

Dove Bank Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124089
Local Authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	363971
Inspection dates	23–24 May 2011
Reporting inspector	Mike Thompson

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	183
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Carol Reddish
Headteacher	Eithna Ford
Date of previous school inspection	16 October 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors observed nine teachers and visited 19 lessons including observations with a specific focus on the support provided for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable. The inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders and most of the teaching staff, representatives of the governing body, and pupils. They looked at a range of information, including data showing the progress made by pupils and samples of pupils' work. Inspectors analysed questionnaires returned by 57 parents or carers, 81 pupils in Key Stage 2 and 17 members of staff.

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

- To what extent do pupils make at least satisfactory progress? How typical is the recent weak performance of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and of those with special educational needs and/or disabilities?
- How effective are teachers in providing their pupils with well-pitched, challenging tasks in lessons and ensuring that pupils have a clear understanding of what they need to do to improve their work?
- How effective has the school been in responding to the previous inspection findings by ensuring that teachers provide every possible opportunity for pupils to practise their skills in reading and writing?
- How skilled are leaders at all levels in monitoring and evaluating the work of the school, and what is their impact on pupils' achievement?

Information about the school

This school is smaller than most primary schools. Almost all of its pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average. Most of these pupils have general learning difficulties, including speech, language and communication, and behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above the national average. In recent years, there have been significant changes in staff.

The school has a range of accreditations; the most recent of these is the Primary Quality Mark for its work in improving provision and practice in literacy and numeracy. It also has Healthy School and bronze level Eco 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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

Dove Bank Primary School provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. Effective care, guidance and support results in many good aspects of pupils' personal development and well-being. Almost all pupils say they are well cared for, knowing that adults will always help them. They clearly understand how to keep safe and the importance of a healthy lifestyle. The strong focus on pupils' personal development includes initiatives to help raise their aspirations and a recently established nurture group to support those experiencing social and emotional difficulties. Pupils' behaviour in lessons is invariably good, and most pupils relate well to one another.

From starting points that are generally below those normally expected, children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage classes. They achieve well because teaching is stimulating and is well matched to individual learning needs.

In Key Stages 1 and 2, the school is successful in ensuring that almost all pupils achieve the nationally expected rate of progress in English and mathematics, but too few exceed this. When pupils transfer to the next stage of their education at the end of Year 6, attainment is broadly average. Teaching is satisfactory. There is some good teaching, and inspectors observed good features of teaching in all lessons. However, learning is too often only satisfactory. This is particularly the case in Key Stage 2. Teachers relate well to their pupils, explain tasks clearly, and usually manage their pupils well. However, expectations of what pupils can achieve are not always high enough. Where learning is satisfactory rather than good it is because teachers do not ensure that their pupils are sharply focused on the intended learning. In some instances, when all pupils have the same task, the teachers miss opportunities to ensure good levels of individual challenge and do not give pupils differentiated criteria for success in completing their work. Narrowly defined activities, including an over-reliance on photo-copied worksheets in some lessons, limit opportunities for pupils to develop independence as learners and improve skills as writers. The quality of teachers' marking of pupils' work varies from class to class and lacks impact as a tool for improving pupils' work.

The curriculum satisfactorily meets the needs of pupils. Partnerships with local secondary schools and other organisations help enrich pupils' experiences and enhance enjoyment in learning. The staff changes since the last inspection have slowed the pace of curriculum development. Consequently, the school has yet to embed planning for a more creative curriculum. There is not enough emphasis on the development of pupils' skills in literacy and numeracy through first-hand and real-life situations that help make learning more relevant and enjoyable. Teachers do not provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to use computers and other forms of information and communication technology (ICT) as a day-to-day tool for learning.

