

Dove Holes CofE Primary School

Hallsteads, Dove Holes, Buxton, SK17 8BJ

Inspection dates 29–30 January 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher has ensured significant improvements in all aspects of the school's work since the last inspection, particularly in tackling underachievement.
- Leaders and governors make regular visits to classrooms and have made marked contributions to improve teaching and pupils' progress.
- Standards in reading, writing and mathematics in Years 2 and 6 have risen notably since the last inspection and these pupils reached average standards in the 2012 tests.
- From low starting points on entry to the Reception year, a very high proportion of pupils throughout the school are making good progress.
- Teaching is good and sometimes outstanding. Teachers and their support assistants know their pupils very well and this is helping accelerate the progress made by pupils of all abilities.
- Pupils are keen to come to school and attendance has risen since the last inspection to above average. Behaviour is good in lessons and pupils feel safe in the school environment.
- This is a caring school and the support given to those pupils who need extra help is a strength of the school.
- The headteacher has very high expectations and a clear vision for continued and sustained improvement.
- Parental confidence in the school has improved.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- In some lessons, pupils spend too long listening to lengthy explanations so do not make as much progress as they could if they were working independently.
- Progress in mathematics is not as strong as it is in reading and writing.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed six lessons, of which three were joint observations with the headteacher. In addition, he observed some teacher assistants teach smaller groups and made a number of short visits to lessons and listened to pupils read.
- The inspector had meetings with the headteacher, staff and pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and the link adviser from the local authority.
- The inspector looked at a range of documentation related to the school development plan, pupils' progress and the monitoring of teaching standards. He also looked at pupils' books, the school's safety and safeguarding procedures, behaviour and attendance documents and new school policies and procedures.
- The inspection took account of four responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and scrutinised the responses to the school's own questionnaires from parents, staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Alan Giles, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Dove Holes Primary School is much smaller than the average-sized primary school and pupils are taught in three mixed-aged classes: Reception and Year 1, Years 2 and 3, and Years 4, 5 and 6. No alternative provision or off-site provision is used by the school.
- Most pupils have a White British heritage and none speak English as an additional language.
- The school has been awarded the International School award, Health Promoting Schools award, and a School Achievement award. It currently delivers the Positive Play programme.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported by school action is below the national average. The percentage of those who are supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils receiving the pupil premium is well below average. The funding is based on the number of looked-after children, those from Forces families and those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' achievement further by increasing the proportion of outstanding teaching by:
 - making sure teachers consistently make the most effective use of time by allowing pupils to work more independently
 - making more use of the school's excellent assessment data to increase further the pace and challenge in lessons for all groups of pupils
 - ensuring that teachers always make clear to pupils their next steps in learning and how to achieve them
 - continue to model the existing examples of outstanding teaching as the accepted quality for moving teaching forwards.
- Build on the success of strategies used in reading and writing to increase pupils' progress in mathematics by:
 - presenting pupils with more group and independent problem-solving activities that further challenges their understanding and enables them to make even better progress.
 - making consistently effective use in lessons of the good skills and knowledge that support staff use at other times in the curriculum.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Achievement has improved considerably since the last inspection in 2011. Pupils' underperformance has been tackled successfully and results in the 2012 tests for Year 2 and 6 pupils in both English and mathematics were average.
- The school continues to build on this improvement. The current Year 6 pupils have made good progress throughout the school and are on track to reach above average standards.
- The school's very effective assessment tracking procedures enable the school to know its pupils very well. Extra help given to pupils showing signs of falling behind has been at the heart of the recent and rapid improvement.
- A high proportion of pupils enter the Reception year with standards below those expected for their age. They make good, and sometimes outstanding, progress at this stage because of the high expectations to develop their listening, speaking and writing skills in positive play activities.
- Because of the organisation of the younger pupils in mixed-aged classes, there is a seamless transition into Year 1. The carefully structured programmes for teaching letters and sounds ensure they enter Year 1 successfully spelling and writing simple words. The school achieved well above average results in the 2012 national phonics testing for Year 1 pupils.
- Good progress continues across Years 1 and 2. The most recent data show a significant proportion of pupils exceeding expected levels of attainment by the end of Year 2. To make achievement outstanding, teaching needs to provide greater challenges for a small number of pupils to achieve even higher levels by this stage.
- The daily teaching of phonics (letters and associated sounds) has had a positive impact on raising standards in reading. The school has organised smaller groups of pupils and they thoroughly enjoy these sessions, experiencing a wide variety of exciting and stimulating activities. Similar activities for mathematics are just beginning to have the same positive effect.
- Similar strategies and support are being used by knowledgeable support staff to boost the confidence and skills of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. These pupils are all making at least the expected progress compared to their starting points and a significant number are exceeding these targets.
- Between Years 2 and 6, the rapid improvements shown in the 2012 results have been sustained and further improved. A high proportion of pupils in Years 4 and 5 have already reached standards beyond that expected for their age. The school is aware that this good progress will be further enhanced when they increase pupils' levels of confidence and independence, especially in dealing with higher order concepts in mathematics.
- The school has also successfully closed the gap that was evident for pupils who are on the free school meals register. Leaders are using pupil premium funding to train support staff and to buy additional resources for one-to-one tuition and small group interventions.

