

Dovecote Primary and Nursery School

Inspection report

| | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|
| Unique Reference Number | 134841 |
| Local Authority | Nottinghamshire |
| Inspection number | 341537 |
| Inspection dates | 29–30 June 2010 |
| Reporting inspector | Sue Hall |

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 | 3–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 441 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Ed Williams |
| Headteacher | Andrew Jenkins |
| Date of previous school inspection | 15 March 2007 |
| School address | Greencroft Clifton Nottingham |
| Telephone number | 0115 9152953 |
| Fax number | 0115 9217848 |
| Email address | admin@dovecote.nottingham.sch.uk |

| | |
|--------------------------|-----------------|
| Age group | 3–11 |
| Inspection dates | 29–30 June 2010 |
| Inspection number | 341537 |

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It rates council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 08456 404045, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 08456 404045

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2010

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors who visited all 16 classes and observed 26 lessons taught by 19 teachers. The inspectors also held meetings with the headteacher, staff, pupils and members of the governing body. They observed the school's work, and looked at documentation including the tracking of pupils' progress, school development plans and records of meetings of the governing body. Samples of pupils' recent work and documents regarding safeguarding were evaluated.

Questionnaires from 48 parents or carers, 100 pupils and 23 staff were scrutinised.

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

- whether all groups of pupils make enough progress in communicating with others and particularly the boys in reading and writing
- if behaviour is good and attendance improving
- if assessment is accurate and information used effectively to provide appropriately challenging work for all groups of pupils
- whether leaders and managers monitor and evaluate the work of the school rigorously enough to identify areas for further improvement.

Information about the school

In this large primary school the proportion of pupils known to be entitled to free school meals is a little above the national average. The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage and there is a small number at the early stages of learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. These pupils have a range of learning, communication and behavioural difficulties. The school was established five years ago following the closure of three local schools and remodelling of the school site. There has been a change of headteacher since the previous inspection. The breakfast and after school care available for pupils, which is managed by the governing body, is included in this inspection. The school holds Healthy Schools, Activemark and Eco schools silver status plus a Mentoring and Befriending Award.

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

The school provides a good quality of education, which has improved since the previous inspection. Pupils say they like attending school. They particularly enjoy the visits they go on and the themes that link learning activities such as the current focus on the countries involved in the World Cup. The care, guidance and support of pupils are good. This includes support for the most vulnerable families, including through the school's 'Blocks' provision and the work of staff coordinating support for pupils with additional needs. The behaviour of the large majority of pupils is good and they know how to keep themselves and others safe.

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills that are well below age related expectations particularly in speaking and early reading and writing. Some are unusually quiet children who happily watch and copy others but often do not say very much. Pupils make good, if at times variable, progress as they move through the school so that at the age of eleven standards are close to national averages. Skills in mathematics are better than in speaking, reading and writing where few pupils reach the higher levels. Girls often do better in English than the boys and some boys say they do not really enjoy reading and writing. Nevertheless, from low starting points most pupils of different ages, abilities and backgrounds achieve well. The attendance and punctuality of a minority of pupils is poor and assessment information shows that it adversely affects their learning.

The quality of teaching and learning is good with strengths in how staff praise pupils' efforts and this helps to raise their self esteem. The management of behaviour is also good and ensures lessons are conducted in a calm and purposeful manner. There are examples of good planning that makes use of assessment information to match the level of challenge to pupils' different abilities. But, this is not consistent and, at times, there is not sufficient focus on the development of speaking and writing skills. The curriculum is good with strengths in the enrichment of learning through a range of visits and cross-curricular activities that bring learning to life. The curriculum for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good in most respects but at times the greater focus given to child-chosen activities is at the expense of adult led tasks that specifically focus on the development of language skills.

The leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have worked hard to develop consistency of practices across the school and are well informed about the strengths and areas for development. This ensures there is good capacity for further improvement. However, at times, the monitoring of the work of the school does not focus sufficiently on how well teachers are planning for, and developing, pupils' skills in communication, both written and oral.