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The impact of leadership on pupils' achievement is satisfactory. The headteacher is driving much of the strategic improvement currently taking place. Governance is satisfactory. The governors ensure that legal requirements are met, and provide satisfactory challenge despite the fact that there are vacancies for parent and community governors. The procedures for evaluating the school's effectiveness are sound and, together with the impact of actions taken to improve pupils' achievement, demonstrate that the school has a satisfactory capacity for sustained improvement.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that pupils make consistently good progress by improving the quality of teaching and learning so that teachers:
 - make clear reference to skills to be developed in lessons and make increased use of success criteria to set specific, measurable targets carefully matched to the abilities of all pupils
 - place a greater emphasis on developing pupils' skills as independent learners and writers
 - ensure that marking of pupils' work is effective in helping pupils to improve, and that their suggestions are followed up and errors are not repeated.
- Develop the curriculum so that teachers:
 - make more use of first-hand and real-life learning situations to provide greater relevance, interest and enjoyment for pupils
 - ensure that pupils use ICT as a day-to-day tool for learning.

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

It was clear from the lessons observed during the inspection that all groups of pupils learn satisfactorily. Skilled teaching assistants provide good quality support especially for those pupils who have difficulty in concentrating and have limited cognitive skills, and barriers to learning are successfully countered. They play a key role and ensure the inclusion of these pupils in lessons. In some instances, learning is consistently good or better. For example, a small number of pupils identified as having the greatest need, enjoy intensive one-to-one tuition as a result of the funding provided for the national 'Every Child Counts' programme. The skilled teaching and support contributes to the outstanding gains in learning made by these pupils, in one case equating to 12 months' progress within a term. Strong relationships between the teacher and pupils, and the excellent use of on-going assessment to pitch challenging and achievable tasks, are strong factors in this extremely rapid progress

Data scrutinised before the inspection showed that pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and of those with special educational needs and/or disabilities did less well than their peers nationally. Inspection findings indicate that this is not typical and that these pupils are part of the very large majority who make satisfactory progress.

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Pupils' strong commitment to adopting healthy lifestyles is evident in their enthusiastic participation in the wide range of physical activities available during lunch break and after school. The success of initiatives such as the annual 'Staying Healthy' week and family learning about healthy lunchboxes is evident in pupils' very clear understanding of what constitutes a sensible diet. The school has well-established and consistently applied procedures for promoting good behaviour; this is reflected in the politeness and consideration shown by all pupils. A clear moral code permeates the daily life of the school and pupils clearly know right from wrong. Pupils' spiritual awareness, understanding of their own development and appreciation of that of others, is satisfactory, as is their cultural development.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

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?

In Key Stages 1 and 2, the quality of teaching is inconsistent and most is satisfactory. Teachers relate well to their pupils and are good at developing their confidence as learners. They explain new concepts clearly and use questions well to develop pupils' understanding. However, lessons sometimes lose pace and direction when teachers talk for too long and when they do not set out precisely what they expect of pupils of different levels of ability. The quality of guidance provided for pupils through teachers' marking of their work is not always effective in securing learning. A scrutiny of pupils' books showed

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that the comments made by teachers do not often result in improvements being made where they are needed.

The contribution of the curriculum to pupils' academic attainment is satisfactory. However, the day-to-day curriculum on offer does not always inject excitement and enjoyment in learning. This is evident in the passive response of many pupils to the work provided. The curriculum is well organised and provides the required balance between subjects. Its main strengths are in the promotion of pupils' personal development and in providing activities to enrich pupils' learning and life experiences. For example, the number of pupils learning to play a musical instrument is growing as a result of the expansion of tuition, which now includes violin, trumpet, trombone and guitar. Their achievements are celebrated. For instance, a group of pupils took part in a concert at the Symphony Hall, Birmingham last year. Talks given by visitors to the school, including guests from Keele University and from local industry, help raise pupils' aspirations. The curriculum for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is satisfactory. It is suitably planned and tailored to individual needs, and the implementation of these plans is effective.

The good provision for the care, guidance and support of pupils permeates all aspects of school life. The needs of individuals are well known, and pupils feel valued members of the school 'family'. There are very clear, well-established, arrangements for the induction of pupils into school and strong links with local high schools enable pupils' smooth transition to the next phase of their education.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The positive views expressed by all staff and almost all of the parents, carers and pupils indicate that they have confidence in the leadership. Target-setting is based on secure assessment information and is adequately challenging. There are suitable plans in place to improve on areas of weakness and eliminate inconsistencies in the quality of teaching. Members of the governing body take a keen interest in the work of the school but they are yet to develop the full range of skills required to help them become more independent in holding it to account.

