

Dovedale Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112700
Local Authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	337991
Inspection dates	14–15 January 2010
Reporting inspector	Lois Furness

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	284
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Nick Cope
Headteacher	David Allen
Date of previous school inspection	8 October 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors spent the great majority of time looking at learning, visited 20 lessons, observed all teachers teaching, and held meetings with the chair of governors, staff, groups of pupils and parents and carers. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation including the school improvement plan, records of pupils' progress, teachers' planning and assessments, pupils' books, information about pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, the school improvement partner's reports, safeguarding documentation and questionnaires returned by 148 parents and carers, 26 staff and 92 pupils.

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

- how effectively the school is raising attainment in mathematics
- whether the curriculum is adapted well enough to meet the needs of boys, more able pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities
- the impact of the school's monitoring and evaluation systems in ensuring progress is good for the groups of pupils who have not progressed well enough in the past.

Information about the school

In this slightly larger than average primary school, most pupils are White British. There are two pupils at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average. Early Years Foundation Stage provision includes a Reception class and a mixed class of Year 1 and reception-age children. Ten reception-age children started school a week before the inspection. The headteacher has a weekly two-day commitment of working for the National Association of Headteachers and consequently leadership is shared between the headteacher and deputy headteacher. The school holds a number of awards including the Eco Schools Green Flag Award. There is an on-site breakfast club which is not managed by the governing body and so is inspected separately.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

This happy, welcoming school provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. Good quality care, underpins pupils' good attitudes towards learning. Their above average attendance shows how much they enjoy their education. Pupils say, 'This school is a good place to be, because everyone helps each other.' Parents also are very appreciative, especially of the way the school keeps their children safe. 'A very safe environment, and I wouldn't want my children anywhere else': is a view that reflects the many positive comments made by parents and carers about their child's experience.

Although attainment by Year 6 has been above average in English, it has been lower in mathematics. As a result of strategies implemented, attainment in mathematics is rising and the current Year 6 pupils are on track to attain levels above those expected for their age in English and mathematics. However, the school's own tracking information shows progress in these subjects to be uneven. The use of tracking information is improving, but target setting does not challenge all pupils to make at least expected progress year on year. Meetings to discuss the progress pupils make are held, but these are not sufficiently frequent to allow staff to prevent underachievement. Strategies to support those who need it, especially more able pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities are not always implemented promptly enough. Although teaching is satisfactory, assessment information is not used consistently to plan activities that meet all pupils' needs. Expectations of written work, including presentation, are occasionally too low. Marking does not show clearly why work is good or how pupils might improve their basic spelling and handwriting skills, although there is some good practice evident, notably in English. The leadership is aware of these weaknesses, and has identified that monitoring needs to be sharper, especially the analysis of pupils' work. As yet, teachers do not receive specific enough advice about improving their teaching and lesson observations do not focus sharply enough on pupils' learning. Governors are supportive, but their role in monitoring the school's effectiveness and the implementation of policies, is a developing area of their work.

The school has worked hard to introduce a creative curriculum which engages the interest of boys. In this, leaders have been successful and boys comment on how they find their work fun. However, boys in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2 do not attain as highly as girls in writing. As yet, the curriculum does not offer exciting purposeful opportunities which encourage boys to record their ideas. Also, the scrutiny of writing books in Years 1 and 2 shows that pupils do not have enough opportunities to write independently. Writing targets are not always set consistently in these year groups.

