

# Dallam Community Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	110972
<b>Local Authority</b>	Warrington
<b>Inspection number</b>	337604
<b>Inspection dates</b>	25–26 May 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Stephen Rowland

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	205
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Ruth Agnew
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Julie Kersch
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	13 September 2006
<b>School address</b>	Boulting Avenue Dallam Warrington WA5 0JG
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 15 lessons and 12 teachers. Meetings were held with staff, pupils, governors, parents and carers, and local authority staff working with the school. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at relevant policies, the school improvement plan, records of meetings, the school's monitoring records and analyses of pupils' attainment and progress. The 30 questionnaires returned by parents and carers were also analysed.

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

- how well the school ensures that all pupils can achieve their full potential
- how effectively the school removes barriers to learning
- whether assessment is effective enough to help promote good learning
- whether leaders and managers at all levels evaluate their work effectively and contribute to the school's development
- the effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage, particularly in developing children's language and social skills.

## Information about the school

This is a primary school of average size. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above average. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well above that usually found. The school hosts a designated provision for pupils on the autistic spectrum. This serves the entire local authority. Many more pupils than normal join and leave school other than at the usual times. The large majority of pupils are of white British heritage and none are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. Since the last inspection a new headteacher has been appointed.

The school has numerous awards including: Investors in People, Healthy Schools Award, Activemark and the Artsmark Silver award.

**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

This is a good school. It serves its community well and provides outstanding care, guidance and support for its pupils. Since the last inspection the school has continued to move forward. There is a common sense of purpose and a determination to succeed. Self-evaluation is clear and honest. The school knows itself well and has identified areas which require attention. For example, great efforts have been put into the drive to improve language skills, particularly writing, and evidence from the most recent monitoring information shows this is having an impact. As a host for designated provision for pupils on the autistic spectrum, the school has significant expertise in managing the well-being and learning of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. This expertise benefits all pupils as staff have focused on styles of learning and what it takes to make individual pupils confident and capable learners. The very detailed system the school has developed to monitor progress, which provides information on each pupil, is a cornerstone of its success. Staff know pupils and their families very well and go to great lengths to provide tailored support for each individual. This outstanding feature of provision contributes to the good outcomes the school is achieving. The positive way the school has tackled the issues raised at the time of the last inspection, along with the clear picture of steady improvement, shows that there is a good capacity for sustained improvement.

Partnerships with parents and carers are good. This is reflected in the many positive comments received both verbally and in writing during the inspection. A typical comment is: 'My child has come on in leaps and bounds during her time at Dallam School. Her teachers are always available if I have any concerns.'

Teaching is good and there are examples of outstanding practice. This means that progress is at least good in all lessons. At times, teachers do not make it sufficiently clear how learning tasks are linked to learning outcomes, do not provide enough time for pupils to share their ideas with each other and do not allow enough time for pupils to check their understanding and to reflect on what they have learned.

The school functions very well as a community and provides many experiences for pupils to promote community cohesion. However, the full impact of these strategies is yet to be systematically evaluated.

Pupils are very proud of their school. One typical view is, 'Teachers always encourage us by helpful marking and comments.' Parents and carers endorse this positive view and are very appreciative of how well the school knows their children as individuals.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

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- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching by:
  - ensuring that all pupils fully understand how tasks are clearly linked to learning outcomes
  - ensuring that pupils are given every opportunity to share their learning with their peers so that they can help and support each other
  - ensuring that pupils are regularly asked to check their understanding and to reflect on the next steps in learning.
- Evaluate the impact of the wide range of strategies the school employs to promote community cohesion.

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

Pupils work very hard in class and are enthusiastic about the tasks and activities offered to them. They are keen to learn and are fully engaged in their learning. As a consequence, they enjoy school, make good progress and achieve well.

