

Denfield Park Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121942
Local Authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	359126
Inspection dates	10–11 February 2011
Reporting inspector	Ted Wheatley

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	222
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Vaughan Carradice
Headteacher	Angela Griffiths
Date of previous school inspection	12 February 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors, who saw 16 lessons taught by nine teachers. Meetings were held with staff, members of the governing body, and pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at documentation about pupils' progress, policies, particularly those for safeguarding and school development planning, and evidence of self-evaluation. They considered 97 questionnaires returned by parents and carers and 111 pupil questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Is teaching improving fast enough to reduce differences in progress between girls and boys, and improve the progress of the most able pupils?
- How well do leaders at all levels evaluate pupils' performance and drive improvements?

Information about the school

Denfield Park School is broadly average in size. Pupils come mainly from White British backgrounds. A very small proportion speak English as an additional language and of these pupils a few are at the early stages of learning to speak English. Spanish and Polish are the other languages spoken. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly average. An above average proportion of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities. These pupils' needs are mainly severe or moderate learning difficulties. The school manages a special provision unit for autistic pupils. A breakfast club, run by the school, operates on a daily basis. The school has Healthy Schools status and the Foundation and Intermediate International Schools awards.

The school is part of a federation formed in September 2010. The other school was inspected at a different time. The two schools are led by the same headteacher and are due to amalgamate on one site in April 2011.

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

Denfield Park Junior is a good school. It is improving and parents and carers are pleased with the quality of education it provides and their children's experience there. One parent wrote, 'The school offers a wide variety of learning about life, our world and people and their cultures.' Another wrote, 'Our child has been made to feel part of a learning family, and supported with her learning.' The school provides excellent care, guidance and support and works well with a very wide range of external services to provide exceptional support for pupils and their families. Provision is good for pupils in the designated special unit.

Attainment is now average having risen steadily in recent years. Past weaknesses in English and mathematics have generally been dealt with well. Pupils' speaking and listening, reading and basic mathematical skills have improved particularly well. While there have been improvements in writing, there are some remaining occasional weaknesses in spelling and punctuation, and in pupils' ability to use sentence structures to express the ideas that they explain well in their speech. In mathematics, pupils' lower competence in extracting and explaining information in graphs and charts limits how well they perform overall in mathematics. However, pupils of all abilities make good progress. The rate of progress is improving and has improved steadily over recent years and for some pupils it is excellent. Past differences in progress made by different groups of pupils have reduced significantly.

Good and sometimes excellent teaching contributes to pupils' improving progress. Work is well matched to pupils' learning needs and is underpinned by accurate assessment used to plan effective lessons. Activities capture pupils' interests and contribute to learning effectively. Teachers provide many opportunities for pupils to discuss their ideas, to ask questions and present to the whole class their findings from investigations. This contributes effectively to good learning and progress. Marking is mostly good but sometimes does not give pupils sufficient advice on how to improve. When guidance is given, it is not always followed up with opportunities for pupils to improve their work. The curriculum provides an excellent range of activities. It is particularly well organised to provide termly themes that provide opportunities to develop basic skills, including the use of computers, problem solving and independent learning skills. It is exceptionally well supported by visits and visitors that enrich pupils' experiences.

Pupils enjoy school, their attendance is good and they are punctual. Their behaviour is excellent. They feel safe and are confident that the school resolves well infrequent incidents of bullying. They have an excellent understanding of the importance of healthy lifestyles, and levels of involvement in physical activities are high. They take on responsibilities enthusiastically, especially in school, and carry them out well.

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Leaders and managers at all levels are effective. The headteacher provides excellent direction for improvement. As a result, staff's drive and determination in pursuit of high standards is becoming increasingly reflected in their work. The school evaluates its own performance accurately and the actions taken are leading to improvements. The school's communication with parents and carers is effective and has led to increased parental involvement and support of pupils' learning. The governing body is knowledgeable and supports the school effectively. Taking account of recent improvements, the capacity for further improvement is good.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By July 2012, raise attainment by ensuring pupils:
 - improve their skills in extracting and explaining information from graphs and charts
 - spell and punctuate accurately in their writing
 - use written sentence structures that accurately express the ideas they explain in their speech.
- Improve teaching by July 2011 by ensuring that:
 - marking consistently gives guidance to pupils on how to improve their work
 - there are opportunities for pupils to follow the guidance given in marking.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils start school with below average levels of attainment which rise to average by the time pupils leave Year 6. Pupils write in a range of different styles and, in the best instances, write with feeling and use complex sentence structures. For example, in a lesson on the theme of 'ghost hunters', pupils wrote articulate letters of application in which they used persuasion and exaggeration effectively to explain why they should be appointed. Frequent opportunities for pupils to discuss their ideas and to put their points of view enhance their development of language skills. However, for some pupils, the ability to explain their ideas in speech is better than their ability to put the same ideas in writing. In addition, careless punctuation and spelling occasionally spoil otherwise good quality writing. In mathematics, pupils' basic skills are good; opportunities to discuss work help pupils to calculate and explain their mathematical understanding accurately. In a lesson on three-dimensional shapes, for example, pupils worked effectively in small groups to discover how many ways cubes and other shapes could be constructed. As a result, they explained what they found accurately and with correct terminology. Although pupils can organise sets of numerical information into graphs and charts, they do not always extract information or interpret what it means. Despite this, pupils' progress in mathematics is good and, where teaching is especially challenging and exciting, it is excellent. The progress made by boys and girls is equally good, as is that of the most able pupils. The very small numbers of pupils at the early stages of learning to speak English make good progress because they are well supported by staff and the pupils they work with.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because their needs are catered for effectively and sensitively. Pupils with autism, who attend the

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designated special provision, make good progress. This enables them to work closely with other pupils, make valuable contributions to lessons and become confident and competent learners.

