

Darton Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106574
Local Authority	Barnsley
Inspection number	336695
Inspection dates	26–27 April 2010
Reporting inspector	Clive Moss HMI

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	314
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr James Martin
Headteacher	Mr Mike Porter
Date of previous school inspection	22 May 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one additional inspector. The inspectors visited 12 lessons observing eight teachers, observed assemblies and other activities in which pupils were learning, and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils, and looked at pupils' work. They observed the school's work, and looked at school policies and plans, records of pupils' involvement in school activities, records relating to support for pupils and monitoring work carried out by the school. They also looked at questionnaires completed by pupils and members of staff and 78 completed by parents and carers.

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

- the effectiveness of support for pupils at risk of underachieving, including how families are helped to support their children's learning
- opportunities for outdoor learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage
- the pace of pupils' learning in lessons and the level of challenge for pupils in their work
- the quality of pupils' reading and writing.

Information about the school

Darton Primary School is larger than the average primary school. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is low. The proportion of pupils whose first language is not, or is believed not to be English, is low. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average overall but is above average for those with a statement of special educational needs and occasionally high in particular year groups. The school has achieved the Healthy Schools Bronze award and the Activemark for the quality of its work in these areas. Early Foundation Stage provision is in two Foundation Stage classes and one mixed Reception and Year 1 class. The childcare provision at the site is managed separately to the school and subject to a separate inspection.

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

The school provides a good education for its pupils and a welcoming, caring and inclusive environment in which pupils feel very safe. The vast majority of pupils enjoy school and achieve well in many aspects of their learning and development. They reach broadly average standards of attainment in public tests by the end of Key Stage 2.

Teaching is of a good standard. Senior leaders have focused carefully on the quality of teaching and used opportunities for the professional development of staff to bring about improvements. For example, partnerships with other schools have been used well to develop the teaching of mathematics, although lessons do not always provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to learn the subject in the practical ways that capture their imagination best. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, the outdoor area is valued as a place where many children prefer to explore and learn. It is used frequently as an extension of the indoor learning areas. Other developments in teaching have resulted in improvements in pupils' achievement in reading and writing. In lessons seen during the inspection, however, the pace of pupils' learning was slowed occasionally when activities were organised in a way that left groups of pupils inactive and awaiting their turn or to be given more work. Also, not all activities provided enough challenge for more able pupils. The school combines the teaching with the good care, guidance and support for pupils through a well-conceived range of intervention strategies that provide effective support for pupils needing additional help. There is a good range of opportunities for parents and carers to be involved in their children's learning and most agree that the school helps them to do so.

The school is experiencing a period of significant change. At the time of the inspection, the headteacher had been in post for only one week and most of the senior leaders were appointed recently. They are quickly developing a detailed knowledge of the work of the school and have put in place thorough systems that enable the staff to understand clearly how well pupils are doing. As a result, the progress made by pupils is improving. The school has made good progress tackling the areas for improvement at the last inspection. It has good capacity to improve further. A broad range of activities to monitor the work of the school provides senior leaders with detailed information on which to base self-evaluation. There is currently, however, insufficient identification of whole-school priorities for improvement and current improvement plans do not provide for a coherent approach to the school's development.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure an appropriate level of challenging work, particularly for the more able

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- pupils, and ensure pupils' progress is not slowed by periods of inactivity in lessons.
- Provide more opportunities for practical learning in mathematics.
 - Develop a more strategic approach to the leadership of the school that identifies whole-school priorities clearly and takes action towards these priorities in a coherently planned way, so that there is a revised school improvement plan in place by the end of the summer term 2010.

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

Pupils enjoy their lessons greatly. This was evident in their response to the teaching, their comments to inspectors during lessons, in meetings, and in surveys carried out for the school and the inspection. The pupils often showed a sense of joy and excitement about learning, with spontaneous expressions of delight during lessons. They take pride in their work and concentrate well. Good cross-curricular links for English provide many opportunities for pupils to write at length on a range of real-life topics. These opportunities enable the pupils to make good progress with their literacy skills. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receiving well-targeted additional support have made significant improvements in reading and mathematics scores. The school monitors the progress of every pupil carefully and ensures there are no significant differences in the progress made by different groups.

