

Discovery Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	135196
Local Authority	City of Peterborough
Inspection number	329048
Inspection dates	2–3 July 2009
Reporting inspector	Martin Newell

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)	368
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 Marie Crutchfield
Headteacher	Mrs Anne Hamson
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Mountsteven Avenue Walton Peterborough Cambridgeshire PE4 6HX
Telephone number	01733 772230
Fax number	

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

Discovery School opened in September 2007 after the amalgamation of Walton Infant and Junior Schools. It is now a larger than average primary school. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational needs, is above the national average. These pupils have, for example, moderate or specific learning difficulties, behavioural and emotional difficulties and pupils at different stages of the autistic spectrum. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is a little below the national average but rising. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. A small and increasing percentage of pupils are from different minority ethnic backgrounds and a very small number of these pupils are at an early stage of acquiring English. Early Years Foundation Stage provision is provided for children in the Reception classes. There is an onsite breakfast club managed by the governing body. There is also childcare provision run by a private provider that is inspected separately. The school has gained Healthy School and Activemark awards and has recently gained International School status.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Discovery is a good school that goes from strength to strength. Some aspects of its work are outstanding. The last two years has seen tremendous improvements in all areas of school life, and there is now a very strong sense of shared vision and commitment to making the school even better. At the core of the school's success story is the outstanding leadership of the headteacher who has left no stone unturned in her quest to make Discovery the best. She has galvanised the whole school community in pursuit of excellence. Parents speak very highly of the school. The response of one encapsulated the views of many when writing, 'The school has improved dramatically. I'm just sorry my son is leaving this year!'

When children start in the Reception class, their skills and experiences are well below those expected for their age. Standards when pupils leave are at an average level and improving. This indicates that progress and achievement overall are good. In the Early Years Foundation Stage and some other classes it is excellent. The progress of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those from minority ethnic backgrounds is as good as their classmates. The progress pupils make is as a direct result of the good and, on occasions, outstanding teaching. Teachers go the extra mile in making learning challenging but fun. The best teaching demands a lot of pupils and keeps them on their toes from the start to the end of the lesson. Pupils enjoy learning because the curriculum captures and maintains their interest, and provides an excellent array of enrichment activities. The school is always looking to broaden pupils' awareness of the wider world and of cultural diversity. It has introduced a curriculum model where pupils' key skills and knowledge are being developed across different subjects, themes and projects. This is not yet fully established to make the most telling contribution to standards and achievement, but the shoots of impending success are clearly visible. The care, guidance and support for pupils are excellent. The welfare of pupils is afforded the highest priority. Pupils have a genuine voice in the life of the school and academic guidance is good. As a result pupils feel extremely safe, cared for and valued, and know what is needed to improve their work. Another major strength of the school is pupils' outstanding personal development and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are great ambassadors for the school through their excellent behaviour, highly positive attitudes to learning, above average attendance, terrific respect for the feelings and beliefs of others, and the significant contribution they make to the school and beyond. These excellent personal qualities, together with the good progress in developing their academic skills, means they leave school well prepared for the next stage of their educational journey.

Good leadership and management are usually the centre of good schools and Discovery is no exception. Under the inspirational leadership of the headteacher the school has made significant strides forward. The school's self-evaluation is spot on and the areas pinpointed for improvement have been exactly the right ones to tackle - which they have been with determination and rigour. Leaders at all levels, particularly the senior leadership team, provide good support for the headteacher. Excellent links have been forged with parents, other schools and institutions. Community cohesion is promoted and monitored extremely well through already well established local, national and international links in order to meet the needs identified in the school's and local cluster audit. Assessment and tracking of pupils' progress has been much improved and leads to the setting of challenging targets. These targets are now used extremely well. An indicator of the leaderships' high ambition is that they themselves have identified the need to embed and refine systems further to have even more impact on helping to raise standards. The

aim of the school is to become outstanding in all areas of its work. The journey is not yet complete but the task is in safe and accomplished hands because the capacity for continued improvement is excellent.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

From well below expected starting points, children make excellent progress to reach broadly the expected level by the end of the Reception year. The quality of teaching is excellent. Staff provide a range of very well planned and innovative learning experiences that capture the imagination and interest of all the children. Phonics and early language skills are taught with verve and flair. Children are given every opportunity to learn through hands on, practical activities which they relish and participate in with great enthusiasm, concentration and perseverance. The behaviour of children is excellent and they already show good levels of independence. Staff make excellent use of the outdoor accommodation to further develop and enhance children's learning and this just adds another layer to children's enjoyment of all the provision has to offer. Assessment is very good and staff have a very secure understanding of each child's capabilities. Ongoing assessment is used equally well to guide and inform future teaching and learning. The welfare of children is excellent and enables children to quickly and seamlessly settle into the routines of the day. Leadership is excellent in monitoring the quality of provision, establishing a strong team spirit, forging highly effective links with parents and always looking to move forward.

