

Dunmore Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	135265
Local Authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	329068
Inspection dates	29–30 January 2009
Reporting inspector	Bernice Magson

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)	433
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 Pina Ross
Headteacher	Mr Robert Pattenden
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	Northcourt Road Abingdon OX14 1NR
Telephone number	01235 520550
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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

Dunmore Primary opened as a new school in January 2008 following the amalgamation of Dunmore Infant and Junior schools. Most pupils are of White British origin and very few are from minority ethnic groups. The number of pupils on roll is rising rapidly. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are admitted to part-time education in the Nursery. They start full-time education in the Reception classes in the autumn term of the school year in which they are five years of age. Below-average numbers of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including physical, behavioural, social and emotional needs and dyslexia. In some cohorts these pupils are a significant number. Extended services are available on the same site managed by the governing body, including out-of-school care and a Children's Centre. The Children's Centre was not part of this inspection.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

'I cannot praise the staff highly enough because they have worked so hard to create a united school', commented one parent expressing the positive views of many. Indeed, this is an improving school and with a good capacity to develop further. Under the guidance of an experienced headteacher, who is ably supported by his deputy and governing body, the school provides a satisfactory quality of education. The appointment of key staff is almost completed and systems are established to ensure that the school operates smoothly day by day. Priorities are identified and actions introduced to develop the school and address weaknesses in pupils' performance. Senior leaders have started to track progress to ensure that learning tasks challenge pupils effectively. However, at this early stage many developments are not yet embedded sufficiently in order to raise standards.

Personal development is good throughout the school. Pupils enjoy school and participate willingly in all it has to offer. They recognise the importance of healthy lifestyles, eat a healthy diet and are enthusiastic about sports. In this inclusive community, pupils are successfully encouraged to respect and appreciate the achievement of others. A curriculum programme called 'Launchpad' is successfully developing their life skills such as team building, money mathematics and first aid. Pupils are developing as responsible citizens, enjoying their partnership links in the community, and with a school in Uganda. Proudly, they describe their efforts to raise funds towards the building of a water tower at their link school in Uganda. Excellent partnerships with other schools and outside agencies are increasing their well-being.

Achievement is satisfactory. Pupils attain above-average standards by Year 6 from above-average starting points. Some weaknesses exist in writing standards, particularly for boys and the more able pupils, and also in mathematics. Pupils are not always challenged sufficiently in lessons because inconsistencies exist in teachers' subject knowledge and in their expectations of pupils. Learning experiences are not always matched appropriately to pupils' interests and needs. The school has accurately identified the lack of a teaching and learning policy, and that curriculum experiences are too narrow for the full development of knowledge and skills. Some improvements have taken place already. Specialist teaching is providing learning in greater depth in music, art and foreign languages and additional support is targeted at the less-able pupils in mathematics in Year 5. However, although some good and outstanding teaching and learning take place, they are not consistent.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher, staff and governors have agreed the school's aims and values and developed an action plan to meet immediate needs and those of the longer term. Systems for school self-evaluation are well structured and are being applied rigorously to ensure the community successfully develops its new identity. Many teaching staff have new roles and responsibilities, which they are keen to develop. A good climate for learning is achieved and standards are starting to improve. Pupils' achievement is rising and they are better supported in their learning. However, the impact of these improvements on overall standards is not measurable at this early stage.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children are happily settled and feel safe and secure because provision for their welfare is excellent. They are confident and enthusiastic learners who are supported extremely well by a

caring staff team. Children persevere well on chosen tasks and are developing excellent skills of independence. Behaviour and relationships are outstanding. 'We like the messy area, playing on the train outside, and the waving window', they commented, when asked about their favourite activities each day. By the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, most children are achieving beyond expected goals for their age in all areas of learning. Progress is good because of consistently good teaching. Children's individual needs are identified early and sensitive support is provided so that they can achieve success. A well-balanced and exciting curriculum for the indoors provides a good range of challenges. However, staff have recognised that the outdoor curriculum in Reception lacks sufficient challenge in all areas of learning. Nevertheless, parents are pleased at how well their children are achieving. 'Every day she surprises us with something new she has learnt', commented one parent, expressing the views of many. The key stage manager provides good leadership and management. She has a good understanding of strengths and weaknesses in the Early Years Foundation Stage and is effectively developing the provision. For example, activities have been introduced to address a weakness of boys in their learning of letters and sounds. Families are rightly pleased with the quality of the out-of-school provision in the Fun Kids Club, describing it as 'good home-from-home care'. The club has a warm and nurturing environment in which the younger children receive good care and support.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the curriculum and teaching and learning in Years 1 to 6 in order to raise standards in writing and mathematics.
- Use assessment data more precisely to measure the performance of pupils and ensure that learning tasks provide a consistent challenge.
- In the Reception year, increase the quality and range of learning experiences in the outdoors.

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

In 2008 Year 2 pupils attained above-average standards in national tests and a third reached the higher levels in reading and mathematics. In writing, although most pupils attained national expectations, too few attained the higher levels. Standards by the end of Year 6 are above average, and this is supported by the provisional results for 2008 national tests. Significant numbers of pupils attained the higher Level 5 in reading, mathematics and science. Boys outperformed girls in mathematics, but the performance of girls was significantly above that of boys in writing. The school has limited data to identify any trends in performance.

