

# Deneholm Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	114858
<b>Local Authority</b>	Thurrock
<b>Inspection number</b>	338469
<b>Inspection dates</b>	2–3 December 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Selwyn Ward

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>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	360
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Helen Horrobin
<b>Headteacher</b>	Susan Basnett
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	8 June 2007
<b>School address</b>	Culford Road Little Thurrock Grays
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. Inspectors visited 26 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They looked at samples of pupils' work, analysis of the tracking of pupils' progress, school policies and procedures, the school improvement plan, governors' minutes and the questionnaires received from pupils, staff and 72 parents and carers.

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

- how the school has responded to the downward trend in results
- how teachers assess pupils' work and use this to plan lessons and to show pupils what they need to do to improve their work
- the support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

## Information about the school

In this large school, around three-quarters of the pupils are of White British origin, with a growing proportion coming from a wide range of other ethnic backgrounds. This includes a small number of children of Gypsy/Roma heritage. The largest minority group is Black African. The school includes an above average proportion of pupils whose home language is thought to be other than English but few are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average. The school operates a breakfast club and it houses an independently managed after-school club. Deneholm Primary has been awarded Healthy Schools' status, Activemark, Basic Skills Quality Mark and Investor in People. The headteacher was appointed in September 2009.

**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

'My child takes an active part in school life. She enjoys the after-school clubs. She is training to be a mentor next year. She also likes to help with fundraising activities. All of this enthusiasm for school is due to the encouragement she receives from the hardworking staff at Deneholm School.' This comment from a parent sums up the views of many in their praise for the way the school looks after their children, from the Reception Year to the end of Year 6, and helps them to grow in confidence and self-esteem. Pupils are well behaved, attentive and keen to learn. They feel safe in school and have a good understanding of how to keep safe and lead healthy lives. In many lessons, they are helped to make good progress, but this is uneven across the school because of inconsistencies in teaching. As a result, achievement is satisfactory rather than better.

Teachers know and get on well with their pupils. They routinely set out 'learning objectives' at the start of each lesson but often these focus more on the task that pupils are due to carry out rather than what it is that the pupils are expected to learn. This limits opportunities for pupils to genuinely contribute to assessing how well they are learning because, in the main, pupils can more readily comment on what they have done rather than what they have learnt. In the best lessons, where pupils make rapid progress, teachers have high expectations of what their pupils can achieve and they challenge and extend them. They vary activities, matching tasks to pupils' different capabilities, and this ensures that all are fully engaged and motivated to succeed. These positive features of teaching are not consistent across the school, however. Progress is also slower when teachers spend too much time explaining or introducing a lesson, reducing opportunities for pupils to think for themselves. As was the case in the last inspection, although pupils enjoy the different subjects they learn at school, opportunities are missed for them to use and apply their literacy and numeracy skills in subjects other than English and mathematics, especially where teachers rely too much on unchallenging worksheets.

There are signs from pupils' books that marking is improving this term. An increasing proportion of marking gives pupils clear guidance on how they can improve their work, especially in English, but much still merely offers words of encouragement. Pupils have targets in English and mathematics but they do not all know what their targets are and they do not routinely refer to them because they are often displayed on the wall rather than on their desks or in their books. In some classes, the pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities have individual targets on cards in front of them, but, again, this is not consistent across the school. Although pupils with the greatest needs mostly have clear targets in their individual education plans that help to focus the

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support they are given in class, many of the individual learning plans for pupils with moderate learning difficulties have only been infrequently reviewed and updated, and not always with the full involvement of parents. As school leaders have identified this year, the strategies for support in these pupils' plans are often too general to help to really drive their learning. As a result, and despite high levels of support in many classes, the progress that these pupils make is no better than satisfactory.

