

Dinnington First School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108437
Local Authority	Newcastle Upon Tyne
Inspection number	337073
Inspection dates	25–26 November 2009
Reporting inspector	Clive Petts

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	3–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	170
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr G Hays
Headteacher	Mrs A Farrar
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Sycamore Avenue Dinnington Village Newcastle-upon-Tyne NE13 7JY
Telephone number	01661 822457
Fax number	01661 820322
Email address	admin@dinnington.newcastle.sch.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It rates council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 08456 404045, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 08456 404045

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2009

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 10 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff, groups of pupils, and parents and carers. They observed the school's work and analysed 54 questionnaire responses from parents and carers. The team also looked at data on pupils' progress, the school improvement plan, school policies and procedures; scrutinised pupils' work; and spoke to the School Improvement Partner to discuss her reports.

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

- the impact of the school's action to raise the rate of pupils' progress and achievement, especially in reading and mathematics, by the end of Year 4
- the effectiveness of leaders and managers in monitoring and evaluating actions taken to improve the quality of learning and the rate of progress of all groups of pupils.

Information about the school

This is a smaller than average village school situated on the north-western outskirts of the city of Newcastle-upon-Tyne. Nearly all the pupils are from a White British background with a small proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and a small number learning English as an additional language. The percentage eligible for free school meals is below average. The number with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. The Early Years Foundation Stage consists of a 26 full-time-place Nursery and a Reception class. Before-and after-school care is provided by the school. The school has achieved the Healthy Schools, Activemark Gold and Sport Partnership Gold 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

Dinnington is a good school which provides good care for its pupils, who really enjoy the happy, friendly atmosphere. Consequently, their commitment to school life is good, including their attendance. The remark of one pupil, 'I love this school as it has such good vibes,' sums up pupils' views. Each pupil is known as an individual and the pupil's unique needs are taken fully into account as the commitment to equal opportunities lies at the heart of all the school does. Parents and carers also appreciate the care and consideration given to their children. A typical comment, 'We are reassured our child is in "safe hands" and most importantly he is happy,' sums up their views. The reason why pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those learning English as an additional language make the same good progress as their classmates is because support and intervention is adaptable and child focused.

Children enter school at starting points typical for their age. They make good progress, overall, to reach close to well above average standards by the end of Year 4. Results from national tests show that pupils make consistently good progress in Years 1 and 2 to reach above average standards, overall, with standards in writing particularly high. However, the school assessment information shows that over time progress is a little slower and less consistent in Years 3 and 4, especially in mathematics. Recent staff reorganisation and a sharper focus on achievement in mathematics are beginning to accelerate the rate and consistency of progress for older pupils.

Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They settle confidently and thoroughly enjoy their learning. The school has suitable plans in place to improve the quality of outdoor learning and has made a good start. However, there is an insufficient range of thought-provoking activities for outdoor learning which motivate children to explore, investigate and promote improved language skills which can then be systematically assessed.

The teaching quality across the school is good with some stimulating and motivating lessons in which all pupils are active participants. Pupils' personal development is very good because of the thoughtful care demonstrated before, during and after the school day. Pupils are really keen and interested in their work and accept responsibility willingly, for example by tending the class vegetable plot to ensure a good crop for use in the kitchen for the lunchtime menu. Pupils are justly proud of the school and what it offers them. Pupils are aware of the diversity that exists in the wider and global communities and are eager to learn more. They readily participate in village activities, for example by observing the events of Easter at the local parish church.

The school has a good capacity to continue to improve. It is tackling inconsistencies in

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

pupils' achievement and progress successfully, for example by improving the quality of their writing. Self-review is critical and reflective but although judgements are accurate, the evaluation of the pupils' learning outcomes is not always sufficiently rigorous to ensure a constant focus on raising achievement in action planning. Effective partnerships with the local network of schools, agencies and the wider community have helped improve provision, boost achievement and add to pupils' personal development.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Sharpen up the approaches adopted by senior leaders to improve effectiveness by:
 - implementing more rigorous methods in the evaluation of outcomes for pupils to help boost the quality of learning for all pupils
 - improving the quality of action planning so that targets are clear and relative weaknesses, for example in mathematics, are improved rapidly by the time pupils leave school.
- Accelerate the rate of progress in Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - extending the range of thought-provoking activities for outdoor learning
 - checking progress more regularly to ensure consistent development in all areas of learning, particularly early linking sounds and letters.

