the other key stages, teachers accurately match work to pupils' needs and abilities and provide an appropriate level of challenge. Pupils are encouraged to think hard about their learning and are given opportunities to assess their work. The use of 'response partners' is well used in some lessons, enabling pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills and encouraging them to become active learners. However, teaching is not always consistent and in some lessons there is a lack of challenge and tasks are not well matched to pupils' needs. The pace is slow, the lesson is predominantly teacher-led and pupils make little active contribution to their learning. The more able pupils in particular are insufficiently challenged. The quality of marking in mathematics does not always sufficiently show pupils as to how to correct or improve their work.

Teaching support staff work effectively alongside teachers to provide additional support for those pupils who need help to fully access the curriculum. The visual impairment unit, in particular, provides pupils with excellent support and resources to enable them to learn alongside their classmates.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The good curriculum is enriched by a wealth of clubs and out of school activities. Good links are made between subjects and the school is developing a more creative approach to planning activities which excite pupils' learning. The school places great emphasis on supporting the physical and emotional health of the community it serves. As a result pupils develop the essential personal skills needed for their next steps. Pupils have satisfactory access to computers and the recent purchase of laptops is supporting further improvements in this area. The visual impairment unit enriches school life enormously and the excellent provision benefits all pupils. Time set aside for discussion and lessons on personal, social, health and citizenship education effectively allow pupils to develop a sense of their community both within and outside school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

This inclusive and caring school excels in supporting the whole community it serves. Parents appreciate the welcome they receive and are keen to take part in the wealth of activities on offer. As one parent said, 'School helps us to help our children. I'm so glad my children are going to Dalton.' Strong partnerships with a wide range of external agencies and outstanding teamwork that makes sure all pupils are fully included provide pupils with the support they need to overcome barriers to learning. As a result pupils feel a strong sense of belonging. Safeguarding measures are in place and meet current government requirements. Pupils say they feel safe and happy. They trust the adults who work with them and know where to turn

for help. However, a lack of consistency of approach to supporting pupils' next steps in their learning means that all pupils do not achieve as well as they can.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The quality of leadership and management is satisfactory. There are some strengths, most notably the clarity of vision brought by the headteacher that puts raising pupils' achievement at the heart of the school's activities. Many changes have increased ambition among staff, parents and pupils to drive up standards. Parents describe their general satisfaction with the work of the school, expressing appreciation for the loyalty and hard work of the staff. However, it is still too early to establish the impact of changes on achievement and the quality of teaching, which are currently satisfactory. Senior and middle managers are developing their roles well. The school's leaders know the strengths and weaknesses of the school and have a clear plan for improvement. Governors fulfil their responsibilities satisfactorily. The school has in place a good range of strategies to support pupils' understanding of the importance of communities: for example, strong links have been established with a range of different ethnic groups which are used to support pupils' understanding of other communities and religions.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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	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?	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?	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	3
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

Thank you for welcoming the inspectors to your school. We enjoyed meeting you and you helped us get a very clear picture of what school life is like at Dalton School Junior, Infant and Nursery.

We have judged yours to be a satisfactory school and also found a number of good things to admire. We judge that all the staff look after you well so that you feel safe and well cared for. They make sure you are developing all the personal skills you need as you grow up. Your behaviour is good and we know how hard you have all been working on this. What a lovely family atmosphere there is in your school!

We have asked your headteacher and staff to improve the standard of your work in mathematics and to make sure that all your lessons are at least good. We have also asked the teachers to be particularly careful to give more challenging tasks to those of you who find work a little too easy. This will mean that you will have to work harder, but it will be worth it in the long run.