

Dudley Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114455
Local Authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	338368
Inspection dates	20–21 January 2010
Reporting inspector	Wendy Simmons

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	177
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Kevin Boorman
Headteacher	Joanne McCarron-Charles
Date of previous school inspection	1 February 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Inspectors looked at a wide range of evidence, which included close to eight hours of inspectors' time focused on pupils' learning. All seven teachers were observed as part of the 14 lessons/part lessons observed; this included a sample of special support groups. Inspectors looked at examples of pupils' work and evaluated their progress using the school's assessment information. Meetings were held with pupils, staff and two governors. Inspectors spoke to the headteacher of the feeder junior school and the school's improvement advisor. Inspectors evaluated a range of documentation, including the school's improvement planning and safeguarding information. In total, 71 questionnaires completed by parents and carers were analysed.

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

- evidence for any improvement in attainment, especially in writing and mathematics for all pupils, and particularly for boys
- the accuracy of leaders' evaluations of the work of the school, especially in evaluating learning, the use of assessment information and pupils' progress
- how well pupils make progress from entry to the school to the end of Year 2
- the quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage, especially how well children's language and communication skills are developing
- evidence to confirm that the quality of care, guidance and support given to pupils is a particular strength of the school.

Information about the school

Dudley Infant School is smaller than average. A higher than average proportion of pupils are eligible for free school meals. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds with a few from Asian and mixed ethnic backgrounds. A higher than average proportion of pupils have a statement of special educational needs but overall the proportion with special educational needs and/or disabilities is similar to most schools. Pupils' specific special needs most often relate to moderate learning difficulties and more complex speech and language communication difficulties. Children start school in the Early Years Foundation Stage and work in one integrated Reception class. In the last two years the school has experienced very pronounced staffing difficulties. The school is part of the local 'Excellence Cluster' of schools to help raise pupils' achievement, self-esteem and behaviour.

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

Dudley Infant School is a satisfactory school where pupils are well cared for. As one parent aptly said: 'Individual needs are addressed in an environment that is nurturing, stimulating and extremely positive.' Pupils behave well and develop good spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. They benefit from teaching which, although satisfactory overall, is good and sometimes outstanding in Year 2. As a result, pupils who are currently in the school gain a suitable range of basic skills for their future lives. Pupils are helped to learn to be healthy, safe and show respect for others. Staff and governors contribute much to the school and relationships with the pupils and parents and other professionals are strong. The school is at the heart of the community and pupils contribute especially well to local life.

At the time of the last inspection, in 2007, pupils' attainment was judged to be average by the end of Year 2. From pupils' often lower than expected starting points, this showed that they made good progress. In the last two years, the school has faced exceptionally difficult circumstances, in all year groups, due to complex staffing difficulties. During this time, pupils' learning was fragmented. This was due to classes being covered by a range of different teachers. As a result, there was uneven and sometimes slow progress due to a lack of continuity in learning from day to day. This led to low overall attainment. However, staffing is now stabilised and pupils are making satisfactory progress. In Year 2, pupils' progress accelerates well and is often good. Based on these factors, achievement is judged to be satisfactory as standards are improving securely and quickly.

Leaders' satisfactory evaluations of the work of the school are mostly accurate and this helps them to make clear improvement plans. Actions taken by leaders demonstrate a satisfactory capacity to improve. The school has a considerable amount of data about individual pupils' attainment and progress. However, leaders have not amalgamated this into a simple summary so that they know precisely how well different groups are doing, such as those with special educational needs and/or disabilities or higher ability pupils. Leaders do, however, have a clear understanding about the variation in the performance of boys and girls and this is helping them to put good interventions in place to lift boys' attainment and progress.