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

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the levels of attendance to at least the national average by working even more closely with parents to convince them of the adverse impact on learning of low attendance.
- Improve pupils' speaking, reading and writing skills by:
 - making sure that all lessons provide sufficient opportunities for pupils, and especially the boys and the higher attainers, to develop their speaking and writing skills
 - ensuring that children in the Early Years Foundation Stage have more carefully structured opportunities to discuss and record their ideas
 - making sure that the monitoring and evaluation of planning and learning focus rigorously on how pupils develop basic communication skills, both written and oral.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

While children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage they enter Year 1 with skills that are below the expectations for their age. Many still have quite a limited vocabulary and range of experiences. But, as they move through the school they gradually develop a range of basic skills and more confidence in their abilities. Most pupils achieve well. Many say they like mathematics, art and other subjects where they 'do' something practical. Pupils make better progress in mathematics and science than they do in speaking, reading and especially in writing. For example good progress is seen in Year 6 when pupils plot pulse rates on a graph to try to work out the stress levels of the characters involved in a murder mystery. However, across the school fewer pupils are working at the higher levels in English than mathematics. Some pupils' spelling is not secure and handwriting can be untidy. Data and inspection observations show that boys do not do as well as girls in writing and to a greater degree than seen nationally. Pupils with additional needs and the small number learning English make good progress towards their individual targets. The school attempts to make clear to parents the importance of regular attendance but some parents do not always welcome the school's efforts and this remains below average. This does not help pupils develop the skills that contribute to their future.

The behaviour of the large majority of pupils is good and has a positive impact on the progress they make. Many have a good understanding that how they behave has an impact on the safety of those around them. Most understand the benefits of a healthy lifestyle, and enjoy sport, active playtimes and adopt good eating habits, helped by the introduction of a healthy tuck shop. However, there is more to do to help convince all of the benefits of a healthy diet. The pupils' contribution to the community is good particularly within the school through roles including peer mediators, buddies and play leaders. Several also assume responsibilities on the school council and as part of the city wide Pupil Parliament. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good

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

including through the Dovecote University activities where groups of different ages work together on a range of areas which they choose to pursue. The staff work effectively to develop pupil's cultural understanding and their experiences of the world beyond Clifton.

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 | 3 |
| 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 | 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 | 4 |
| The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 2 |

How effective is the provision?

Teaching ranges from satisfactory to occasionally outstanding and is predominantly good. Where it is most effective staff have high expectations of the pupils coupled with real enthusiasm for what they are teaching which makes learning fun. Staff across the school have good relationships with the pupils and offer lots of praise and encouragement to build their self-esteem. But in some lessons staff dominate discussions and miss opportunities for pupils to discuss their ideas with a partner which allows some to sit very quietly but uninvolved in their learning. In most lessons, the activities provided are well structured to help pupils develop their learning in a systematic manner and questioning is used well to check their understanding. While the use of assessment information to inform planning is good, at times it is not used to provide even more challenge for the higher attaining pupils especially in English.

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

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

The curriculum has strengths in the programme to enrich learning. This was seen to full effect during the inspection when several classes were on visits to places of educational interest. This widens pupils' knowledge and understanding of the world around them and helps form the basis for some interesting follow up work. There is good provision for mathematics, science and information and communication technology. However, staff do not always plan enough opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking or writing skills through drama or other practical activities that develop their imagination and technical skill as a writer. This also means that staff miss opportunities to use methods and resources that boys find more appealing and interesting.

The school provides a caring and nurturing environment. Vulnerable pupils are provided with very good support and a stimulating and safe environment where they grow in confidence and enjoy their time in school. Staff work with pupils with additional needs and their families effectively to help them overcome difficulties. Those who struggle to manage their own behaviour are given particularly good support. Provision in the breakfast and after-school activities is good and ensures pupils have an effective start and end to their school day. Staff at mid-day miss the opportunity to help pupils develop better table manners. The school does much to encourage regular attendance including first day absence texts to parents. But, senior staff recognise the need to do even more to make clear to parents their responsibilities and how non-attendance affects their children's life chances.

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 | 2 |
| The effectiveness of care, guidance and support | 2 |

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher provides good leadership and has worked successfully to unite three separate staff and parent groups to work largely as one and thereby embed ambition and drive improvement. He is well supported by the deputy headteacher and they share a good grasp of what the school does well and where improvements are still needed. While there is still some inconsistency across this large school there are many areas where there is a common approach particularly in pastoral matters. Joint lesson observations during the inspection show that senior leaders correctly identify what works well in lessons. However, the longer-term monitoring of the work of the school does not always focus enough on learning and is at times a little more generous than data and the sample of pupils' work indicate. A key group of well informed and knowledgeable governors are working effectively. However, currently governance is no

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

more than satisfactory because some very new governors and several governor vacancies mean the governing body is not at full strength.

The school has good links with a range of external agencies including an Education Improvement Partnership with a group of local schools. Very successful links with a local company and development agency has resulted in the provision of an innovative project involving a small number of pupils in high level science activities. The school has sound links with the adjoining Children's Centre. Safeguarding procedures are good. There are careful checks of those who help in school and of site security. The school plans effectively to promote community cohesion in the school, local, United Kingdom and global community. Much work has been done to extend the awareness of the pupils and their families of life beyond Clifton. This is epitomised in the teaching of Spanish, including for the youngest children, and French for some. Global links with schools in Germany and Holland and an orphanage in Uganda extend pupils' understanding of the lives of others. Links with parents and carers are satisfactory. The school works to encourage family involvement in the life of the school but responses to initiatives are limited and there is recognition that efforts need to be renewed. The school promotes equality of opportunity satisfactorily but does not always take sufficient account of the needs of all groups including boys and the higher attainers.