Standards have drifted downwards since the time of the last inspection, especially in English. Attainment is average overall, although scores in the Year 6 national tests and the Year 2 assessments fell below average in 2009. Governors have not done as much as they should to challenge school leaders over the decline in standards and rates of progress, or on the way in which the school has tackled the issues for improvement identified in the last inspection, some of which remain. They have been too dependent on school leaders for information about the school and have only very recently realised the need for training. The governing body has not been much involved in evaluating the school's effectiveness or in setting the priorities in the school development plan. The plan itself does not set sharp enough criteria for it to be used as a tool for driving and measuring success.

The variation in practice throughout the school has been quickly identified by the new headteacher, who has a very accurate view of the school. Although it is early days, there are already clear signs of improvement, for example in marking and in increasingly sharing the good practice that exists within the staff. These show the school's satisfactory capacity for continued improvement. Staff share the headteacher's ambition to drive the school forward, and this is appreciated by parents too. As one explained, 'The new headteacher has made a lot of changes - all for the better.'

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

- By the end of the summer term 2010, make all teaching as good as the best in order to accelerate the rate of pupils' progress by:
  - setting out clear learning intentions at the start of each lesson that show the pupils what it is they are expected to learn
  - involving pupils more actively in assessing how well they are learning and whether they have achieved in each lesson appropriately challenging success criteria
  - matching work to the different abilities of the pupils in each class so that the most able pupils are challenged and extended
  - giving pupils varied activities and tasks and not allowing lesson introductions to go on for too long
  - expanding opportunities for pupils to use and apply their literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum
  - ensuring that all pupils know and refer to their targets and that marking gives them clear guidance on what they need to do to improve their work.

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- Improve progress of all pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, by the end of the spring term 2010, by:
  - having precise targets in place which guide staff in the best way of supporting the pupils with their learning
  - ensuring that individual education plans are updated and reviewed at least termly, with the full involvement of parents.
- Improve the effectiveness of the governing body in evaluating the school's work and in holding school leaders to account for ensuring improvement, by the start of the autumn term 2010, by:
  - updating the school development plan, setting clear, measurable success criteria for each of the actions identified for improvement
  - ensuring that governors take up appropriate training so that all are fully aware of their role and responsibilities.
- 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**

Achievement and progress across the school are satisfactory. There are no significant differences in the progress that different groups of pupils make, including ethnic groups. Gypsy/Roma pupils, and those pupils who are learning English as an additional language, make similar progress to their peers. The work in pupils' books and in lessons show that pupils make satisfactory progress. This is true for pupils of all backgrounds and abilities, but progress is notably faster in those classes where the teaching is good. A strong feature of this school is the way pupils from different backgrounds get on well together. This helps make Deneholm a happy, harmonious community where pupils increasingly enjoy learning. They also enjoy the opportunities that they have to take responsibility, including as school councillors and mentors who, as other pupils explain, 'Help us to sort out problems'.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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<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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<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
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
<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?**

Although there are examples of good teaching and use of assessment, these strengths are not seen consistently across the school. In all classes, however, the good relationships that staff have with their pupils helps to motivate them to work hard and do their best. Teachers manage their classes well, and they are making better use of interactive whiteboards and information and communication technology than at the time of the last inspection. There was certainly a buzz of excitement as pupils used their Bee-bot programmable robots to trace a series of directional instructions. Pupils generally listen attentively in lessons, although their attention sometimes lapses when they are expected to listen to the teacher for too long.

Pupils are engaged by the topics that they learn, enjoying the fact that the curriculum is enlivened through relevant visits and visitors to the school. In some subjects, particularly science, history and geography, an overreliance on often unchallenging worksheets limits the opportunities for pupils to develop and apply their literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum. Although there are many adults on hand to help the pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, the school has this term identified that these pupils' individual educational plans do not all give support staff sufficient guidance on how precisely they can help to accelerate pupils' progress. Pupils are enthusiastic about the good range of extra-curricular clubs on offer, and in which many take part. The breakfast club also offers a valued facility, and pupils appreciate what they describe as the 'healthy and yummy' cooked meals that are provided in the school canteen.