What the school should do to improve further

- Establish the school's integrated curriculum approach to learning and evaluate its impact on standards and progress.
- Refine assessment and tracking systems to further improve standards and accelerate progress.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children make exceptional progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage so that attainment at the end of the Reception year is broadly at an expected level. Standards by the end of Year 2 have improved much over the last two years from being significantly below the national averages to being in line with the national picture. Standards by the end of Year 6 have also been on an upward trend and are currently at an average level, and getting stronger. Significant improvements in teaching, assessment and the curriculum have been key factors in the rapid development of the school since its amalgamation. All pupils in Years 1 to 6, including those with learning difficulties and those from different ethnic minority backgrounds, make good progress and achieve well. Progress in some classes is excellent.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils show an infectious enthusiasm for all the school offers and participate in all school activities with joyous endeavour. Their behaviour is exemplary and they are extremely polite and courteous. Older pupils genuinely 'look out' for younger pupils and relationships across the school are excellent. Pupils show an outstanding awareness of what is needed to follow healthy and safe lives, including internet safety. They put this wisdom into practice through following a healthy and balanced diet, growing their own fruit and vegetables on the school

allotment and participating in sporting activities with gusto. Pupils are reflective, appreciate the world around them, show an extremely mature sense of fair play and high level of respect, understanding and tolerance for different cultures and traditions. The school council, playpals, tending the allotment, instigating and running many fundraising activities and helping improve the local environment are just some shining examples that illustrate pupils' excellent contribution to the community.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The good and at times better progress of pupils owes much to the quality of teaching. On occasions, teaching is outstanding because lessons are packed with challenge, the pace of learning never drops and pupils investigate and problem solve in activities that keep them spellbound for the entire lesson. Occasionally, teachers talk for too long when pupils have clearly understood the lesson intention and are just keen to get on with it. Across the school, teachers manage pupils well and teaching assistants do much to support pupils with learning difficulties. Teachers make good use of the interactive whiteboards and tap in well to the differing learning styles of pupils. The best classrooms are characterised by displays that are awash with colour and interest and the walls have many learning prompts which the pupils readily utilise. Marking is generally of a good standard because it clearly outlines why a piece of work is good and what is needed to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum meets the individual needs of pupils well and contributes much to pupils' good progress and enjoyment of learning. Good provision is made for developing pupils' literacy, numeracy and computer skills. The school has recently introduced an integrated curriculum where pupils' skills are developed across different subjects and themes. The school has rightly identified the need to embed and develop this to help accelerate pupils' learning still further. A very strong emphasis is given to developing pupils' awareness of cultural and global issues through themed weeks events and through links with other schools in places such as Africa and China. Pupils learn French, have the opportunity to play a musical instrument and to participate in a number of enterprise activities. Enrichment activities are excellent. There are many visits and visitors, including an artist in residence. Pupils participate in a residential visit to France, choir, film making, maths challenges, a very popular breakfast club and after-school clubs that include golf, judo and fishing.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The pastoral care for pupils is excellent and helps pupils thrive and develop. This is a school where the individuality of pupils is both recognised and celebrated. Pupils feel very safe and secure, and greatly respect the fact that they have a voice that is listened to. The links with outside agencies are excellent and supplement the school's own very strong mechanisms for identifying, and then supporting, vulnerable pupils, those with learning difficulties and the increasing number of pupils from different ethnic backgrounds. Good procedures are in place to promote the importance of regular attendance. Procedures for safeguarding pupils meet

statutory requirements. Academic guidance is good. Pupils know their individual targets and levels and are now starting to set their own targets for improvement. Pupils are often seen assessing their own work and that of their classmates so that they are active participants in the whole learning process.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher has been the driving force in moving the school forward. She provides inspirational leadership that has seen the school improve at an unrelenting pace since the amalgamation. Such are her leadership skills, she has brought staff, pupils, parents and governors with her. Underachievement has been tackled rigorously and improvements in many areas of the school's work have seen standards rise significantly and progress accelerate. She benefits from very good levels of support from a highly effective senior leadership team. The headteacher has empowered middle leaders to take a more proactive role in monitoring teaching and evaluating standards and this role is developing well. Governance is good because they balance support with challenge and are fully involved in school development planning. They recognise that further ongoing training will help them carry out their roles even more effectively. The headteacher has introduced robust systems for assessing and tracking pupils' progress and the school has identified the need to further refine these systems to have even more impact on helping raise standards. Community cohesion is excellent because provision starts from an audit of pupil's needs and the close monitoring of success. The school reaches out extremely well to parents and is continually strengthening pupils' awareness of their position in a global society.

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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	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
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	2

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?	1

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	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
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**

6 July 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Discovery Primary School, Peterborough, PE4 6HX

Thank you for the welcome you gave us when we came to visit your school recently. We were all very impressed with your politeness and courtesy and you helped to make the visit one that we will remember for a long time to come. I really enjoyed watching the rehearsal for the Year 6 end of year production. I am sure your parents and families will love it. We had the chance to talk to quite a lot of you during the visit but I would like to say a big thank you to members of the school council and some Year 6 pupils with whom we had longer conversations - and what enjoyable conversations they were! You were all terrific ambassadors for your school. It was very pleasing to hear that you love coming to Discovery, that you feel extremely safe, that bullying is not a problem and that there is always someone to talk to if you are worried.

It was great to hear that you think Discovery is a really good school. You are right. Discovery is a good school with some aspects outstanding. Good teaching and a good curriculum help you make good progress and achieve well. Some teaching is outstanding as is the range of visits, visitors and after school clubs. The staff of the school take especially good care of you and your well-being is always of great concern to them. Mrs Hampson is an exceptionally good headteacher and together with other staff and leaders is determined to make the school even better - and I am sure she will. There is another major strength that I have not mentioned yet and that is you - the children! Your behaviour, your attitudes, your enthusiasm and your contribution to the school community are all outstanding. Well done!

Even schools like yours can improve. With this in mind I have asked Mrs Hampson, staff and governors to:

- continue to develop the curriculum to make learning even more exciting, fun and challenging;
- make sure the information on how well you are doing in different subjects is used even better to help you make faster progress.

I know you will want to continue to play your part in the success story that is Discovery Primary School by continuing to show such brilliant attitudes and behaving so well. It was a pleasure and privilege to meet you.

Yours faithfully

Martin Newell

Lead inspector