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 | 3 |
| 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 | 2 |

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage shortly after their third birthday with knowledge and skills that are well below the expectations for their age. Their speaking

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

skills are at a particularly low level and remain a challenge for staff throughout the school. Several children struggle to express themselves. Their personal, social and emotional development is also often limited and they play alongside others but rarely with them. The children benefit from working with a good number of staff in the purpose built accommodation. Most settle well and make good progress particularly in their social development and they have lots of opportunities to choose what they want to do. They particularly enjoy playing outside with a good range of resources. Teaching, learning and the curriculum are often good. However, at times teachers do not prioritise enough the adult led activities that help develop speaking and early writing skills, such as mark-making, in a carefully planned and sequential manner. Staff work well together in a team approach to leadership although at times this does not ensure sufficient rigour in checking if all staff maximise the opportunities for children to develop their communication skills.

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

At just over 10%, the parental/carer response to the inspection questionnaire was comparatively low. Of those who did respond, the majority think their children like school and are happy there. Most believe the school helps their children develop a healthy lifestyle and that they are well taught. The main anxiety parents have is whether the school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour. Inspectors believe that the behaviour of a very large majority of pupils is good and should any mis-behaviour occur this is dealt with firmly and appropriately. A small number question if the children are given enough support. Inspection evidence shows that support for individual pupils is good. A small number of carers also believe they are not very well informed about their child's progress and would like more help to support learning at home. Inspectors believe that the school provides a good range of information to parents but could do a little more to involve them in the life and work of the school and to help their children learn more.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Dovecote Primary and Nursery 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 48 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 441 pupils registered at the school.

| Statements | Strongly Agree | | Agree | | Disagree | | Strongly disagree | |
|---|----------------|----|-------|----|----------|----|-------------------|---|
| | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % |
| My child enjoys school | 23 | 48 | 23 | 48 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 |
| The school keeps my child safe | 18 | 38 | 28 | 58 | 2 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| The school informs me about my child's progress | 19 | 40 | 24 | 50 | 5 | 10 | 0 | 0 |
| My child is making enough progress at this school | 19 | 40 | 22 | 46 | 5 | 10 | 0 | 0 |
| The teaching is good at this school | 17 | 35 | 29 | 60 | 2 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| The school helps me to support my child's learning | 15 | 31 | 28 | 58 | 5 | 10 | 0 | 0 |
| The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle | 14 | 29 | 33 | 69 | 1 | 2 | 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) | 19 | 40 | 25 | 52 | 2 | 4 | 1 | 2 |
| The school meets my child's particular needs | 19 | 40 | 25 | 52 | 4 | 8 | 0 | 0 |
| The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour | 13 | 27 | 25 | 52 | 9 | 19 | 1 | 2 |
| The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns | 12 | 25 | 31 | 65 | 4 | 8 | 1 | 2 |
| The school is led and managed effectively | 15 | 31 | 29 | 60 | 2 | 4 | 1 | 2 |
| Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school | 19 | 40 | 25 | 52 | 2 | 4 | 1 | 2 |

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.



1 July 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Dovecote Primary and Nursery School, Nottingham, NG11 8EY

Thank you very much for making the inspection team welcome when we visited your school recently. We really enjoyed chatting to you, and the groups we met with were good at explaining what you all do. I particularly enjoyed seeing how excited you were about your class visits and how Year 6 used the information they had to work out the murderer in work they were doing to prepare them for secondary school. Thank you also for the questionnaire returns that you filled in for the inspection. These are some of the findings from the visit.

Your school is providing you with a good quality of education. We were pleased to see that there were a lot of improvements since the last inspection which was only a couple of years after Dovecote opened. We think you make good progress particularly in mathematics and when you are actively involved in your learning. We were pleased to see that almost all of you behave well and that the staff look after you carefully which means that you are safe and happy in school.

To improve your school further, we have asked the headteacher and staff to:

- work with your families to make sure you all come to school regularly
- help improve your speaking and writing by giving you more opportunities to discuss your ideas and develop the skills to write with confidence.

To help your school even further, could you try to join in all discussions and work a bit harder on your writing and spelling. Can you also encourage your parents to help you develop a healthy diet and remind them you can't learn as much as your friends if you don't come to school.

Yours sincerely

Sue Hall

Lead inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 08456 404045, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.