Nevertheless, leaders have introduced additional strategies to bring improvement, because they recognise that the most able and boys are not challenged enough in some lessons. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make the same satisfactory progress as their peers.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Relationships are good and pupils are respectful of each other and their teachers. When the teaching is good, pupils are enthused to learn and gain rapidly in confidence. Behaviour is good around the school and in lessons. Pupils have a clear understanding of the difference between right and wrong and almost always choose to do right. They feel safe and secure and know to

whom they can turn for support and comfort if they have anxieties or are concerned. Pupils have an excellent cultural understanding and speak knowledgeably about their own heritage and countries and cultures locally and overseas. They invite visitors to share in events which celebrate cultural appreciation, such as concerts and assemblies. Good support is given to the local hospice with their charity donations. Attendance and punctuality are good and above the national average. The school works diligently to maintain these levels.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching varies between outstanding and satisfactory. In most lessons classroom routines are made clear and regularly reinforced, so that learning takes place at a good pace and in a well-structured environment. When the teaching is good, learning objectives are explained clearly to pupils and tasks challenge different ability groups. In these lessons teachers and teaching assistants work very well together to support and encourage pupils. However, in some lessons pupils are less motivated to learn because tasks do not challenge and interest them enough and the role of teaching assistants is unclear. Teachers are beginning to use assessment data more regularly in lesson-planning, although this is not yet consistent. Teachers' marking is inconsistent across the school because comments do not focus sufficiently on explaining how pupils can improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is under review in order to meet the needs and interests of pupils and provide better continuity and progression in the learning of key skills. Topics are enthusing pupils more, such as the recycling project in Year 1. Specialist teachers are enhancing the curriculum well in the arts and modern languages and provision for personal, social and health education is good. The recently introduced 'Launchpad' project is promoting research and enterprise. Satisfactory links are made between subjects to consolidate basic skills in literacy and numeracy, although there are too few links to information communication and technology skills for research or other learning. The number of out-of-school clubs has recently increased, although these are mostly in sports and offer limited access to pupils in a school of this size.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The pastoral care of pupils is good. Systems are securely in place to safeguard learners and ensure their welfare. Attendance and punctuality are monitored well. Induction procedures into the Early Years Foundation Stage are good. Across the school staff know pupils well and establish good relationships with them. Assessment systems are only just satisfactory, although they are developing well. The tracking of pupils' progress has started, although its use is at early stages. The excellent links with outside agencies, including the Children's Centre and out-of-school care, are helping support pupils and their families. Most parents are extremely positive about the new school and the changes that have taken place. Parents receive appropriate information about the curriculum and how their children are progressing, although some would like this to be increased. The school is seeking to address the concerns of a small minority of

parents in Year 1 who are anxious about staffing changes caused by long-term sickness and retirement.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher has rapidly introduced a series of initiatives to improve the progress of pupils and develop the quality of provision. Ably supported by the deputy headteacher, the headteacher has had a very positive impact in a very short time. For example, pupils in Reception and Year 1 are learning about letters and sounds more rapidly because of the consistent use of a well-planned programme. Good progress has been achieved in developing a cohesive and stable primary school team of staff and governors. Good efforts are made to promote high-quality care for all pupils, including in the out-of-school care. Community cohesion is promoted well. The school has become a key member of its community through its excellent partnership links with the secondary school, specialist health agencies and local church. The recently introduced systems of self-evaluation are effective and are helping the school to move forward. Although there is less than one year's data to analyse, the school has a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. Governors are effective in holding the school to account. Finances are managed well and efficient use is made of resources. Subject co-ordinators are beginning to develop an overview of their subjects but, as yet, have had limited opportunities to observe and monitor teaching in their subject areas. They do not yet use assessment data sufficiently to gain a clear grasp of standards throughout the school. Recent improvements to standards, though still in the early stages, demonstrate that the school has a good capacity to improve.

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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	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	1
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?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
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	2
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	2

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?	3

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	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**

12 February 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Dunmore Primary School, Abingdon, OX14 1NR

You may recall that a team of three inspectors visited your school recently. Thank you for being so friendly and welcoming. It was good finding out about all the exciting things you are doing. The 'Launchpad' programme for Friday afternoons looks really exciting and we can understand why you enjoy the activities so much.

You have a satisfactory school, which is improving rapidly.

Here are the things that are best about your school.

- You enjoy school and attend regularly.
- You work hard in lessons and are eager to succeed.
- You reach high standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science.
- You enjoy sporting activities and understand about eating healthily.
- You take good care of each other and give good support to those less fortunate than yourselves.
- Your headteacher, staff, governors and parents are working hard to make your school even better.

There are three things we would like your school to do to improve. First, in Years 1 to 6 we would like the teachers to provide a wider range of activities to interest and challenge you, particularly in writing and mathematics. Second, we have asked the teachers in the Reception year to provide more activities for learning in the outdoors. Finally, we would like to see your teachers and other adults make greater use of the systems which measure how well you are learning and provide better guidance for you about how to improve.

We hope that you continue to enjoy your time at Dunmore Primary School.

Yours faithfully

Bernice Magson

Lead Inspector