Pupils make good overall progress in reading. However, in Year 1, guided reading is not introduced as early as it could be in the school year to enable pupils to make even faster progress. In writing, activities are often exciting but, as yet, older pupils are not extending their writing enough or gaining the skills to edit and improve their work. The school improvement plan correctly prioritises development of the outside learning area for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and to extend their learning more

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especially when children select activities for themselves. There are some missed opportunities to develop writing as part of the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum. Inspectors found that mathematics work is not always well enough matched to pupils' wide-ranging abilities.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By July 2010, improve attainment to average or better and lift the quality of teaching and learning to become consistently good by:
 - enabling pupils to undertake extended pieces of writing allowing them time to edit their work and improve their skills
 - making sure that pupils learn new mathematical skills systematically and are given work that matches their differing capabilities
 - introducing more guided reading activities in Year 1.
- Build on the good start already made to improve provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - improving the outside learning area
 - extending children's learning especially when they select activities for themselves, and by doing more writing activities.
- Strengthen management systems still further by:
 - sharing management roles more widely
 - producing precise summary information about the progress and attainment of pupils so that leaders have explicit information about all groups of learners.

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

Pupils thoroughly enjoy the activities that are provided. Their achievement is satisfactory and learning, progress and attainment are improving. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported and they make at least satisfactory and sometimes good progress. Accelerated progress in reading is due to the improved focus on guided reading, letters and sounds (phonics), and by using the 'Every Child a Reader' programme. Many parents also give considerable help with reading. Pupils successfully develop their speaking skills. They were full of ideas when planning their snowman story. In this lesson, and with the help of the teacher, pupils said such things as, 'The snowman was amazed by the gracefully, swiftly and gently falling snow'. Pupils are being helped to develop their ideas for writing, which is good practice, but opportunities for them to do extended writing are still being developed. The sample of work seen in mathematics shows that there is a lack of challenge for higher ability pupils.

Pupils develop confidence and self-esteem and learn how to be good citizens. They take part in many community activities. For example, they enjoyed a 'Funky Families' dance workshop with their parents and carers. They actively raise funds for different charities, recycle, and care for the wildlife garden. Pupils enjoy music due to specialist teaching in

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lessons and through the exciting drum club.

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	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	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
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 and teaching assistants know the pupils well and use a range of teaching methods to enable them to learn in different and interesting ways. They place a strong emphasis on discussion work and make good use of different resources to support their teaching. Good links are often made between different subjects. The introduction of new support groups, including help from the 'Excellence Cluster', is helping to further lift the quality of teaching and is especially helpful in increasing boys' learning. This was evident when pupils learnt how to write sentences and enjoyed using rainbow pens to produce a long story entitled 'Over the Rainbow'.

In the past, some assessments of pupils' skills were overgenerous. Teachers' accuracy has improved well and now helps teachers to set clear targets for pupils. However, assessment information is not used consistently well from day to day to plan the smaller steps of pupils' learning. As a result, some activities are not always modified for pupils' differing abilities. Some teachers are very skilled at making reference to pupils' individual

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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or group targets in lessons, but this is inconsistent.

The school provides a good range of extra activities. For example, the British Heart Foundation led an after-school club promoting health and pupils love the daily 'Activate' sessions, which give pupils very good rigorous heart-thumping exercise! High quality day-to-day care is aided by strong links with outside agencies and kind and helpful guidance from all staff, including teaching assistants. Teaching assistants receive some training on how to support pupils with very specific special educational needs, and on the teaching phonics and say that they would like more. Staff are very effective in helping vulnerable children, for example through nurture groups.

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	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and deputy headteacher share a common vision and, like the other staff, they want the best for the pupils. They have been hampered in driving new initiatives as quickly as they would have liked due to many past staffing difficulties. They are now securely placed to move forward. There is a clear focus on improving teaching and learning. They identify the most important priorities for development. The recent appointment of a new mathematics leader is helping senior staff to share out leadership roles more evenly, but there is still more to do on this. Leaders know that in order to become sharper in their self-assessment, there is a need to de-clutter and streamline the way in which they use assessment information, so that they can produce summary information about how well all groups of learners are doing.

The school promotes equal opportunities and tackles discrimination satisfactorily. Strengths include the way in which leaders have actively developed provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and to help boys to do better. There is still room for the most able to have better provision.

