

Dale Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112720
Local Authority	Derby
Inspection number	337997
Inspection dates	16–17 June 2010
Reporting inspector	Mary Davis

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	549
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Mahroof Hussain
Headteacher	Mrs Linda Sullivan
Date of previous school inspection	26 February 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. They observed 28 lessons and 24 teachers, and held meetings with groups of pupils, governors and staff. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at policies and development planning; the analysis of data related to the tracking of students' progress; senior leaders' monitoring of teaching and learning; safeguarding documents; governors' minutes; pupils' work and 144 questionnaires from parents and carers, together with those from students and staff.

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

- the school's use of assessment data to explore learning and progress of groups of pupils in current classes, in particular to see how well boys are doing
- the success of leadership in addressing underachievement and closing the gaps between subjects and groups of pupils
- the use of assessment in lessons to ensure pupils know how to improve
- the cohesiveness of the school community and how well equal opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled.

Information about the school

Dale Community Primary School is a larger than average school serving an area of high deprivation in the inner city. Almost all pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds, the largest group being of Pakistani origin. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is high and there are an increasing number of new arrivals who speak no English. The proportion of pupils who join the school in Key Stage 2 is also high. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average.

The school has a number of awards including Activemark gold, Artsmark and Investors in People and has achieved National Healthy Schools status.

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

2

Main findings

Although Dale Community Primary school provides a satisfactory quality of education overall, it has shown improvement in many aspects of its work since its last inspection and demonstrates a good capacity for sustained improvement. The quality of care it provides is now outstanding. 'My child is really happy at this school and all his needs are met', 'the pastoral support is outstanding', 'I couldn't ask for anything better, the teachers are very supportive and easy to approach.' These remarks are typical of comments made by parents and carers. The strong sense of community is evident as pupils from diverse backgrounds not only get on well, but care for each other and are quick to welcome newcomers and look after the most vulnerable. This is a result of the example shown by the adults around them. Each pupil is known and cared for as an individual and as a result of the outstanding focus on safety, all pupils feel extremely safe and look out for the safety of each other. Behaviour is good and pupils are polite, courteous and quick to respond to instructions. They enjoy taking responsible roles and raising money for charity and are proud of their garden where they can help grow vegetables that are served in the school canteen. They have a good understanding of how to stay healthy and large numbers enjoy the vast number of opportunities to take part in sport, where not only the school teams compete to a high level, but all abilities are encouraged to take part.

Although pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 has been low in comparison to national standards over the past three years, there is an evident pattern of improvement, particularly in mathematics and science. Key Stage 1 pupils are now reaching standards that are broadly average and are making good progress from their starting points. The school's accurate tracking shows that pupils in Key Stage 2 are now making expected progress and in Year 5 are exceeding expectations. Pupils enjoy their learning and are keen to do well. They work well together, help each other when undertaking group work and particularly enjoy opportunities to compete in active tasks. Where teaching is good or outstanding, there is a real buzz of excitement about learning and these teachers inspire their pupils not only to engage with learning in lessons, but also to research independently to find out more. The quality of teaching is, however, inconsistent across the school and as a result, pupils make satisfactory progress overall. Pupils know their targets and how to reach them, as a result of the oral feedback they receive. Marking, however, is inconsistent and so pupils do not always know how well they are doing and they are not always given sufficient written advice about how to develop their work further.

The new curriculum focuses closely on pupils' individual needs and seeks to fill the gaps in their experience. For example, a trip to Derby city centre enabled pupils to learn

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about their local area and a trip to the seaside provided memorable experiences to inspire their writing. This curriculum is now beginning to impact on raising levels of progress and attainment. Care, guidance and support are outstanding, a key strength being the care that extends to the support of the families of pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable. Pupils with special education needs and/or disabilities are well supported by the inclusion team, learning mentors and by teaching assistants. They make good progress accordingly. Good use is made of technology such as 'talk boxes' to enable pupils to record and replay sentences as they write them down.

