

Desford Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119921
Local Authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	339555
Inspection dates	30 September –1 October 2009
Reporting inspector	Susan Lewis

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	234
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ruth Camamile
Headteacher	Martin Turnham
Date of previous school inspection	9 June 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 14 lessons, and held meetings and discussions with governors, staff, pupils and parents. They observed the school's work, the provision for childcare, looked at the documentation relating to safeguarding, school improvement plans, reports on the school's progress, governors' minutes, records of pupils' progress, analysed 104 parental questionnaires and took account of staff and pupil questionnaires.

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

- the achievement of different groups of pupils, including those with particular gifts and talents and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, to determine the effectiveness and impact of teaching on their progress
- the school's use of assessment to track and monitor pupils' progress and to help it to determine its priorities
- the school's safeguarding procedures
- the effectiveness of the school's leadership and management in delivering improvements.

Information about the school

Desford Community Primary School admits pupils mainly from the village of Desford and the surrounding rural area. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is lower than average. Almost all pupils are from a White British heritage. Few pupils do not speak English as their first language, and an average proportion of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school holds the Activemark award, and is working towards the Healthy School Award. The governing body has recently achieved a Financial Management in Schools award.

During the last two years the school has suffered considerable instability in senior staffing because of staff illness, which is now resolving. The headteacher had been in post for just over a year at the time of the inspection. Most pupils are taught in mixed year groups in which teams of teachers plan together.

Governors also manage the Extra Time Club, a breakfast and after-school childcare provision for pupils at the school.

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

Desford Primary School is a welcoming, friendly school. It provides a satisfactory education, but is rapidly improving and has a number of strengths, of which it can be very proud. The headteacher's enthusiasm, drive and determination and the good teamwork has enabled the school to make up the lost ground since the last inspection. Despite the challenges of turbulence within the leadership team, the school has introduced a number of initiatives which are beginning to pay off. Although the pace of change has sometimes not been as fast as they wished and the results are not yet visible in all subjects, the school is demonstrating satisfactory capacity to improve further. Standards are broadly average and achievement is satisfactory, although the quality of teaching is now good throughout the school and learning in lessons during the inspection was occasionally outstanding. Reception children quickly settle and develop good attitudes to learning. Pupils across the school make good progress in reading and in science, and satisfactory but improving progress in writing. Progress in mathematics is satisfactory. The school is rightly focused on improving this further. This is a highly inclusive school which works hard to find ways in which everyone can join in. Although achievement is similar for all groups of pupils, regardless of background or ability, there are individual instances of pupils making exceptional progress, particularly in their behaviour, literacy or communication.

The revamping of the curriculum with a more creative focus is already exciting pupils. Pupils are enthusiastic, saying that they learn 'lots', because their teachers 'explain everything so well' and that 'everything is fun'. Pupils say they do not like missing school because of all the interesting things they do, but they would like to be involved even more in school life and be clearer about how well they are doing. They and their parents also say that the school has improved considerably over the last year and inspectors agree. A strong focus on assessment and using the information gained has supported the school's careful targeting of additional support to individual pupils and groups, and shown what it must now prioritise in order to improve further.

The work of the governing body in driving change and challenging the school to do better has also improved considerably, although elements of its role such as the review of the effectiveness of school's policies are less well developed. The school is at an early stage of developing plans to meet better the needs of its pupils in understanding the diversity of cultures in multicultural Britain.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' attainment further in English and mathematics and ensure that all

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pupils make at least good progress at each key stage by:

- extending the use of the data the school now has about pupils' progress, achievement and attainment so that staff make consistent use of it when planning and delivering lessons
- using a wider range of teaching approaches and tasks
- ensuring all pupils understand their targets and how well they are doing.
- Ensure that there are more opportunities for pupils to contribute to the life and development of the school and that the school's community cohesion plan provides opportunities for their understanding of and involvement with other communities locally, nationally and internationally.
- Ensure all policies and procedures that the school should have are up to date, reviewed, monitored in implementation and evaluated for their effectiveness.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next inspection.

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

Pupils' books, records and lessons observed during the inspections confirm that achievement, though still satisfactory, is improving in all subjects. Those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported well and make at least satisfactory progress in their academic work, as well as developing their confidence and their willingness to join in. Lessons are lively and interesting. Progress seen in lessons was strongest where teachers had thought very carefully about what the different groups of pupils needed to do next. In a few lessons, some pupils, and particularly those with the highest ability, were not challenged enough because the work did not take sufficient account of everyone's levels of ability.