There are good arrangements for looking after pupils' welfare, including looking out for

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the needs of those pupils who are at risk because of severe allergies. Systems for chasing up absences and promoting good attendance have helped to ensure that attendance rates have remained in line with the national average.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

**How effective are leadership and management?**

In her short time at Deneholm, the headteacher has already had a positive impact in galvanising other school leaders and staff with an urgent desire to learn from, and spread, the good practice in the school. Leaders and governors now have an accurate picture of the school's strengths and of those areas where there are inconsistencies. The promotion of equal opportunities is successful in relation to girls and boys from different ethnic backgrounds, who are all helped to achieve at similar rates, but the school has itself identified that pupils with moderate learning difficulties have not been as well catered for as those with more marked special educational needs and/or disabilities because their individual education plans have sometimes lacked focus and not been updated with sufficient frequency. There are also differences between classes in pupils' rates of progress due to variations in the quality of teaching.

Community cohesion is very evident in the harmonious relationships throughout the school and the interest pupils take in learning about their own and other cultures. However, governors have not evaluated the impact of the school's promotion of community cohesion. Although governors are supportive and have ensured that the school meets its statutory responsibilities, including those for pupils' safeguarding, they have not been assiduous enough in seeing that school self-evaluation is kept up-to-date or that improvement planning is rigorously focused on standards and achievement. Drawing, this year, on advice from the local authority, they are now much more aware of their roles and have very recently acknowledged the need for more governor training.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
<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>4</b>



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<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>3</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>3</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children join the Reception Year with skills and capabilities that are broadly in line with those expected for the ages. They make satisfactory progress and reach average standards by the start Year 1. The children are helped to settle well and, as in the rest of the school, there is much good teaching, providing a balance in Reception between adult-led and activities chosen by children that help them to learn through play. Staff keep a careful track of children's progress, and they have identified that writing, particularly that of boys, is an area on which they need to focus. Opportunities are missed, however, for children to develop their mark making by, for example, labelling activity areas in the classrooms. The lack of cover for the outdoor area means that children learn and play outside in inclement weather. There are good arrangements to ensure children make a smooth transition to Key Stage 1, with which the Early Years Foundation Stage shares its leadership.

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

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>3</b>
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 express positive views about the school. A few parents voiced concerns that their children were given too much homework, but inspectors found homework was used well. This was particularly the case for those pupils who need extra help with their learning and for whom the homework assignments are very carefully explained.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Deneholm 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 72 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 360 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	40	56	31	43	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	28	39	41	57	3	4	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	28	39	40	56	4	6	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	30	42	39	54	3	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	26	37	44	62	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	24	33	46	64	2	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	22	31	48	67	2	3	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)	22	32	44	64	2	3	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	27	39	40	57	3	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	17	25	47	68	5	7	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	18	26	48	69	4	6	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	21	30	47	67	2	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	28	39	43	60	1	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"><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.**



4 December 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Deneholm Primary School, Grays RM16 2SS

Thank you for making us welcome when we came to visit your school. You are all so very polite and friendly, and we were especially pleased to see how well you all get on together and how well behaved you are. You do your best to pay attention in lessons and that is helping you to learn. You enjoy the interesting topics that you get to learn about. Deneholm is providing you with a satisfactory education. Standards have dipped since the time of the last inspection, but we could see from your work and from what your parents told us, that your new headteacher has already made some changes that are helping to turn things around so that you do better.

In some classes, you are making good progress, but your progress is not as rapid in every class because there is variation in the way in which teachers and staff help you. We have asked teachers to copy some of the best examples in the school so that you are all helped to make good progress through your time at Deneholm from Reception to the end of Year 6. You can help to improve your work too by making sure that, when teachers mark your books and give you advice, you do your very best to follow it.

We have asked the school governors to take a much more active role in checking how well the school is doing and making sure that you all make as much progress as you can. We have also asked the school to set clearer targets for those of you who need a little extra help with your learning, and to be sure to keep them up-to-date, so that the adults who support you in class know exactly which is the best way of helping you learn.

We hope you have a happy Christmas.

Yours sincerely

Selwyn Ward

Lead inspector

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