Self-evaluation is satisfactory and leaders are aware of the strengths and weaknesses in

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provision. Leaders are determined to eliminate the uneven progress. The key improvement points identified at the time of the previous inspection have been satisfactorily rectified. This, alongside the school's success in raising attainment in mathematics and improving boys' enjoyment of school shows that the school's capacity to improve further is satisfactory.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By July 2010, eliminate the uneven progress of pupils by:
 - using assessment information more carefully to ensure planned activities match pupils' learning needs especially those of the more able pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities
 - raising teachers' expectations of the amount of work pupils are able to record and of presentation
 - involving pupils more in knowing the good features of their work and how to improve
 - holding half-termly pupil progress meetings whereby any underachievement is identified and actions are quickly taken.
- By July 2010, raise boys' writing attainment to equal that of girls in Years 1 and 2 and in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - providing exciting and meaningful contexts for writing so that boys are motivated to record their ideas
 - making sure there are daily opportunities for boys to write independently
 - ensuring the setting of writing targets is consistent in Key Stage 1
 - making sure that the marking of pupils' written work helps them to improve basic spelling and handwriting skills.
- Sharpen up monitoring and evaluation procedures immediately by:
 - ensuring lesson observations focus on pupils' learning and teachers are given clear guidance about how to make teaching better
 - setting challenging targets for pupils whereby all pupils make at least nationally expected rates of progress in reading, writing and mathematics each year
 - regularly carrying out work scrutinies checking the impact of teaching on pupils' progress
 - involving the governors more in checking how well pupils are learning and that all agreed policies are implemented.
 - About 40% of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

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Achievement is satisfactory. Although attainment is above average in English and rising in mathematics, progress is uneven between year groups. This is partly because the work given to pupils is not always appropriate especially for the more able. Pupils make good progress when assessment information is used more effectively in planning tasks matched to all abilities. Boys in Years 1 and 2 do not make sufficient progress in writing. Even so, achievement is satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress in lessons. When they work in small groups and work is specifically tailored to their needs they make good progress in learning. Those pupils who are at an early stage of learning English make good progress when they receive targeted support.

Pupils have good attitudes to learning, cooperate well with each other and are keen to offer their ideas. Their behaviour is good and they try hard to succeed with the tasks set for them. Good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development means pupils are kind and considerate, have a secure sense of right and wrong and are respectful of the beliefs and traditions of people from different backgrounds. As yet, however, pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to meet directly with people from different communities. Pupils play a constructive part in the school community as school councillors, playground buddies or working on improving the environment. Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay fit and healthy, make sensible food choices and enjoy taking plenty of exercise. They speak confidently and knowledgeably about the strategies they use to keep themselves and one another safe. Their good basic skills of literacy, numeracy and information communication and technology, above average attendance and good social skills indicate they are prepared well for the future.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2

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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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?

Lessons seen were usually enjoyable. Adults try hard to respond to pupils' needs. However, although teaching is satisfactory with some good practice, its quality is not consistent enough to promote good learning. In good lessons, pupils engage well in their work because activities are closely matched to their needs. In one Year 6 mathematics lesson, pupils made good progress, as they enthusiastically set about the task of providing a card game to challenge their friends' understanding of the relationship between fractions, decimals and percentages. Less effective practice in lessons seen, was characterised by work not challenging thinking, expectations that were too low and long introductions that left little time for pupils to advance their skills. Although there is good practice in marking, this is inconsistent. Approximately a quarter of pupils who completed the questionnaire say they are not sure how well they are doing in their work.

The staff have worked hard to adapt the curriculum to engage pupils' interest. In this, they have been very successful, and lesson observations show boys are well motivated and involved in their lessons. The changes to the mathematics curriculum have been particularly welcomed by pupils, who say, 'mathematics is my favourite lesson now.' Teaching assistants support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities effectively, enabling them to take a full part in all classroom activities. The variety of after-school clubs available is greatly appreciated as pupils speak enthusiastically, for example, about the gardening and theatre music clubs.

All adults are fully committed to the support they give to pupils, and this is central to the pupils' good personal well-being. As a result, all pupils, particularly those whose circumstances make them most vulnerable, feel safe, confident in the knowledge that adults will help them. Induction procedures are good, and pupils new to the school quickly settle, as was seen in relation to the new Reception children who are already happy and confident learners.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

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How effective are leadership and management?