Pupils behave well. They are very polite and show a lot of consideration for other people. Very occasionally, there were minor disruptions to lessons seen during the inspection. This was usually because of periods of inactivity, sometimes after easy tasks had been completed quickly. Relationships between pupils at the school are harmonious. Instances of bullying are rare and there have been no recorded incidents of racial intolerance. Pupils are confident that any instances of misbehaviour are dealt with effectively. Exclusions are extremely rare.

Most pupils say they always feel very safe at school and they show a high level of understanding of how to stay safe. They have an excellent understanding of how to eat healthily and the proportion taking part in sports activities is well-above average. Most use the school's excellent resources for active play. There are good opportunities for pupils to take on responsibilities in school and pupils speak with pride about the various roles they fulfil. They develop a good sense of social responsibility. This can be seen, for example, from the school council's decision at their own instigation to use the profits from the school's healthy tuck shop, which it runs, to support a child in Uganda and in pupils' leadership of assemblies on topics of concern to themselves, such as environmental matters. The pupils grow in confidence and self-esteem at the school and feel well prepared for the next phase of their education, although they are reluctant to leave Darton Primary!

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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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	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
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	2

How effective is the provision?

In the best lessons seen during the inspection, teachers ensured a good pace of learning and used questions effectively to assess pupils' learning, enhance pupils' understanding and correct misconceptions. Lesson planning is detailed and constructed around clear learning objectives, but assessment data are not always analysed and used sufficiently to ensure all pupils are given challenging work, particularly the more able. Learning support staff are used well in lessons and help to ensure that pupils needing additional support, including those with special educational needs, make similarly good progress to their peers. Pupils were able to tell inspectors clearly how well they were doing and what they needed to do to improve their work. All of the pupils who responded to the inspection survey said that adults explained to them how to improve their work.

The curriculum provides a broad and balanced range of experiences that contribute significantly to the pupils' enjoyment of learning and, consequently, the sometimes high outcomes they achieve. Pupils' interest is captured and sustained through well-planned activities such as a sequence of lessons connected with a visit made by the pupils to Manchester airport. Pupils spoke with enthusiasm about this work. The curriculum is enhanced by a good range of extra-curricular activities that attract large groups of pupils. Until the school recently formed a link with another school in London, however, pupils have not had sufficient opportunities to gain direct experience of communities different to their own.

The school has improved pupils' attendance through working in partnership with neighbouring schools and the above average level has been sustained. The school works well with a range of agencies to meet the needs of individual pupils. The support

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provided is very effective in enabling pupils experiencing difficulties to settle into the school and learn well. Parents and carers have noted 'a huge difference' in their children as a result; it is apparent in improved social skills and attitudes to homework. One parent/carer wrote, 'At school, (the pupil) mixes well, is happy and developing confidence.' Most parents and carers think that the school meets their children's particular needs well.

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	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Senior leaders have brought about improvements in the quality of teaching through a wide-ranging programme of activities for monitoring the work of the school, including governors observing teaching. Most parents and carers think the school is led well and are happy overall with their children's experience at the school. Morale among the staff is high, but not all have had sufficient opportunities to be involved in setting whole-school priorities and in evaluating the work of the school critically.

Governors are well organised and were influential in ensuring the school responded promptly to a drop in pupils' attainment in 2008. They are directly involved in monitoring the quality of teaching, but do not always evaluate it critically. All regulations for safeguarding pupils are met and risk assessments are carried out rigorously. The school's work to promote equalities has ensured there are no significant differences in the achievement of different groups of pupils, but the participation of different groups in the full range of opportunities provided by the school is not analysed routinely. Action plans for promoting equalities are incomplete. Activity to promote community cohesion makes an important contribution to pupils' achievement, but the school has not completed all the formal requirements associated with this duty, resulting in some missed opportunities for its promotion in the curriculum.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3

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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	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Many children start school with lower levels of skills than expected for their age. Good quality teaching and secure subject knowledge promote children's rapid progress, particularly in their personal, social and emotional development and communication, language and literacy skills. Teachers build successfully on what children know already and plan the next steps in learning accordingly. The school's data show that by the time the children leave the Reception Year they are working securely within the early learning goals, reach average standards and are well prepared for the start of Year 1.