Governors are very committed to the school. They work very closely with staff and parents and contribute to good procedures for safeguarding. Well-established links with the local community are a particular strength of the school and the school does well to involve all groups of parents in the life of the school, especially those who may not have had good experiences of school life themselves. The school works hard to help develop awareness about the culture of Hastings. Awareness of different beliefs and cultures is promoted especially through story telling and the annual 'International Week'. A link with a school in Germany and the way in which staff and parents share their different

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cultural backgrounds enhance community cohesion. There are close links with the 'Excellence Cluster'.

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	2
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

The effectiveness of provision and outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are satisfactory overall and leaders are keen to improve provision still further. Relationships are very good. Staff are very caring and they often make learning fun, as seen when the teacher dressed up as a robber and stole the shoes from the number line to help children to understand subtraction.

From children's often lower than expected starting points they make satisfactory progress overall. Nonetheless, standards remain lower than average in personal skills and in children's language and communication skills, especially their writing, by the end of the Reception Year. Pupils do better in gaining knowledge of the world in which they live and in developing their physical and creative skills.

As a result of satisfactory leadership the provision is improving but there is still more to do. Clear action has been taken to move the Early Years Foundation Stage into a larger teaching space, so that all Reception children can work together. This is a new and good initiative, which started in September 2009, but this provision is still bedding in.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory and children in the Reception classes enjoy a good range of indoor activities. Adults work well with small focus groups but sometimes opportunities are missed for adults to interject and extend learning or to make informal assessments about their children's skills when children select activities for themselves.

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Staff make the best use possible of the outside space but there is no immediately accessible outside learning area. This is correctly identified for improvement and exciting plans are being considered. Children do not have continuous access to outside activities and this hampers them from learning to best effect. Moreover, on occasions, having such a high number of children inside all at the same time can mean that the noise level rises too much and this reduces children's focus. Children behave well and are enthusiastic learners.

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

Parents whole-heartedly agree that their children enjoy school, are well cared for and that their children's particular needs are well met. The inspectors agree with this view as children are happy, polite and behave well. Almost every parent also agrees that their children are making progress. Relationships are very good and parents and inspectors agree that staff are supportive and approachable. The views of one parent sum up those of many when saying, 'The school really values parents as partners and puts great effort into caring for and educating our children.' Parents like the way that they are helped to support their children's learning. They spoke highly about the very good transition arrangements with the junior school and the helpful home visits for children when they start in the Reception class. Inspectors confirm that these are especially successful in helping children to settle happily into their new schools.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Dudley Infant 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 71 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 177 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	45	67	23	3	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	52	73	19	27	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	28	41	37	54	3	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	36	51	34	48	1	1	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	46	65	24	34	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	35	50	34	49	1	1	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	37	53	32	46	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)	37	57	26	40	0	0	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	40	60	26	39	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	32	48	35	52	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	33	50	32	49	1	1	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	38	54	30	43	2	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	50	71	20	29	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 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.



22 January 2010

Dear Children

Inspection of Dudley Infant School, Hastings TN35 5NJ

You may remember that three school inspectors visited your school. Thank you for being so friendly and helpful when we spoke to you. We are writing to tell you what we found during our visit.

We agree with you that Dudley is a very caring school. You work hard to learn new things. We call this a satisfactory school; this means that most things are fine but there are several things to do to make improvements for you. We were very pleased to see you having fun at school and enjoying your lessons and other activities. Your daily 'Activate' exercises are great and really help you to become fit. In particular, we like the way that you do so many different things to share with others in Hastings. Your teachers and all of the other adults do a great deal to help you to be happy at school and we were delighted to see how they encourage you to talk about your ideas. You certainly came up with some super ideas. Some of you have good extra help.

These are the things that we have asked the adults to do to make the school better.

- Make sure that more lessons are as good as the best.
- Help you to write more often and, for those who are ready, help you to check and improve your work so that you can write longer pieces.
- Make sure that you fully understand any new mathematics work before you start on something different. Also, make sure that activities are just right for you, not too difficult and not too easy.
- Give Year 1 pupils more chances to do guided reading.
- Make the outside learning area better for children in the Reception class and help them to learn as much as possible when they choose activities.
- Make it easier for the adults to check how well you are doing.

Keep working hard, behaving well and being kind to others.

Yours sincerely

Wendy Simmons

Lead inspector

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