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

The school's above average results in national tests at the end of Year 2 have lifted standards. Pupils do best in reading and writing, and achievement in mathematics is now higher and more consistent. The school's assessment information reveals that Year 3 and 4 pupils continue to make good progress, overall, to achieve close to well above average standards. Nevertheless, the rate of progress is slower and the pattern of achievement fluctuates; for example pupils achieve really well in their writing but progress in mathematics is variable. Younger pupils benefit from some inspiring teaching which challenges their imaginative thinking, for example when they were describing their picnic on the moon before blasting off to return to earth. As a result, pupils become creative, confident writers. In mathematics older pupils are sometimes given more mundane tasks which are not always tailored well enough to their needs and interests. This reduces the opportunities for active, practical learning for pupils to apply their skills to solve problems. Assessment information is skilfully used to target priorities for support and intervention for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those with particular talents.

Pupils have an excellent understanding of the benefits of keeping fit, staying active and choosing a balanced diet. Most behave really well and are very responsible and safety conscious, for example when using the internet or a mobile phone. At play, pupils are energetic and keenly competitive in any games or contests. They are considerate and helpful towards one another, which is a reflection of the very positive adult role models. They respect differences and each others' views; this underpins the harmony that exists

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

in school. Pupils are confident that bullying is rare and are very positive about the benefits of the red and yellow card system. Members of the school council actively represent pupils' views at their regular meetings and are proud of the difference they can make, for example by successfully writing a letter of complaint about the faulty 'friendship stop kit' to request a free replacement. Throughout the day there is a happy, bubbly family atmosphere where older pupils take their responsibilities seriously, especially when 'looking out' for younger children. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good and provides a firm basis for reflection and consideration for others, for example by sponsoring children in the Third World.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
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	2
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?

The quality of teaching is good with elements of outstanding practice. Strengths include secure subject knowledge, using topics to link subject areas, and active learning followed by composed periods of reflection and analysis. In nearly all lessons teachers give clear explanations and demonstrations are enhanced by using new technology. They check effectively how well pupils have understood what they have learnt. When

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

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

progress slows it is often as a result of tasks set that are not matched well enough to needs, interests and talents. Occasionally, expectations of what can be achieved are not as high as they could be.

The imaginative curriculum links subjects together well to create interest and provoke questions, for example relating the topic of symmetry to work on Arabia. Literacy opportunities are exploited effectively across subjects although occasionally chances are missed to exploit pupils' numeracy skills in all subjects. The good partnership with the local high school enables pupils to learn French, Spanish and Italian. Pupils also benefit from high-quality specialist teaching in art and music. There is a good range of activities outside the classroom to enrich learning, for example visiting a nearby synagogue and a residential experience for older pupils.

Pastoral care for pupils, including those who face challenging circumstances or who are vulnerable, is a strength of the school. This includes the good before- and after- school care which is effectively managed by a group of committed volunteers including parents and carers. In questionnaire responses parents and carers speak highly of the quality of induction into Nursery and the transition to the nearby middle school. Good care is taken to ensure that pupils are included in all activities regardless of background or starting point. This all bolsters pupils' strong sense of belonging to a happy, caring community.

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?

The headteacher provides good leadership and has carefully considered ambitions for the continued improvement in the quality of learning. This is shared by a committed team of staff. Concerted efforts have greatly improved writing skills. Recent staff reorganisation and 'freshening' of approaches in Years 3 and 4 reflects the headteacher's drive to iron out some of the inconsistencies in achievement. A more consistent pattern of achievement is emerging, which reflects the success of that patient drive for improvement. The recently appointed chair and vice chair, ably supported by parent governors, are patently committed to school improvement and provide good support. However, they recognise that practices and procedures, such as checking pupils' performance and safeguarding procedures, require regular monitoring and quality assurance checks. Safeguarding procedures meet requirements and the schools employs recommended best practice in nearly all areas of its work. Despite the building's

