

Danson Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101403
Local Authority	Bexley
Inspection number	335707
Inspection dates	6–7 October 2009
Reporting inspector	Sheila Browning

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	411
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lawrence Baxter
Headteacher	Jackie Edwards
Date of previous school inspection	1 November 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 18 lessons and held meetings with governors, staff and pupils. They also talked to parents in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They observed the school's work, and looked at documentation including records of pupils' progress and the school development plan. They also took into account the views of parents and staff expressed in questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- how well boys, particularly those in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Years 3 to 6 who are White British, achieve in their writing
- the extent to which average and more able girls are challenged in English and mathematics work in Years 3 to 6
- the effectiveness and use of assessment in English and mathematics to accelerate pupils' progress in Years 3 to 6
- how successfully leaders, including governors, set ambitious targets to improve teaching to improve pupils' attainment.

Information about the school

This primary school is larger than average. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. Over the last three years there has been a slight rise in the proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups and in the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language. An increasing number are at the early stages of learning English when they join. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is well below that found nationally. Most of these pupils have behavioural, emotional or social difficulties, and speech, language and communication difficulties. The school has provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage in its Nursery and Reception classes. The school is accredited as a Healthy School and has gained an Activemark in recognition of its work in physical education and sport. It has a Travel Plan and International Schools (foundation) awards.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Danson is a good school. It is exceptionally well led by the headteacher who, together with the leadership team, is bringing about significant improvements. These are seen in pupils' rising standards, especially in reading, writing and mathematics and particularly by White British boys and the more able pupils. As one pupil said, 'in lessons teachers try to get the best out of us'. Pupils enjoy their learning, especially the themed topics, such as 'India', where different subjects and skills are linked together to make learning more interesting and fun. The outstanding curriculum is 'living and breathing' proof of the rich high-quality opportunities for learning. The excellent care, guidance and support for pupils are reflected in their exemplary behaviour, and outstanding contribution to the school and wider community.

Standards at the end of Year 6 are now average, with a much higher proportion of pupils working at higher levels than expected for their age. This continuous improvement has come through a successful school focus on reading and writing. The large majority of pupils now make good progress and some make outstanding progress. Nonetheless, there is more work to be done to ensure that pupils, especially the more able, make the same good progress in science as they do in English and mathematics where rigorous monitoring, which helps pinpoint any likely underperformance, has had a strong impact. Good teaching is complemented by well-trained teaching assistants and additional learning programmes. Stimulating activities and strong teaching across the six areas of learning ensure children in the Early Years Foundation Stage get off to an excellent start in their education. They enjoy their daily sessions which help them link sounds and letters. Throughout the school, a careful choice of texts and a more practical approach to reading and writing have especially engaged boys in their learning. A more 'girl-friendly' approach to teaching mathematics, which successfully engages girls' interest, has raised their achievement.

Senior leaders are very clearly focused on moving the school forward. The relentless drive on improving standards and clear-sighted evaluation of the school's strengths and areas for development, often using strong analysis of data, demonstrate the school's good capacity for further improvement. School improvement planning is comprehensive, but is short-term rather than long-term. Partnerships with the community and parent links are positive. One comment typical of many parents was, 'I am happy to leave my child every day because I know he is having a positive experience'.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate the progress of pupils, especially those more able in science, so that they

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match levels of attainment in English and mathematics, by:

- extending the opportunities for practically based learning
 - ensuring checks on data identify those pupils underperforming in science
 - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve and checking that work is appropriately challenging, especially for the more able.
- Refine school improvement planning by:
- ensuring plans cover a longer period (at least three years).

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

In lessons, pupils' make good progress; they are really motivated by the teaching, work hard and are eager to take part in all the school offers. This is a reflection of their excellent attitudes to learning. Action taken, including lunchtime reading clubs to improve boys' achievement in reading and writing, particularly the achievement of White British boys, has resulted in them outperforming the girls. Work in lessons and pupils' books indicates that the activities chosen interest and challenge them. Older average pupils and more able pupils, especially girls, are challenged well in English and mathematics. All these factors have led to an increased proportion of pupils reaching higher levels than expected for their age. This is not yet the case in science. All pupils achieve well, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those who speak English as an additional language. Due to excellent provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage, children start in Year 1 having made outstanding progress in most areas of learning. They build well on this to attain above average standards by Year 2. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 are now successfully making up for 'lost ground'. The four-year upward trend is testament to the improvements in teaching and learning across the school so that by Year 6 standards are at least average and in English are above those found nationally.

Pupils say they feel exceptionally safe, enjoy cycling proficiency and being playground buddies. They know a lot about keeping fit and healthy and a large number participate in sports, although the content of their lunch boxes is not always the healthiest! Pupils make an outstanding contribution to school life. The active school council has a strong voice and pupils take part in the world of work through 'Young people are taking over'. They are proud to be house captains and were thrilled to discover the newly elected head boy and girl. They raise funds for charities, get involved in the local community brilliantly and through their international links to Mumbai, and within the United Kingdom have a very good sense of different cultures and traditions. All these reflect their excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Several factors have led to pupils' good and improving achievement. The innovative and interesting curriculum has more creative opportunities for writing, such as the Year 6 'box of dreams', while fashion projects in mathematics inspire the girls. Themed weeks, activities such as 'Take One Book' and 'Take One Picture' working with the National Gallery, and collaboration with the schools sports partnership have all had a significant impact on pupils' enjoyment and achievement. The many clubs, including Italian, cooking, gardening and dance, and residential trips, breakfast and after school clubs all contribute well to broadening pupils' experiences.

