

Drove Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	131566
Local authority	Swindon
Inspection number	381366
Inspection dates	13–14 March 2012
Lead inspector	Marianne Phillips

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The registered childcare provision, managed by the governing body, was inspected under sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	549
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ian Cooke
Headteacher	Nicholas Capstick
Date of previous school inspection	14–15 July 2009
School address	Drove Road Swindon SN1 3AH
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3–11
3–14 March 2012
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Introduction

Inspection team

Marianne Phillips

Additional inspector

Stephen Edwards

Additional inspector

Partricia MacLachlan

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 25 lessons or parts of lessons, involving 21 members of staff. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, representatives of the governing body and school leaders. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work and looked at the school's self-evaluation documents, school improvement plan, the work in pupils' books, school policies and data tracking pupils' progress, together with records on safeguarding. Inspectors scrutinised 439 questionnaires completed by parents and carers and met with some parents and carers who were dropping their children off at school. Inspectors also analysed the questionnaires returned by staff and pupils from the school.

Information about the school

Drove Primary School is a larger than average primary school and is one of six federated schools managed by a single governing body. The headteacher of Drove Primary is one of two executive heads. Eighty nine percent of pupils represent 44 different cultures from minority ethnic backgrounds. The 79% of pupils who speak English as an additional language is more than four times the national average. The percentage who are known to be eligible for free school meals is higher than the national average, but the proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below national figures. The school exceeds the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress. It has achieved a range of awards.

The governors of the school also manage the Drove Children's Centre and Surestart Nursery Yellow Room, on the same site. These institutions were separately inspected, but the quality of education in the maintained Green Room Nursery for three- and four-year-olds is reported under this section 5 inspection.

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	1
Achievement of pupils	1
Quality of teaching	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils	1
Leadership and management	1

Key findings

- This is an outstanding school. The headteacher, staff and governors are totally committed to driving school improvement to ensure every opportunity is given for all pupils to achieve and enjoy learning. The vast majority of parents and carers and pupils who gave their views were extremely positive about the school. One parent commented, 'Drove is great, because even in the quest to continually raise standards the whole child is not forgotten.'
- Achievement is outstanding. All pupils, including those who are disabled or who have special educational needs, make rapid progress. Children start at school with skills and knowledge well below those expected for their age. They achieve consistently well as they move through the school and reach above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the time they leave in Year 6.
- Teaching is outstanding. Teachers set consistently high expectations and build strong, effective relationships with their pupils. Lessons have pace and rigour and incorporate a wide variety of strategies to engage all pupils. Marking is excellent and clearly tells pupils how they can improve further.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding and they display extremely good manners towards each other and adults. Their excellent behaviour and positive attitudes in class support their learning. They say they feel very safe and enjoy coming to school. Many pupils have excellent attendance records but a small number of families take their children out of school for extended periods without permission.
- School leaders at all levels have a shared sense of purpose. The leadership of the headteacher is very strong in managing the school's performance. The highly effective leadership of teaching is supported by a robust programme of monitoring and professional development. This, together with systematic procedures for performance management, is having a positive impact as the proportion of outstanding teaching demonstrates.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attendance for all groups of pupils to 95% by July 2013 by working closely with those families that, despite a range of measures, are proving to be resistant.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Children enter school working at levels well below those expected for their age in all areas of learning, particularly communication and calculating skills. From these starting points, monitored effectively by school leaders, children make sustained and rapid improvement in all areas, particularly in writing, where overall standards are above the national average by the end of Key Stage 1. They continue to exceed the national average in all subjects, by the end of Key Stage 2.

The drive for improvement is consistently seen in lessons. Pupils from the many different ethnic groups work hard, cooperating very successfully with their peers and adults. As a result they make sustained and excellent progress. Pupils consolidate learning very well in 'timed reflection' sessions where they respond to teachers' marking or carry out open-ended tasks, applying previously learned skills in a variety of new situations. Booster classes for all in mathematics and English ensure that even the highest attaining pupils are challenged daily.

Through Project X, a whole-school focus on reading which targets boys in particular, all pupils are fully engaged in the exciting world of books. The life-sized characters appear all over the school and pupils can be seen taking on the mantle of the characters, bringing reading to life. Very effective teaching of the sounds that letters make (phonics), especially in the Nursery and Reception classes, accelerates the children's acquisition of reading skills. As a result, by the end of Year 2 attainment in reading is broadly average and by the end of Year 6 it is above average.

The commitment to overcome barriers to learning through creative approaches was illustrated extremely well in several outstanding lessons observed. As a result all groups of pupils, especially those who speak English as an additional language, are disabled or who have special educational needs, make rapid and sustained progress.

Quality of teaching

Teaching over time is outstanding. Teachers and support staff set very high expectations, ensuring pupils make sustained and rapid progress. Consistently excellent planning ensures tasks are closely matched to pupils' abilities. In 'non-negotiable time', created by extending the school day each morning, teachers effectively revisit learning issues arising from the previous day.

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Marking and individual target setting are highly constructive and enable pupils to make accelerated progress. Marking shows pupils clearly how they can improve while highlighting what they have done well. This was illustrated extremely well in the work of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, who, in October, were simply making marks on a page and, by March, were forming recognisable, phonetically correct words. The consistent and thorough marking and monitoring of the teacher, with appropriate intervention and guidance, has enabled the children to succeed.