Pupils behave well, particularly in lessons, and their relationships with each other and with staff are strong. They say they feel safe and cared for at school and that the occasional instances of bullying are dealt with appropriately by staff and resolved quickly. They have a good understanding about the importance of leading a healthy life and take part in a range of clubs, residential visits and sports activities which promote this well. The Extra Time club also supports children's understanding of these aspects well. Opportunities to take on responsibilities around the school are welcomed by the pupils and they fulfil these well, but wish they had more. The school council, for example, plays a limited role at present. Although they do fundraise and take part in community events, not enough active use is made of partnerships to both promote pupils' learning and citizenship further. Pupils' good behaviour and attendance, the strong work ethos they show in lessons, their good teamwork and their improving progress in areas such as literacy, set them up well for the next steps in their education. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is also good. They have a clear understanding about right and wrong and a good range of cultural experiences help to promote understanding of others' beliefs.

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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	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
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	3
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?

The school has put considerable effort into improving the quality of teaching and the learning opportunities offered to its pupils. The careful arrangement of classes and sets means that pupils are taught in groups designed to maximise their progress and achievement. This is evident in the accelerated progress Year 5 and Year 6 pupils are already making this year. Although there is some variation in the quality of teaching, almost all is good or better. Lessons are organised well and teaching assistants are briefed and deployed effectively, usually supporting those pupils needing additional help. Good use is made of information and communication technology to interest and excite pupils. In the best lessons pupils, whatever their starting points, made good progress and sometimes better, each group or individual being challenged with slightly different tasks so that they learned new skills and knowledge. These lessons provided pupils with many different ways of learning, including teacher-led and working in pairs and groups, so that pupils learned well from and with each other as well as from adults.

The curriculum is enhanced well by out-of-school visits and extra-curricular activities, including residential visits. Indeed most Year 2 pupils were on a residential visit during

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 inspection. For the others a vibrant 'off timetable' creative curriculum was in place with Year 1 pupils. Year 6 pupils enjoyed an eco theatre workshop, performing with talent and enthusiasm to Year 5s. Dance workshops, a musician in residence and the teaching of modern foreign languages add further variety and interest to a curriculum the pupils themselves describe as 'really good and interesting, it makes you want to listen and find out.' They enjoy the activities at the Extra Time Club which also support their behaviour, learning and development.

Pupils, including vulnerable children, are well supported by all staff, who work well with outside agencies where they are also involved. This is a caring school in which each individual is valued. It works extremely well with other schools and with feeder early years providers to ensure that children 'hit the ground running' when they first attend. The transition arrangements for pupils transferring to secondary school also work well. Most pupils have a reasonable idea of their own areas for development, although some say they would like a clearer idea of how well they are doing.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
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

How effective are leadership and management?

The school has begun to improve standards, primarily because of a clear focus on the quality of teaching and learning and better use of assessment. Staff morale is high. Everyone in this school works really well together and is absolutely determined to raise pupils' attainment and achievement. The school's leaders, including the governing body, have a very clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They have identified the correct priorities for improving pupils' performance and have already brought about improvements in teaching and the curriculum. Development planning is focused sharply on what the school needs to do. They have also ensured that well targeted professional development opportunities support teaching and learning and increase the effectiveness with which each individual fulfils their role in the school.

Safeguarding arrangements are secure and meet all statutory requirements. Governors are playing an increasing role in the school's development and ensuring that the school promotes equality of opportunity well. They work well together, setting up a development group that both holds the school to account for its performance and plays a greater role in strategic planning. However, for both the Extra Time Club and school, not all policies are reviewed and monitored regularly for their effectiveness and to check that practices are followed consistently by staff.

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The school has good links with parents and gathers their views regularly both formally and informally. It works closely with partner schools and with support services to enhance the experiences of pupils, particularly around transition to other classes and schools. However, links with community groups, local businesses and schools are not fully developed to support learning further. The school is making satisfactory progress in promoting community cohesion. It works hard to promote pupils' awareness of others' beliefs and customs through the taught curriculum and to make them visible within their local community. It is rightly trying to broaden the opportunities pupils have to learn more about the diversity of cultures within Britain and the wider world.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
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

Good relations with other early years providers and good links with families before children start school mean that they quickly settle when they enter Reception and the work can be well tailored to their interests and needs. Children have wide-ranging attainment on entry. Overall it is broadly as expected for their age, although some children have limited skills in communication, language and literacy and/or personal social and emotional development. Children, whatever their starting points, make good progress in these and in other areas of their learning. The child care provision complements this learning and provides appropriate activities to support children's development. However, it is not yet planning using the different areas of learning or recording children's achievements in ways that link to this. Staff know the children well however and their safety and well-being are paramount in school and the club.