Additionally, pupils receive excellent care, support and guidance. At the time of inspection all safeguarding procedures were robust. Pupils are well known to staff and pupils say they have total confidence in staff to advise them effectively. Pupils understand how their targets help them to improve their work and say marking helps them identify the next steps in their learning. In most lessons 'steps to success' criteria, thumbs-up and -down and 'talking partners' were used well to reinforce pupils' learning. Well-targeted support, strong family links, and extended services support those vulnerable or facing challenging circumstances extremely well.

Teaching is consistently effective and motivates pupils' interest. The great majority is good with some that is outstanding and a little that is satisfactory. Sometimes the pace of learning tends to slow when teachers talk for too long, which limits opportunities for pupils' independent work. Planning is clear and teachers ensure pupils understand what they will be learning and why. Good subject knowledge, effective questioning and skilled teaching assistants contribute significantly to pupils' learning. Assessment and teachers'

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good expectations are used well in English and mathematics teaching but are less well developed in science. Increasingly, more practical learning opportunities occur in science as when Year 2 pupils investigated ice melting. Opportunities to discuss ideas are used well to support learning: good examples are when Year 1 pupils enjoyed comparing, smelling and talking about Indian spices before writing; Year 2 pupils researched and shared facts about Indian life and culture; Year 4 pupils researched animals in India and used information and communication technology to design factsheets to share with other pupils.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher's strong leadership has led the drive for continued school improvement. Highly effective steps have been taken to reduce pupils' previous underperformance. Staff and governors share her determination to provide the best possible learning opportunities. The development of strong effective teams and leadership at all levels is why improvements are seen in pupils' outcomes, well-being and the curriculum. Teaching has improved because of extensive monitoring and the professional development of all staff. Target setting is rigorous and excellent use is made of tracking and monitoring information alongside quality support for identified pupils. The school is self-critical and reflective. While the right priorities are identified, development planning is short-term rather than long-term.

Governors are now well informed about the school's strengths and development areas and are beginning to challenge the school's performance. They seek the views of parents and hold exit reviews with Year 6 pupils. Relationships with parents and carers are good, with clear communication channels for parents, including regular newsletters, although a few would like more information, including about their children's progress. Pupils' awareness of community cohesion is well established through the school's immediate, national and international links. The school's strong commitment to promoting equal opportunities, tackling discrimination and safeguarding are seen in how well the children get on with each other and also in the improvements in the performance of many groups of pupils.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children settle quickly into the Nursery and Reception classes to become happy confident learners. High-quality adult questioning and support help them get off to a flying start in most areas of learning. Excellent leadership, strong teaching, and rigorous assessment that is used very effectively to guide planning, have resulted in a continuous trend of improvement. Children have consistently good and often excellent levels of achievement. Most demonstrate outstanding progress from their below average starting points to reach above age-related standards by Year 1. The successful teaching of letters and sounds and sessions in guided reading have led to improving results in writing for both boys and girls. Children benefit from an exciting outdoor learning environment with clearly zoned activity areas. A newly created woodland area gives children extra opportunities to develop their curiosity, imagination and concentration. Activities observed included boarding a plane to fly to India, role play in the Indian restaurant, making Divali cards and learning a Hindi nursery rhyme. Children show a very good understanding of how to keep safe and healthy. Younger Reception children enjoyed joining Nursery children in tasting poppadoms, samosas and rice and knew to wash their hands first. Effective liaison between the Nursery and Reception classes ensures a smooth transition for children. Children's welfare underpins the work of all staff who work in most effective partnerships and with parents, carers and agencies to support children's personal and academic development. Children learn well through a mix of teacher-led and ,child-chosen activities.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

Parents' and carers' views of the school were positive. Almost all parents and carers felt that their children enjoyed school and were kept safe and healthy. They commented on the many improvements they had noted over recent years. A few felt that incidents of unacceptable behaviour were not dealt with effectively but inspectors found pupils' behaviour exemplary and pupils themselves said behaviour was not a problem. A few parents and carers would like more information about their children's progress and for the school to take greater account of their suggestions and concerns. Inspectors found that the school was doing all that could be reasonably expected in these areas.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Danson Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 12 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 96 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 411 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	42	44	54	56	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	34	35	62	65	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	14	15	65	68	11	12	2	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	22	23	63	66	7	7	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	30	31	61	34	2	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	23	24	65	68	5	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	19	20	73	76	1	1	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	16	17	62	25	2	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	17	18	68	71	4	4	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	17	18	64	67	11	12	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	9	9	67	70	10	10	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	21	21	65	68	4	4	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	34	35	58	60	1	1	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



8 October 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Danson Primary School, Bexley, DA16 2BH

You may remember that we visited your school recently. We really enjoyed talking to you. I am writing to thank you all for being so friendly and helpful. We thought you would like to know what we found out. Your school is a good school and it is improving. We thought your behaviour was outstanding. We really liked how you all help each other as playground buddies and in other ways. You told us how much you enjoy school, especially all the sports and extra clubs and activities you do. These also help you to keep fit and healthy. Your teachers make lessons interesting and fun for you, especially in English and mathematics. Children in the Nursery and Reception classes get off to a great start at school. You told us that you feel very safe and how well the staff look after you. Your curriculum is so exciting and interesting, no wonder you are doing so well in your learning, especially in reading, writing and mathematics. Well done!

Your headteacher has led the school brilliantly and all the teachers are working so hard to keep improving your school. Even though you are doing so well now they want to make things even better for you. We have suggested a few things which we think might help make your school even better:

- Help you, especially those of you who find learning easy, to make the same good progress in science as you do in English and mathematics by:
- giving you more opportunities to learn practically
- using assessment information to make sure you are doing well enough
- making sure teachers check that the work you do is hard enough especially for those of you who find learning easy.
- When the staff make a list of the ways they can make the school better, they should think further ahead to check more carefully how well they have done.

You can help too by continuing to work hard.

Yours faithfully

Sheila Browning

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