The inspirational headteacher has built a strong team around herself, including not only senior leaders, but also an effective middle leadership group. As a result, all staff understand their roles, are held accountable and share the leadership's enthusiasm and passion for taking the school forward. 'I love this school,' and, 'I love these children,' are expressions frequently heard and adults show their delight when pupils overcome difficulties and enjoy their learning. Leaders monitor teaching and learning well and target individual support effectively to address weaknesses and to ensure a greater consistency of teaching quality. This includes sharing the good practice of the outstanding teachers and has resulted in raising the quality of teaching, particularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1 where pupils were making insufficient progress. Focused strategies are being employed to further raise the quality of teaching. The leadership has clear and appropriate plans in place for future development of its provision, based on thorough and frequent evaluation. Although individual pupils have been effectively targeted for extra support, patterns of underachievement, particularly in writing and mathematics have not always been identified to enable an efficient targeting of resources. Plans are already in place to address this more closely.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment and accelerate rates of progress by:
 - raising the proportion of good or better teaching to 80% by June 2011
 - improving the consistency of marking so that all pupils know how well they are doing and what to do to improve
 - further extend the analysis of assessment data to include the progress made by all groups of pupils across different subjects, to enable the identification of patterns of underachievement and where good practice can be shared and resources targeted.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Over the past three years attainment by the end of Key Stage 1 has been consistently

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significantly below national expectations, although in 2009 an improving picture was seen, particularly in writing. Current assessment and lesson observations indicate that pupils at this key stage are now reaching broadly average standards with an increasing number of pupils reaching higher levels in reading. The attainment and progress of the current Year 6 cohort have been adversely affected by a high level of pupil mobility, including many pupils arriving in Year 6 with low levels of English. This cohort made poor progress during Key Stage 1 and entered Key Stage 2 with attainment well below national averages for English and mathematics. Since then, as a result of focused interventions and consistently high quality teaching during the current year, these pupils are now making expected levels of progress. Attainment while still low is improving strongly. In 2009, boys performed less well than girls in national tests. This has been addressed and lesson observations during the inspection indicate that boys and girls are making similar progress in lessons and assessment data indicate that this achievement gap is closing.

Pupils have a very good understanding of the impact of good behaviour on their learning and that of others. They have a clear understanding of what constitutes healthy eating and can talk about what is or is not good for you. They are enthusiastic about taking part in physical activities and all age ranges attend school clubs, including large numbers taking part in cricket training at 7.30am. Pupils show enormous pride in their school and community, and are able to share their views through the school council. Older pupils support younger ones, for example, acting as play pals. Although attendance levels are broadly average there are very few persistent absentees as a result of the school's strong focus on the importance of attending regularly.

A range of exciting opportunities, such as the compilation and publication of the Dale Centenary Book, help pupils to experience a range of life skills and to raise aspirations. Pupils are beginning to apply basic skills securely, particularly in reading and ICT and are confident in their relationships with adults. These skills are preparing them satisfactorily for their future economic well-being. Pupils respond to philosophical issues as a result of a clear understanding of the school's focus on the '4 Rs' of 'resilience, relationships, resourcefulness and reflection'. They are provided with a wealth of awe-inspiring and exciting images, music and live experience, such as planting an apple tree and seeing it bear fruit, to promote their spiritual development.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	4
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	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
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
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teachers plan well to meet the needs of different ability groups in their class and in most lessons build on learning throughout the lesson with activities that allow pupils to practice skills and reinforce their understanding through a variety of tasks. Good use is made of teaching assistants to support slower learners. In the best lessons pupils are excited by their learning and show curiosity about the world around them. They are confident to ask questions and to tell teachers when they don't understand. Pupils say that teachers are patient and will give of their time to make sure they understand their work. In the weaker lessons pupils do not make sufficient progress because lesson planning has insufficient focus on what pupils are going to learn. In some lessons, questioning techniques fail to include all pupils or to extend their thinking.

The well-researched curriculum model is focused on cross-curricular topics, such as each year group being allocated to research a country represented in the football World Cup. These topics are frequently evaluated, ensuring that none is extended unnecessarily. This enables in-depth learning to take place at a fast pace and is beginning to show an impact on improved literacy and numeracy skills. Collaboration with other schools ensures enrichment activities not only extend learning, but to enable pupils to meet those from different backgrounds, learning respect for each others' beliefs and customs. This creative and exciting curriculum is beginning to embed basic skills to have a positive impact on progress and attainment.

The school works with a variety of external agencies to ensure the needs of pupils are met. Staff are well trained to ensure that they understand the needs of specific groups of pupils and also to provide support which is culturally sensitive. Families trust the

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school and relationships between staff, pupils and families are positive and respectful. The school has been particularly successful in including pupils from the Roma community, who value the school's support. Transitions between key stages are well managed and systems for targeting support to meet pupils' individual needs are very effective. As a result of the inclusive ethos of the school, shared amongst all adults, pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable receive the support they need to access education.