The school has a very effective process for monitoring pupils' progress. This enables teachers quickly to identify when an individual is falling behind so that a programme of intervention can be provided. This is tailored closely to individual needs so that good progress can be maintained. Children enter the school with skills which are generally well below national expectations, particularly in language and social development. They make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage although skills are still below national expectations by the time they enter the main school. The most recent test results show that pupils who are not in the designated provision are reaching standards which are close to the national average. Boys do not perform as well as girls, particularly in writing. The school is aware of this and has taken effective action to remedy it.

Inspection evidence from lesson observations and the scrutiny of pupils' work shows that standards are rising strongly and that all pupils are making good progress. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, who receive very good support and make good progress in line with their peers.

Pupils affirm that they feel safe in school and parents and carers confirm that this is so. Action is taken swiftly to address any problems which may arise and pupils generally support each other and act in a considerate way. Behaviour is good. Pupils are courteous and polite. The significant reduction in the number of exclusions testifies to the school's positive atmosphere. Pupils adopt healthy lifestyles. All participate in physical activities, some for up to five hours a week. A healthy lifestyles task group of pupils is working successfully to improve the quality of packed lunches. The school has worked very hard to improve attendance so that it is now at the national average. The number of persistent absentees has been very greatly reduced which demonstrates the fact that most pupils enjoy coming to school. Pupils respect each other and have opportunities to develop spiritual awareness through thought-provoking assemblies.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

**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

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

### How effective is the provision?

Teaching is good and there are examples of outstanding practice. The learning needs of pupils are very well understood thanks to the school's thorough monitoring system and lessons are well planned to meet those needs. Regular meetings are held to discuss pupils' progress and the information provided by these meetings is used to inform planning. The pace of learning is brisk and purposeful. For example, in an outstanding Year 5 literacy lesson pupils moved rapidly through a variety of tasks which kept them fully engaged and extended their understanding in a systematic way. In the very best lessons pupils are frequently asked to work with partners to exchange their ideas and so to help each other. Practice is always good but there are some inconsistencies. The link between tasks and learning outcomes is not always as clear to pupils as it needs to be. Occasionally, more time could be given for pupils to share their ideas with their peers and more time could be put aside to check understanding to make sure that everyone has fully understood.

The curriculum is good and caters effectively for the needs of all groups of pupils including the more able and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. It provides a solid base for learning basic skills, including skills in information and communication technology, and opportunities for linking subjects together. The theme weeks, for example that on the topic of 'growing', provide imaginative experiences for pupils. As well as providing understanding of the environment and biology, this theme

<sup>1</sup> 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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also has a global dimension since it concerns itself with farming in less well-developed areas of the world. Personal, social and emotional skills are taught effectively and this contributes to the good outcomes in personal development and well-being. Enrichment activities are many and varied and cover sporting, musical and cultural activities as well as the opportunity for all Key Stage 2 pupils to take part in a residential experience. The care, guidance and support of pupils are outstanding. Staff are committed to assessing the particular needs of all pupils and providing well-organised and intensive support to overcome barriers to learning. As a consequence, many pupils who may have found school challenging are attending regularly and enjoying what school has to offer. This excellent provision is supported by a number of links. Notable among these are the strong links with the neighbouring children's centre, which works with the school to provide for the needs of Dallam families and children from birth at least until the end of primary school.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

**How effective are leadership and management?**

There is a clear a shared determination to succeed at Dallam. The drive to improve standards and to provide the very best quality of care and support for pupils and their families is demonstrated by all staff and governors. This is having an impact on outcomes, although its full impact is still to be realised. The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide strong and confident leadership and staff feel empowered to lead and manage in their own areas of responsibility. The quality of teaching is monitored closely and opportunities are provide for staff to share good practice and to develop their professional skills. The school is well supported by its governing body. Governors fulfil their statutory obligations effectively and are taking an increasingly active role in the life of the school. For example, the Vice Chair of the Governing Body, who is minister at the local church, regularly takes assemblies. Governors are effective critical friends, providing support and rigorous challenge.

