

St Denys Church of England Infant School, Ibstock

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120138
Local Authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	339611
Inspection dates	15–16 June 2010
Reporting inspector	Andrew Stafford

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	166
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Neil Laws
Headteacher	Jane Sharp
Date of previous school inspection	6 February 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Fourteen lessons were observed with eight teachers seen. Inspectors observed the school's work, and held meetings with staff, governors and groups of pupils. They looked at the school development plan, pupils' assessment records and details of the progress made by pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Inspectors also analysed 75 questionnaire returns from parents and those from staff.

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

current standards in school, particularly in respect of boys' work

- the progress of pupils with special educational needs
- the quality of tracking pupils' progress, target setting and monitoring
- the school's work to improve attendance.

Information about the school

This is an average sized infant school whose pupils are mainly from White British backgrounds. The school includes a special unit for 10 children with complex learning and physical needs, who come from a wider area than the school's catchment area. This means that the proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is higher than average. There are small numbers of pupils from minority ethnic groups and a few of these are at an early stage of learning to speak English. A small proportion of pupils are eligible for free school meals. The school has the Activemark award and Healthy School 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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school. It provides an effective education for its pupils in an exciting and stimulating learning environment. The school is successful because the leadership and management are effective. The headteacher provides exceptional leadership and a clear direction for the school. Staff, governors and parents all subscribe to the school's aims and values which is reflected in its statement, 'Each one of us different, each one of us special'. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. The following comment was typical of many: 'My daughter has always been very happy at St. Denys, there is a lovely atmosphere, the headteacher is excellent and children get a good start in life.'

Children get an excellent start in the Reception classes and make very good progress. By the end of Year 2, standards are above average, pupils make good progress and their achievement is good. The school promotes equality of opportunity extremely well and its safeguarding procedures are extremely effective. The school is well aware of its strengths and areas for development. For example, actions taken to improve the quality of boys' writing and attainment in mathematics have generally been successful. Consequently its capacity for further improvement is good. Assessment of writing skills is more precise and the expertise of teaching assistants has developed to enable them to use computer resources to support pupils' acquisition of numeracy skills. However, in mathematics the less able and middle ability pupils are not consistently reaching the standards they reach in literacy because the work they do is not always challenging enough. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good and sometimes outstanding progress, because the support they receive both in class and in small groups is very well focused and successfully motivates them. The pupils in the special unit make outstanding progress because of staff's consistently high expectations and the exceptional support provided. The small, but increasing, proportion of pupils at an early stage of learning English make good progress because of the good support provided. Lessons are well structured and the animated responses and excitement generated in lessons illustrate how much pupils enjoy their learning. Nevertheless, sometimes, teachers talk for too long at the start of lessons and this leaves less time for children to get on with their own activities. The inspiring curriculum is based around creative and practical themes. The care and support provided for pupils, and their families, is excellent. Pupils receive outstanding support for both their personal and academic development and their efforts are valued and celebrated, particularly in the displays of outstanding artwork around the school. Teachers regularly give time to review pupils' learning with them, and all the pupils spoken to by inspectors both knew and understood their targets.

Pupils are lively and responsive in class, and thoughtful and reflective in assembly. They

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understand how to care for each other and the playground is a very safe and happy place. Pupils have an excellent understanding of the importance of a healthy lifestyle. The children are committed to conservation and are, rightfully, extremely proud of their varied recycling projects. Pupils enjoy taking on responsibilities in school and eagerly raise funds for national and international charities, such as UNICEF and the Samaritan's Purse shoebox appeal. They have instigated several improvements in school, such as using the school council's budget to buy hanging baskets and produce garden areas. Pupils' good competence in numeracy and literacy and their excellent personal and social skills provide a good preparation for their future lives.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that less able and middle ability pupils in mathematics are consistently provided with more challenging opportunities to enable them to reach the standards they reach in literacy.
- Keep the pace of lessons brisk so that pupils have sufficient time to be able to complete their independent tasks.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Standards are above average in reading and writing and average in mathematics. There has been a significant improvement since the last inspection in the pupils' knowledge and use of information and communication technology (ICT) and this is now above expectations. Performance in science and art is also above that expected and overall, pupils' achievement is good from their broadly average starting points when they enter Year 1. The school is always seeking to improve pupils' learning and to this end small focus groups or one-to-one help provide very good support. As a result, pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and particularly those in the special unit, achieve well. The progress of pupils who are gifted or talented is monitored rigorously and great care is taken to ensure their learning is fully extended. Less able and middle ability pupils are not always sufficiently challenged in mathematics. The school is aware of this and has already initiated plans to remedy the situation.

The school is a happy and harmonious community where pupils thoroughly enjoy their learning and get on exceptionally well with each other. Relationships are extremely positive and behaviour is exemplary. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They work together to respect the feelings of others and have a well developed sense of fair play. The playground is a very safe place because pupils are highly safety conscious. Their well developed understanding of the importance of staying healthy is seen, for example, in their enjoyment of a wide range of physical activities. This is also reflected in the school's achievement of both Healthy Schools status and Activemark. There is an excellent range of extra-curricular activities which excite pupils and further enhance their learning experiences. Pupils enjoy growing their own vegetables and make their own compost from recycled materials. Pupils have a strong social and community awareness and are keen fundraisers for charity. Their

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above average attainment and ability to work constructively with others, linked to their above average attendance help them to be well prepared for the future.

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	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
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	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
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	1

How effective is the provision?