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	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The vision of the leadership is communicated effectively and middle managers are enthused and enlightened about the way forward. The governing body discharges its statutory responsibilities, understands the priorities for the school and is beginning to be systematically involved in school life, enabling it to challenge the leadership more effectively. The school provides a variety of opportunities for parents to be involved in their children's education, from the expectation that parents of the youngest pupils will work with their children on arrival at school, to the mass cross-growing project used in the construction of a giant map of the world. Learning logs in all year groups are helping both parents and pupils to reflect on learning and to develop ideas together. A strong link with a local business ensures that pupils see the relevance of science to everyday jobs and help to raise aspirations. This has had an impact on raising standards of writing.

Safeguarding procedures are exemplary. Child protection focuses not only on safety, but on enabling pupils to fulfil their potential. Pupils are particular proud of the new fire-safety renovations and there is a comprehensive awareness of safeguarding issues among the governors and staff at all levels. A wide range of intervention strategies are being employed to ensure equal opportunities and the gaps are now beginning to close between the performances of different groups of pupils. The school is aware of where it has a positive effect on engaging groups in the multi-cultural community and effectively identifies pupils' needs regarding the community of Derby, to enable them to understand their context. The leadership has clear plans in place to develop pupils' global awareness.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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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	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

On joining the school in the Early Years Foundation Stage, children's communication, language and literacy skills are, for many, well below those expected for their age. As a result of the care and planning to meet individual needs, pupils make good progress and the majority now reach the expectations for their age by the time they enter Year 1. Children enjoy school, are enthusiastic and motivated learners. They know how to use the resources safely and relate to each other well during their activities. They are able to take turns, share and are considerate to one another, for example when using the bicycles of playing on the roundabout. They respond well to adults and are happy to talk about what they are doing.

Good use is made of the outside area which supports learning in all areas. Children enjoy planting and growing vegetables and flowers and show curiosity about seeds and conditions for growth. There is a balance between teacher and child-initiated activities and children's needs and interests are taken into account when planning activities. At times, however all adults are involved in focused activities resulting in play-based learning being not fully supported. This results in some missed opportunities for taking learning forward. The Early Years Foundation Stage coordinator has a good understanding of strengths and weaknesses and has made a significant impact on developing the provision. Children's progress is tracked and monitored and intervention strategies are well targeted. A strong team of adults enable good continuity and consistency across the key stage.

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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	2

Views of parents and carers

The overwhelming response of parents and carers who completed questionnaires was positive, with 99% saying that their children enjoy school and 100% that the school keeps their children safe. The comments that they made endorse this strongly. Some parents expressed a view that behaviour was not well managed. Inspectors found that behaviour is good and that teachers are consistent in ensuring this is so. A few parents commented on the inconsistent quality of teaching and inspectors found this to be correct. A very small minority of parents said that they do not receive sufficient information about their children's progress, but most of these also said that teachers are approachable and willing to answer questions. Inspectors found that the school works well to involve parents and that the learning logs are providing regular information to enable pupils to work with their parents.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Dale 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 144 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 549 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	85	59	58	40	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	76	53	68	47	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	58	40	67	47	16	11	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	54	38	75	52	10	7	4	3
The teaching is good at this school	56	39	81	56	5	3	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	59	41	71	49	9	6	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	62	43	73	51	6	4	1	1
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)	46	32	79	55	6	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	45	31	85	59	10	7	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	46	32	77	53	17	12	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	43	30	82	57	9	6	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	54	38	82	57	3	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	63	44	72	50	8	6	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). 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.



18 June 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Dale Community Primary School, Derby, DE23 6NL

Many thanks for the welcome you gave to me and my colleagues when we visited the school for its recent inspection. We very much enjoyed talking with you and seeing all that you do. We particularly enjoyed hearing you sing African songs in assembly and hearing the youngest children play the instruments they had made.

Our inspection has judged that the school gives you a satisfactory quality of education. You make satisfactory progress and the standards that you reach in English and mathematics are rising. We were impressed by your good behaviour, the care you show for each other and the welcome that you give to new pupils so that they quickly feel part of your community. You concentrate well and enjoy your lessons and all the activities that are provided for you, including all the sport and exciting projects such as the school book. Your teachers provide lessons that are fun and care for you very well, so that you feel safe. We think though, that sometimes you are not provided with sufficient information to enable you to improve your work and to reach your targets. You make a good contribution to your school and local community and show a good deal of understanding and respect for the beliefs and cultures of others.

The leaders of the school work hard to make sure you continue to be safe and cared for and that you develop well as young people. We have asked the school to do the following to improve further:

- ensure that you keep on making good progress to reach higher standards
- make sure that all lessons enable you to learn well
- ensure that marking of your books informs you how well you are doing and how to improve
- track your progress carefully to make sure you are all reaching your targets.

You can all help by working hard and attending well. I wish you every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mary Davis

Lead inspector

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