Parents' and carers' overwhelmingly positive views about their children's positive experiences reflect their appreciation that this is an inclusive school in which discrimination has no place and which gives their children a sense of belonging and equality of opportunity. Careful monitoring of pupils' progress informs the school's actions. Safeguarding procedures have a high profile, fully meet requirements, and are rigorously applied through well-developed systems for quality assurance and risk assessment. A wide

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range for partnerships helps enrich pupils' experiences, for example support from a local environmental services group alongside the school's Eco club helped develop the community garden. Work to improve the promotion of community cohesion is on-going, and the school recognises that there is much to do to broaden pupils' horizons in both national and global contexts. The governor responsible has organised working parties to make costumes for a carnival celebration and has had a positive impact in involving parents and carers, including some who are generally hard to reach.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
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	3
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	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

When children join the Nursery class their skills and understanding are generally below the levels normally expected for three-year-olds, with weaknesses in communication, language and literacy and limited knowledge and understanding of the world around them. By the time they leave Reception the majority attain the expected learning goals. Milestones in children's development are carefully recorded, although some of the assessments are too descriptive and lack evaluative text.

Children make particularly good progress in developing personal and social skills. They quickly adapt to routines, share resources amicably, respect others and behave well. Adults have a good understanding of how young children learn and provide activities that capture children's imaginations. For example, when learning about the life-cycle of a butterfly, children were provided with pillow cases to crawl into as they each turned into a chrysalis! All areas of learning are covered well and there is a good balance between opportunities for children to learn through play and direct teaching, both indoors and out. All adults are good at developing children's learning through conversation, but on some occasions they miss opportunities to correct immature speech patterns or grammatically

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incorrect responses. Leadership and management are good, and teamwork among staff is a particularly strong feature in this area of the school.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

A very large majority of parents and carers recorded positive views in all areas surveyed. The aspect of the school's performance of greatest concern, identified in 13% of the questionnaires, relates to the management of unacceptable behaviour. Inspection evidence shows that the behaviour of pupils is well managed and that there are few incidents of unacceptable behaviour. Where these do occur, they usually involve a small number of pupils with clearly identified emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Dove Bank Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 57 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 183 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	28	49	23	40	5	9	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	30	53	23	40	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	30	53	25	44	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	28	49	28	49	1	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	28	49	27	47	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	28	49	28	49	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	24	42	31	54	0	0	1	2
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)	22	39	32	56	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	28	49	27	47	1	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	22	39	22	39	6	11	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	23	40	24	42	4	7	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	23	40	28	49	3	5	1	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	29	51	26	46	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 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	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 2010 to 31 December 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 2010/11 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:	<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 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.



25 May 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Dove Bank Primary School, Stoke-on-Trent ST7 4AP

I would like to thank all of you for being so welcoming and helpful to the inspectors when we visited your school. I think that your school gives you a satisfactory education. This means that there are a lot of things that the school is doing right and some things that need to be improved. I know that all the adults who help to run your school want it to be a good school. For this to happen, you need to make better progress in your work.

Here are some of the things that are best about your school.

The children in the Nursery and Reception classes are making good progress.

I was impressed by your good manners and behaviour.

You feel safe because the staff take good care of you.

You know a lot about how to stay healthy.

To help you to make better progress, I have asked your school to do two things.

Your teachers need to make sure that you understand what your target is in each lesson and set work for you that always makes you think hard. I would also like you to do more thinking for yourself and become better writers. To help with this I would like your teachers to make sure that you do more writing for yourselves. I am sure that you are ready for these challenges! I would also like you to do what your teachers ask you to do when they mark your work.

I have asked your teachers to plan topics for you that give you exciting and challenging opportunities to improve your skills in literacy and numeracy, even when you are doing work in other subjects. I have also asked your teachers to get you to use ICT a lot more in lessons. I'm sure that you will enjoy this!

I would like you all to play your part in helping the school to become even better. The best way for you to do this is to pay careful attention to what your teachers ask you to do and to make sure that you always do your corrections!

Yours sincerely

Mike Thompson

Lead inspector

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