The two senior leaders work well together but although the leadership is determined to eliminate uneven progress, there is still more to do to accelerate achievement and secure consistently good quality of teaching and learning. Self-evaluation is satisfactory, but the leaders do not evaluate well enough the impact of teaching on pupils' progress. Monitoring does not pinpoint exactly what teachers need to do to improve pupils' learning. Governors provide good support but their monitoring and evaluation role is currently insufficiently well developed. However, they do ensure the statutory requirements regarding safeguarding are fully in place. The school works satisfactorily to promote community cohesion, particularly in ensuring pupils within school from different socio-economic and social backgrounds form a happy and harmonious community. The school is inclusive, seeking to treat all pupils fairly and all pupils have access to all activities the school offers. There are systems for tracking pupils' progress, but they are not sufficiently fine-tuned to make sure there is a really quick response to concerns if certain pupils have made slower progress.

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

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children start Reception with skills and knowledge that are slightly above those expected for their age. They make satisfactory progress and by the time they enter Year 1, attainment is above average. However, progress in their personal, social and emotional development is good and lesson observations show children are happy, well

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behaved and very settled in their classroom environment. For example, in the Year 1 and reception class, children, after a very short time in school, concentrated well, and tried hard to follow the teachers' instructions. Activities are interesting. In one activity seen children were particularly enthusiastic in watching the puppet show, and talking about the different people who work at the circus. Relationships between adults and children are good, and secure assessment systems means that work is usually, well matched to their needs. Boys do not progress as well as girls in writing and the classroom environments and the outdoor area although satisfactory do not actively encourage boys to practise their writing skills. Also, the children in the mixed year class do not have as many opportunities to access the outdoor environment as the other children, due to limitations in the accommodation. The leader of the Early Years Foundation Stage is aware this needs to be rectified as soon as possible, and plans are in place to do this. As yet, the leader does not use the results of assessment sufficiently well to focus on improving provision, for example, to increase the opportunities for boys' writing.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

A high percentage of parents and carers replied to the Ofsted questionnaire. Most of the responses were very supportive of the school's work. A particularly high percentage of parents and carers felt their child was kept safe and were pleased that their child enjoyed school. Discussions with pupils and the analysis of their completed questionnaires confirm these viewpoints. A few parents and carers felt the school did not effectively manage unacceptable behaviour. However, the inspection team found no evidence to support this view.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Dovedale 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 inspector received 148 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 284 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	90	61	54	36	3	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	106	72	40	27	2	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	64	43	81	55	3	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	68	46	77	52	2	1	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	75	51	68	46	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	71	48	71	48	4	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	68	46	77	52	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)	69	47	70	47	2	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	63	43	81	55	3	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	61	41	77	52	6	4	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	51	34	86	58	2	1	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	83	56	60	41	4	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	94	6	52	35	2	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.



18 January 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Dovedale Primary School, Nottingham, NG10 3HU

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed talking with you, and were impressed by your politeness and the way you

- get on with your teachers and each other. These are some of the important things we found out about your school:
- by the time you leave in Year 6 your attainment in English is above that found in most schools, and you are also starting to reach higher standards in mathematics
- we know from talking to you and from reading your questionnaires that you enjoy school and being with your friends
- you feel safe in school, and this is because adults take good care of you and are always willing to help if you are worried or upset
- in lessons, you try your best and work well together
- the staff have worked hard to make the curriculum more interesting especially for some of you who in the past have not always found lessons fun. The mathematics lesson I visited where you were making games looked really interesting
- it is good to know that your parents and carers are pleased with the school's work and please thank them for returning the inspection questionnaire.

Your headteacher, staff and governors are trying very hard to improve the school and we have made three suggestions which we think might help. We have asked them to make sure that:

- all of you make good progress year on year in reading, writing and mathematics
- teachers help the boys in Reception and Years 1 and 2 to become better at writing
- the leaders of the school check often that you are all learning as well as you could.

Thank you again for your help with the inspection and you can help your school by continuing to do your best in all that you do.

Yours sincerely

Lois Furness

Lead Inspector

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