In the Nursery and Reception classes, children make outstanding progress. Teachers highlight the diversity of language through multilingual signs and labels. A very exciting 'play and stay' session with parents and carers was observed where the smiles on every face indicated all were having fun while learning. 'Wow walls' illustrate effective parent partnerships, where parents' and carers' comments celebrate the progress their children are making and their interest in learning, linking home and school. As one parent questionnaire recorded, 'Drove School is the best for my child; he's improved a lot and has been showing interest in new activities, many thanks to the teaching staff.' This view is supported by the vast majority of parents and carers.

The curriculum has a very positive impact on pupils' progress, in particular the many opportunities offered across different subjects for pupils to refine their basic skills in literacy and numeracy. The school is very focused upon the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils. Assemblies and prayer time encourage thoughtful reflection. Yoga, at the end of a very active games session, helped children to calm down and prepare for their next lesson. The links with schools internationally help pupils to understand the lives and cultures of others.

Teachers display high levels of expertise in questioning and in the use of information and communication technology to motivate all, meeting the differing learning needs of pupils. Teachers demonstrate and explain new learning very clearly, encouraging and extending pupils' thinking through partner work and regular opportunities for pupils to share their learning. This is building pupils' confidence and their skills in 'talk for learning'.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Behaviour is outstanding. The excellent atmosphere of mutual respect is generated through the efforts of staff and pupils alike. Pupils' excellent manners are shown in the way they open doors for adults and peers, listen to each other and share their feelings openly.

Pupils have a very good understanding of different kinds of bullying, such as cyber bullying, persistent name-calling, homophobic, racist and physical bullying, developed through 'bullying week'. They were keen to emphasise that 'bullying of

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any sort doesn't happen in Drove school'. They have a very good understanding of their own health and safety and this is developed from their early years' experiences, where they are trained as 'risk officers' to inspect their outside play areas ensuring they are safe for use.

The excellent relationships that exist between adults and pupils create a secure, nurturing atmosphere. Pupils are encouraged to ask for help and willingly do so. The mentoring support for pupils with emotional needs is excellent. Pupils were keen to express their enjoyment of school and learning. As one child said, 'I enjoy school very much; I'm a Christian and my friend is a Muslim; we share each other's holy books and like learning from each other.'

Pupils' very high standards of behaviour never faltered over the time of the inspection and there is secure evidence to show that this is the norm. Whether moving from class to class, outside or during lessons, pupils behaved excellently at all times. Analysis of the school's documentation, together with observations during the inspection and discussions with pupils, confirms that behaviour and safety are a strength of the school. The great majority of parents and carers agree and think that behaviour is of a high standard and that the school deals effectively with any cases of bullying, which are rare.

Attendance is broadly average and it has been steadily improving over the past three years. Measures both positive and punitive are regularly employed. Excellent attendance, which is a feature of many, is praised, celebrated and rewarded by raffle tickets, through which pupils can win a bicycle. Families who take their children out of school for lengthy periods without permission from the school have been fined and taken to court. Comments in parents' and carers' questionnaires confirm the resistance these families are displaying and their lack of appreciation of the importance of regular attendance in order for their children to learn effectively.

Leadership and management

Leaders and managers at all levels, including governors, are passionately committed to their school. They are knowledgeable about its strengths and clear about priorities for improvement, never hesitating to share their vision for the future. Expertise is developed from within, through the high quality training on offer. Excellent appointments have created a team that is very skilled and focused to drive the pace of improvement. Rigorous performance management effectively targets need and the priorities for individual professional development of all staff, including support assistants. Succession planning is supported through leadership opportunities across the federation. Leaders have become very effective in sharing their expertise, consistently raising the quality of teaching and learning, in turn improving levels of achievement for all groups of pupils. As a result, senior leaders have demonstrated relentless determination and secure ability in the capacity to improve.

Leaders work hard to make the outstanding curriculum rich and stimulating, packed

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full with experiences both memorable and rewarding. In the Early Years Foundation Stage there is an excellent balance of teacher-led activities and those initiated by children, such as a shared story developing into role play, where children chose animal characters and became 'wild things', creatively acting out stories through their play. Developing the 'whole child' is a principal focus of the school's work and leaders work very hard to successfully promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils. The school is extremely vigilant in tackling discrimination and promotes equality of opportunity very well.

The governing body displays a high level of skill and understanding of its role and works very effectively in partnership with the headteacher to challenge the school in its efforts to drive improvement. The vast majority of parents and carers are very happy with the effectiveness of the school. Many take the opportunity to engage with the school in supporting their children's learning. Safeguarding is of a high priority. Governors and school leaders ensure that children are safe and secure and all statutory requirements regarding safeguarding and child protection are fully met.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all 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	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



16 March 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Drove Primary School, Swindon, SN1 3AH

Thank you for your excellent manners, friendliness and welcome when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed our visit and are particularly grateful to those of you who filled in questionnaires and spoke to us over the two days. You and your parents and carers told us how great your school is and we agree it is outstanding. Here are some of its strengths.

- The quality of teaching you receive is often outstanding and consistently good and this helps you to make exceptionally good progress.
- The youngest children improve rapidly, from the time they start in school until the time they leave Reception.
- As a result of all your very hard work your achievement is outstanding by the end of Year 6.
- Your behaviour is outstanding both in lessons and when you play together outside.
- You get on very well with your teachers and other adults in school.
- The headteacher, the staff and governors are outstanding in the way they manage the school. They make sure you are safe and do all they can to help you to be successful in your learning.

In order to help your school improve in the future we have asked your headteacher to:

- help you and your families understand how important it is for all of you to attend school regularly and not be away for large amounts of time during the term as this will affect your learning and progress.

We wish you all the best in the future.

Yours sincerely

Marianne Phillips
Lead inspector

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