Partnerships with parents and carers are good. The school's focus on providing for Dallam families and for involving parents and carers as much as possible in the life of the school is a cornerstone of its development. Informal links are good and these are supported by the involvement of parents and carers in learning activities. The 'growing' theme week, for example, includes the opportunity for a garden party for all family members. Partnerships with other bodies, such as two local high schools, and with the

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local authority extended services are effective and help the school to achieve its aims. Discrimination has no place in the school and all pupils have an equal opportunity to achieve and learn. Any gaps in performance between different groups are tackled vigorously. Child protection procedures and safeguarding arrangements are fully in place and meet current requirements.

The school functions well as a community and there are numerous examples of strategies which promote community cohesion. These are effective but the school has still to evaluate their impact fully and to consolidate them into a coherent package.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills which are generally well below those expected for their age. They make good progress, particularly in language and social skills, and enter the main school as capable learners. There is a good mix of activities on offer in both the indoor and outdoor areas. Every opportunity is taken to build upon children's interests and this makes learning fun. The majority of activities are child initiated with adults on hand to guide and manage learning. There is a particularly strong emphasis on the conversations adults have with children and the encouragement children receive to talk about what they are doing. Children learn social skills well and are considerate towards each other. They also develop the skills they need to be independent and to care for themselves. They develop a good understanding of healthy lifestyles. They enjoy their healthy snacks and know how to keep themselves safe and healthy. They all know how important it is to wash their hands before handling food.



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Adults keep detailed records based on their observations of children at play and work. This means that they can plan for progression effectively. As is the main school, partnerships with parents and carers are good. Parents and carers are involved in the process of learning and are told about their children's achievements daily. They also contribute to each child's record of achievement by providing records of what is achieved outside school. Staff, led well by the Early Years Foundation Stage coordinator, evaluate their work systematically and plan for improvement. They are appropriately trained and have the necessary skills to ensure that children are kept safe and can learn effectively. As in the main school, safeguarding requirements are in place and statutory regulations are met.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
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**

About 12% of parents and carers responded to the questionnaires. All the responses were entirely positive with almost no negative comments. A very small minority of respondents felt that the school did not take account of suggestions or concerns. Inspectors looked at this carefully and felt that the school did ensure that parents' and carers' suggestions and concerns were acted upon whenever possible. Parents and carers were particularly appreciative of the individual care and support given to their children and were keen to point out how happy their children were at school and how much progress they had made at Dallam. These positive comments were echoed by the group of parents and carers who met with an inspector during the inspection.

### Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Dallam Community 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 30 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 205 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	20	67	10	33	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	27	90	3	10	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	26	87	3	10	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	25	83	5	17	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	22	73	7	23	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	23	77	7	23	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	24	80	6	20	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)	19	63	9	30	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	17	57	13	43	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	22	73	8	27	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	20	67	8	27	2	7	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	20	67	9	30	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	24	80	6	20	0	0	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

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](http://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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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 May 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Dallam Community Primary School, Warrington, WA5 0JG

Thank you for making my colleagues and me so welcome during our recent visit to Dallam. I am particularly grateful to those of you who met with us during your lunchtime. Your comments were very helpful. Thank you also to those who returned the questionnaires. There are many good things about your school. Your teachers provide you with interesting lessons. They know you all very well and know how to look after you and to help you to learn. You work hard and behave very well. I enjoyed listening to some of you talking about what is special about Dallam.

It is a good school. All the people I spoke to or who wrote to me had good things to say about your school. Dallam School is really at the heart of its community.

There are a small number of things I want your school to do to make it even better.

All of your lessons are good but to improve them even more I want your teachers to:

- make sure that you can see how the tasks you have to do in lessons lead to you meeting the learning outcomes
- make sure you have lots of opportunities to talk about your work to your peers so that you can help each other
- make sure that you have plenty of opportunities to check to see if you have understood everything.

Also, I want your school to check all the things you do to help you to understand about our society and the different groups in it to see what is working best.

You are proud of your school and this is right. You can help your teachers by always getting into school on time and by always trying your very best.

Once again, thank you for your help during the inspection.

My best wishes.

Stephen Rowland

Lead inspector

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