Teachers provide activities that interest, challenge and engage the children in learning. For example, children have extensive opportunities to write and to learn that print carries meaning. Teachers use questions well to encourage children to speak. There are well-resourced and exciting role-play areas, and other, good-quality resources easily accessible to children throughout the learning areas. As a result, children have many opportunities to make choices about their learning and develop independence in the way in which they learn.

Early Years Foundation Stage provision is extremely well organised. Strong leadership ensures the quality of the care for children and their learning are reviewed and evaluated rigorously in order to promote the continuous development of the provision. Excellent partnership with parents and carers ensure children's needs are met and parents and carers are able to be involved in their children's development. For example, children settle quickly into the Early Years Foundation Stage, because parents and carers are involved in this process through a programme of home visits and consultations. The Early Years Foundation Stage leader ensures that all welfare requirements are met and safeguarding procedures are secure and in line with the school's policies and procedures.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

Most parents and carers are happy with their children's experience at the school. An overwhelming majority think that their children are kept safe and enjoy school. Most think that the quality of teaching is good and that their children are making good progress. Negative views were usually restricted to individual parents and carers, although a very small minority think that their children are not making good progress. Inspectors found that the pupils enjoy their education greatly and achieve well in many aspects of their education and development. The quality of teaching is good and the children are kept safe and feel very safe at school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Darton 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 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 78 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 314 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	44	56	32	41	2	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	41	53	34	44	3	4	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	28	36	40	51	7	9	2	3
My child is making enough progress at this school	33	42	35	45	8	10	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	39	50	36	46	2	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	24	31	43	55	7	9	3	4
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	22	28	53	68	2	3	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)	18	23	52	67	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	28	36	42	54	7	9	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	20	26	40	51	10	13	3	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	17	22	43	55	7	9	3	4
The school is led and managed effectively	20	26	47	60	5	6	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	33	42	40	51	3	4	1	1

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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

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 is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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.



28 April 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Darton Primary School, Barnsley South, S75 5AD

Thank you for talking to my colleagues and me and making us welcome when we visited your school recently. We spoke with you in lessons, around the school and in groups, looked at your work, read the results of questionnaires filled in by you and your parents and carers, and spoke with some of your teachers. Here is a summary of our main findings, which I hope will be of interest to you.

- The school provides you with a good education. You make good progress from your starting points when you join the school and your test results at the end of Key Stage 2 are similar to the average for pupils across England.
- Your attendance is above average. You said that you enjoy school a lot and feel very safe. You showed a lot of knowledge and understanding about how to stay safe.
- You behave well and also get on with each other extremely well. As a result, everyone is able to get the best out of the school, including those of you who need a lot of help.
- The school provides a wide range of lessons and other activities that excite you and are helping you to learn well. Most of your parents and carers support the school and think it is doing a good job.

I have asked the headteacher and the staff to make sure that all of you are given work that is challenging and enables you to make the best progress you can, particularly those of you who are more able. Also, I want the teachers to make sure that there are no occasions in lessons when you are waiting around. You told the inspectors that you enjoy learning about mathematics most when you have practical activities to do. I have asked the teachers to make sure you have more opportunities to learn mathematics in this way. Finally, I have asked the headteacher to do some things with the governors and the staff to help the school make even more improvements. I know that many of you already make a very important contribution to the school and I am sure all of you will want to do everything you can to support the staff in making Darton Primary School better still.

Yours sincerely

Mr Clive Moss

Her Majesty's Inspector

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