Teachers are imaginative in their planning and make learning relevant and fun for pupils. As a result pupils are eager to learn. Good subject knowledge gives teachers the confidence to be ambitious. Strong relationships and high expectations ensure that pupils behave very well and work hard. Teachers usually keep the pace of learning brisk but in a few lessons they talk for too long during the introduction to the lesson, thus shortening the time available for pupils to be able to carry out their own tasks. The quality of marking is good. Pupils generally receive very well focused feedback, know what they need to do to improve and are beginning to make informed evaluations of their own achievements.

The excellent curriculum enables pupils to develop skills in all areas. As well as a strong focus on the development of numeracy and literacy skills, there is a strong emphasis on developing the creative arts and ensuring that the pupils have a really broad education.

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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There is an excellent programme to promote pupils' personal and social education and the wide variety of visits and visitors enable pupils to improve their understanding and skills. Care is taken to ensure that pupils who are gifted and talented and those who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well provided for.

The quality of pastoral care is very high and stems from the constructive relationships that exist across the school. The supportive family atmosphere helps pupils to grow in confidence and to develop into well-rounded young citizens with high self-esteem.

Parents are justifiably confident that their children are well looked after at school. Pupils with special educational needs and /or disabilities are extremely well provided for, and very strong links are established with outside agencies to ensure that additional support is provided when required. Inspectors agreed with one parent who wrote about the special unit, 'We feel very fortunate that our daughter with complex needs has attended St. Denys for the last three years as the staff are compassionate and very skilled at what they do'.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The school's good leadership and management are characterised by shared ambition and a clear drive for further improvement. The excellent leadership of the headteacher is supported effectively by the subject leaders. They analyse data carefully and identify where intervention, support or more challenge is required in order to meet pupils' needs. This is evident in the way plans are developing to provide additional challenge for less able pupils in mathematics next year. The school has worked particularly hard to develop ideas and strategies to motivate boys to write, and is successful in doing so. Rigorous monitoring helps to ensure that the school continues to improve. The headteacher monitors lessons and has identified the pace of lessons as an area for development. This is not always consistently applied which means that opportunities are missed to help teachers raise the quality of their teaching from good to outstanding. Targets for development are regularly set and reviewed. As a result, the school has a good picture of how well it is doing and its self-evaluation is accurate. However, there is no complacency and the school's drive to improve further is illustrated by the good improvements made in boys' writing. The school's outstanding promotion of equality is clearly demonstrated by the way in which the progress of different groups is analysed and acted upon. The school is highly effective in promoting safeguarding because child

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protection and safeguarding procedures are extremely robust and were fully in place at the time of the inspection. This was seen for example, in highly effective supervision by staff during lunchtime and break time, which ensured pupils stayed extremely safe. The governors monitor the work of the school closely and effectively. They promote community cohesion well but recognise that there is more to be done in establishing greater links nationally. Links with the community closer to home and abroad are strong and pupils have a good understanding of other faiths and cultures.

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	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
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	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children join the Reception class with skills below those expected for their age, particularly in writing and calculating. The exciting and stimulating provision ensures they make very good progress and reach at least average standards by the time they join Year 1. Children's personal, social and emotional development is outstanding, and the sensitive encouragement and guidance they receive helps them to become happy and independent learners. Children behave exceptionally well and learn to play with and help each other. Teaching is lively and stimulating and enables the children to learn very effectively. The curriculum is exciting and provides activities across all the areas of learning. Role play areas, such as the vet's surgery and the farmyard, successfully motivate boys to write. There is a good balance between those activities led by the teacher and those that children choose for themselves. A wide range of activities is provided in the outside area, to which children have continual access. The provision is led and managed extremely well. Staff have a clear understanding of how well the

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provision meets children's needs and how it can be improved. The care and attention given to children's welfare are excellent. Children's progress is carefully monitored and recorded and their Learning Diaries are an excellent record of their time in Reception. Parents are encouraged to contribute to these so children's achievements at home are included in this comprehensive record.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

Parents have an extremely positive view of the school and the quality of education it provides for their children. Inspectors received many written comments praising the school for the quality of care that it offers to all of its pupils. They agree that these positive views are accurate and that the school does provide a good standard of education for its pupils.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Denys Church of England Infant School, Ibstock 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 75 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 166 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	54	77	16	23	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	53	76	17	24	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	43	61	27	39	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	48	69	22	31	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	52	74	18	26	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	47	67	22	31	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	56	80	14	20	0	0	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)	46	66	19	27	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	43	61	26	37	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	43	61	27	36	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	41	59	28	40	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	50	71	19	27	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	51	73	19	27	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

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.



17 June 2010

Dear Children

Inspection of St Denys Church of England Infant School, Ibstock, LE67 6NL

Thank you for the very warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school. You certainly seem to be very happy and it was good to hear how you really enjoy your work and all the extra activities in which you are involved. Your school gives you a good education and is working hard to make it even better.

These are the things we like best.

You get an excellent start in the Reception classes.

Your behaviour is excellent and you are really keen and enthusiastic about your learning.

You are doing well in English and mathematics, and in many other subjects as well.

Teachers make learning interesting and fun for you, and you know how to improve your work from marking and target setting.

You have an outstanding and varied curriculum and the special activities arranged to enhance it are excellent. Your work in art is stunning.

The teachers and staff take excellent care of you and you are safe while you are in school.

Your headteacher and governors lead the school well.

So that you can do even better, we have asked your teachers to do two things:

Some of you who find learning in mathematics harder than others need to be given harder tasks to do.

We have asked that your teachers don't spend too long on the introduction to your lessons so that you have plenty of time to learn and discover for yourselves.

I am glad you enjoy your school so much and hope you will continue to work hard.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Stafford

Lead inspector

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