The Reception class has been reorganised to allow for a better balance of child-initiated

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and adult-led learning. Currently, some pupils are in a mixed Reception and Year 1 class. However, activities are carefully planned so that each year group has appropriate challenge and opportunity to be with others of their age. The Reception and Year 1 staff work very well together as a team and this supports continuity as children progress in school. The quality of teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good, because adults are skilled at joining in children's play and helping them to learn more from it. The activities that the adults themselves lead extend the children's thinking well and always stretch and challenge the different groups. Good relationships with parents, and regular newsletters, help to keep them well informed of both what their children are doing and how well they are doing. The learning environment is designed well to excite children's curiosity and interest in their surroundings and has a good balance of quieter and more creative areas. The outdoor play area is adequate and is about to be further developed by the school, so that it can be used even more as an extension of the classroom.

The Early Years Foundation Stage is led well by a coordinator and her team who are excited about recent improvements, know the provision's strengths and weaknesses and have clear ideas about have the right priorities as to how to improve the provision further.

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

A very large majority of the parents who responded to the questionnaire are very positive about their child's experience at the school. Almost all judge that the school keeps pupils safe and teaches them well and many make individual comments about how friendly, helpful and supportive staff are. These views were confirmed by the inspection team.

A very few parents had questions about individual incidents or about behaviour or bullying, and inspectors had discussions with pupils to review the situation, examined paperwork and discussed these with school leaders. The school's procedures were judged to be appropriate. Inspectors found no evidence to substantiate that bullying was a problem. The pupils that the inspectors interviewed said that on the rare occasions when problems do arise, they know the procedures to follow and that the matter is then resolved successfully.

Almost all parents who did reply are happy with their child's experience at school. A

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small minority of parents commented that the school did not give enough information about the progress of their child. The school acknowledges that it did not necessarily give sufficient information at the beginning of term, particularly for some younger children. It is already extending the range of information it provides to all parents.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Desford 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 104 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 234 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	60	58	30	34	5	5	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	37	36	56	54	5	5	2	2
The school informs me about my child's progress	31	30	55	53	9	9	3	3
My child is making enough progress at this school	40	38	52	50	1	1	2	2
The teaching is good at this school	42	40	52	50	5	5	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	41	39	57	55	3	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	33	32	49	47	5	5	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)	36	35	53	51	8	8	3	3
The school meets my child's particular needs	43	41	47	45	6	6	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	28	27	63	61	8	8	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	53	51	41	39	4	4	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	51	49	41	39	4	4	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	51	49	41	39	7	7	1	1

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.



2 October 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Desford Community Primary School, Desford, LE9 9JH

Thank you so much for welcoming us into your school and lessons when we visited you recently. We enjoyed meeting you and talking with you and looking at your work. Thank you to everyone who completed the pupil questionnaires; these really helped us to understand your views. It is clear that you like your school very much and that you think it has improved over the last year in particular. We agree with you that it is a very friendly school that provides a satisfactory education. It has some very good features, which you enjoy.

These are the main things that we found out about your school.

Children starting in Reception settle really quickly, learn well and have lots of interesting things to do.

You behave well, enjoy school, play well together and really want to do your best.

You enjoy the different clubs and opportunities you have to learn through practical activities.

The new organisation of the school into teams of year groups is working well although some of you are worried about how they might affect your SATs.

Teaching has really improved because your teachers plan well together and challenge you to learn new skills and to develop your knowledge and understanding.

We have asked the school to do three things to improve the quality of education that you receive.

We have asked them make sure that the work you are given helps you to make even faster progress and reach higher standards, particularly in English and mathematics and that you understand the targets that you are set and what you need to do to achieve them.

We have asked the governors and school leaders to check even more on how well the different policies and plans are being put into place and are helping you to achieve more.

We have also asked the school to make sure you understand more about the world around you.

We hope that you continue to enjoy and be proud of your school.

Yours faithfully

Sue Lewis

Lead inspector

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