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

shortcomings, classrooms provide rich, stimulating learning environments enhanced by vibrant displays. The system for checking progress is accurate and reliable although is not fully exploited to analyse and evaluate the performance of all groups. The school makes a clear commitment to promoting community cohesion. The curriculum is used in innovative ways to increase pupils' understanding of the diverse and changing world around them, for example each year group has adopted a local, national or international charity to support. As a result, community cohesion is good and a developing strength.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
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
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	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children thoroughly enjoy their learning in Nursery and Reception because the teaching is made interesting and fun and there are lots to do indoors. Excellent relationships with staff ensure that children settle quickly. Activities are well planned and organised and provide ample opportunities for children to solve problems and find things out for themselves. The creative use of topics, for example with light and sound linked to work on owls, excites children and stimulates early writing. Although recent improvements have extended the scope for learning outside, there are not enough thought-provoking activities. Children are confident initiating their own learning. Staff follow their lead and pose some questions but questioning does not always relentlessly boost their early skills in linking sounds and letters and support reading and writing. Children are lively and bubbly when engaged in learning and play which helps encourage thoughtful dialogue. Behaviour is good and all are at ease with routines. Good hygiene habits are established throughout the day. The diverse family cultures are celebrated to promote

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

understanding and respect for difference, for example with Nursery children wearing traditional dress discussing with their friends how they celebrate Ramadan and Eid. Staff make notes on what children say, can do and achieve but observations are not always frequent enough or systematically focused on key areas of learning, for example early communication and language. Parents and carers are given good information and are successfully involved in their children's learning. From average starting points children make good progress to reach the levels expected for their age with almost half exceeding the expected levels. The provision is well led and managed.

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	2

Views of parents and carers

In response to the questionnaire, an overwhelming majority of parents and carers were extremely positive about the school. All expressed high praise for the enjoyment provided by the school and that it keeps their children safe. Parents and carers express confidence that any concerns are listened to carefully and acted upon appropriately by the headteacher. Parents and carers might find it helpful to know that there were a very small numbers of concerns received. The inspectors found that these issues were being effectively addressed and managed by the school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Dinnington First 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 54 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 170 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	43	80	10	19	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	36	67	18	33	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	25	46	29	54	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	33	61	19	35	2	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	39	72	15	28	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	34	63	19	35	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	33	61	19	35	0	0	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)	28	52	23	43	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	31	57	21	39	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	28	52	20	37	3	6	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	25	46	24	44	4	7	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	34	63	17	31	3	6	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	37	69	15	28	1	2	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.



27 November 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Dinnington First School, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, NE13 7JY

Thank you for being so very cheerful, friendly and helpful when we visited your school. We thoroughly enjoyed our time at Dinnington, especially listening to just how much you enjoy life at your school. I would like to tell you about some of the good things about your school.

- The school staff look after you and care for you well and support you so you make good progress in your learning, especially your writing.
- Your thoughtful and sensible attitudes and keenness to be at school are striking and this is reflected in your good attendance.
- You have an excellent grasp of how to remain healthy and keep fit.
- The school enjoys very good relationships with your parents and carers and there are good partnerships with the local network of schools and support agencies.
- You have a good headteacher and a committed, hardworking team of staff.

Your school provides a good education. By the time you leave school, the standards you reach are above the average, although not all of you do as well as you could in mathematics before you leave school. To help your school get even better, and ensure that you make an even better start in Nursery and Reception and achieve higher standards in mathematics, we have asked for these improvements to be made.

- We have asked that the rate at which you learn in Nursery and Reception is speeded up by staff making sure there are more thought-provoking experiences when you are working outside, which will also help boost listening, speaking and early reading and writing.
- We have asked that all of you improve the quality of your mathematics by the time you leave school. To help do this we have asked staff to work even more closely together so that your planned activities are more active and interesting.

You can play your part by continuing to work as hard as you can. Thank you for helping with this inspection. We hope the school will keep on building on its many strengths.

Best of luck to you all.

Yours sincerely

Clive Petts

Lead inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 08456 404045, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.