Pupils enjoy learning and take part in all activities with great enthusiasm. Their contribution to the school community is especially good. For example, pupils work as peer mediators, eco-warriors and school counsellors, and some organise 'challenge' activities for pupils to do at breaks and lunchtimes. Pupils report that they can see the effect of good diet and exercise on their bodies. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Moral development is especially good, because pupils have a chance to discuss issues like human rights and to reflect on moral dilemmas.

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	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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

How effective is the provision?

Lessons are often exciting. In outstanding lessons, expectations are high, work is exceptionally challenging and questioning is skilful. Relationships are excellent, which encourages pupils to voice their ideas and ask questions confidently. For example, in a lesson about mythical creatures, pupils expressed their ideas using a wide range of vocabulary and sentence structures with confidence and rapidly increasing competence. Assessment of pupils' progress is accurate. Pupils know how well they are doing and most know how to improve their work. Marking is usually good. When advice is given, many

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pupils respond to suggestions on how to improve, though some do not, and this is not always followed up by staff.

The curriculum is exceptionally well organised around themes that spread through several subject areas and include health, global issues and mythology. Its strength is recognised through the Primary Curriculum award. Well planned computer resources enhance pupils' learning. For example, pupils make presentations, produce podcasts and research work for other subjects. Pupils do homework and access their work via the internet from home, which many enjoy doing. Writing and numeracy activities are well established and promote progress effectively in English and mathematics. The range of enrichment activities - theatre, music, places of worship, art, French, sports, residential trips, and visitors to school - is very wide and provides opportunities for pupils that some might otherwise miss. An extensive range of out-of-school activities, which include chess, ballroom dancing, football for boys and girls, is extremely well supported. The curriculum is strengthened considerably through collaborative work with other schools.

The breakfast club is very well organised. Healthy breakfasts are provided, pupils are well cared for and enjoy a wide range of activities, including art, using construction kits and playing games. The school provides excellent support for pupils and families whose challenging circumstances make them vulnerable. It has good links with external agencies to strengthen this work, and this is further supported through the strong links it has with other schools. Procedures to promote good attendance are effective. Arrangements for transition within school and between schools are good. The school is safe and the governing body and staff work hard to maintain this. Support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and for those from the designated special provision, is good.

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?

Ambition and drive are evident in the work of all leaders. Planning for development is thorough and actions taken are impelling improvement in the school's work. The governing body monitors the work of the school effectively and takes into account the views of parents, carers and pupils in planning school improvement. Efforts to engage parents and carers are leading to improving involvement in activities designed to support them in helping their children learn. Attendance is high at parents' and carers' consultations. The school makes extremely good use of its links with other schools and organisations to promote the curriculum and pupils' welfare, and also to provide professional development for staff, including for those new to leadership roles. Close links

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within the federation enable staff from both schools to work together to plan provision for the time the schools amalgamate. The school promotes community cohesion well. It has good links with schools in different circumstances and is expanding the scope of its links with a school in Kenya. Community cohesion is effectively promoted through the curriculum and pupils have an increasing awareness and understanding of the traditions of other cultures in Britain and around the world.

Safeguarding procedures are fully met and are well understood by the staff. The school works hard to keep policies up to date. The school successfully promotes equal opportunities. The differences in progress between different groups of pupils have narrowed considerably. The elimination of all forms of discrimination is an integral part of the curriculum and school's culture, and is effective.

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	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
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

Views of parents and carers

Their views are almost entirely positive. A very small proportion of parents and carers feel the school does not deal with their concerns adequately. Inspectors found there were very thorough procedures to consult with and to listen to parents and carers. A very small proportion of parents and carers also feel the school does not deal with unacceptable behaviour well enough. Inspectors saw only outstanding behaviour, and pupils say that unacceptable behaviour is extremely rare and dealt with very well.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Denfield Park Junior 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 97 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 222 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	50	52	46	47	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	65	67	31	32	1	1	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	48	49	45	46	3	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	52	54	43	44	0	0	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	58	60	38	39	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	53	55	41	42	1	1	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	40	41	53	55	2	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)	48	49	46	47	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	53	55	42	43	1	1	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	54	56	39	40	4	4	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	43	44	47	48	5	5	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	52	54	44	45	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	57	59	38	39	2	2	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 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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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:	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. <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 pupils' 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.



14 February 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Denfield Park Junior School, Rushden, NN10 0DA

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school. You gave us a lot of information that helped us to judge that your school is good. Your progress in English and mathematics is good and improving, and the following things are particular strengths of the school.

Teachers make sure work is challenging and fun to do. They provide lots of activities that make learning interesting.

The headteacher, staff and governors work hard to make sure the school continues to improve.

Your behaviour is excellent. You treat each other with consideration and work together really well. You are very polite, friendly and helpful to adults.

You carry out any responsibilities you have reliably and with enjoyment.

You know how to stay healthy. Almost all of you take part in physical activities and eat healthily. You recognise the effect that good diet and exercise have on your own bodies.

The school is safe and staff take outstanding care of you. The school works very closely with lots of outside support services to provide the best care it can.

In order for the school to be even better, we have asked your teachers to do the following.

Improve how well you extract information from graphs and charts and understand what they mean, make sure you spell and punctuate your work carefully, and help you to write as well as you speak.

Make sure marking always tells you how to improve your work and that you have opportunities to follow the guidance you are given.

You can all help by making sure you spell and punctuate work accurately. You should also make sure you know how to improve your work and spend some time following any advice given to you.

Yours sincerely

Ted Wheatley
Lead inspector

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