The quality of teaching is good

- Since the last inspection, leaders, managers and governors have successfully raised the quality of teaching and learning. Teachers now monitor the progress of their pupils more effectively and are more consistently using marking to indicate further improvements in pupils' learning.
- Pupils know their targets very well and consistently refer to them in lessons. To make teaching outstanding, teachers need to be more consistent in telling pupils what their next steps are and how to reach their targets.
- Teaching assistants use their considerable skills to work with a number of identified pupils in quiet work bases around the school. This is having a marked impact on raising the achievement of individual pupils. There are sometimes missed opportunities to use their skills in the classrooms, especially to develop small group problem-solving activities.
- Pupils say, 'Teachers make learning fun and interesting.' In one science lesson, pupils enjoyed

experimenting with yeast and discovering changes to living organisms, showing they are capable of planning their experiments and cooperating well together to resolve problems.

- The school encourages good behaviour by praising those who exhibit it. All staff have high expectations for the way pupils conduct themselves. This promotes pupils' working effectively together in mixed-aged settings.
- Some teaching points are not always sufficiently sharp or concise. At times, there is a lack of individual and group activities that challenge pupils with longer periods of investigative work.
- Where learning is best, time is used well to give pupils plenty of chance to work independently. In one outstanding lesson, the teacher worked with a group of Year 1 pupils who produced excellent descriptive writing. At the same time Reception children displayed outstanding self-control in their independent activities. Such effective organisation is not always evident, across the school, however, especially in some mathematics lessons.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' behaviour is typically good, and sometimes outstanding, both in lessons and informally throughout the school. The school is a harmonious and welcoming place to visit.
- Behaviour has improved since the last inspection and this can be clearly appreciated by reading the opinions of parents and carers. All of the recent parent questionnaires issued by the school show there are no concerns about the behaviour and safety of children.
- Pupils listen attentively in class and work well in pairs and groups. They are still learning to improve their focus when working independently; teachers continue to challenge them in this aspect of their work.
- Pupils make it clear that they feel safe and that they enjoy school. One Year 6 pupil indicated that he wanted to come to school even when recent bad snow had closed it.
- In conversations with pupils, it was clear they understand the issues surrounding bullying and equally clear there is virtually no bullying in the school. They also say that all pupils and teachers use the 'golden rules', and that 'these help us know right from wrong'.
- The pupils say they like being in a small school and in mixed-aged classes and agree that older pupils' helping younger ones is the 'norm' for this school.
- There are many opportunities for the pupils to take on additional responsibilities. They show initiative and confidence as assembly monitors, consideration in their buddying roles and maturity as school councillors.
- Attendance has been a key focus since the last inspection and has risen to be above the national average. This has been the result of effective communication and cooperation with outside agencies and parents, and because of the firm stance the school has taken on requests for holidays in term time.

The leadership and management are good

- Since her appointment in 2010, the headteacher has provided strong leadership and has been instrumental in leading a fast pace of improvements over a relatively short period of time. Evidence shows that the recent and dramatic improvement in pupils' achievement is being sustained.
- The school has worked collaboratively with the local authority and this support has contributed considerably to the drive for improvement.
- Improvement is based on accurate self-evaluation. The school has a rigorous system of checking on pupils' progress and this has ensured that the school has been successful in accelerating pupils' progress. These improvements continue because leaders are astute in helping teachers to improve any weaker aspects of their work.
- Although teaching continues to improve, the school recognises that it needs to share further the best examples of teaching, to continue to help less-experienced staff and to achieve the aims of

their corporate 'drive for excellence'.

- Teaching programmes are enriched by the use of visitors to school and by visits to places of interest such as museums during history work and a sculpture park visit during art work. Pupils also talked excitedly about making moving toys in design and technology and how they enjoy their science experiments.
- The school is developing topics to teach literacy and numeracy skills through other subjects, but this is still in its infancy. It has already improved the communication skills of the pupils through activities such as 'Philosophy 4 Children'. However, a clear, cross-curricular approach, especially for mathematics, although in place, needs further development.
- The school makes an important contribution to the pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Life in the school reflects this with high levels of pupils' respect for each other, their acceptance of rules and by involvement in the varied extra-curricular activities.
- The school has received an international award for the work it does with exchange visits to a school in Punjab. It recognises the need further to extend pupils' knowledge of life beyond their community in order to extend their multi-cultural understanding, especially of life in the United Kingdom.
- The partnership with parents has improved significantly in the last two years and the school acts on all the feedback received from the distribution of regular parent questionnaires.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governance is good because there is a determination from relatively new members, including the recently-appointed chair, to ensure the school continues to improve. The governing body receives detailed information and accurately interprets performance data in order to offer challenge to the school. Governors are aware of the necessary link between teachers' pay and their effectiveness. They make regular visits to classrooms and this gives them a good understanding of the quality of teaching and the targets set to continue to improve the school's effectiveness. They ensure that all statutory requirements are met.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	112809
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	405427

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	70
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jane Green
Headteacher	Jennifer Allin
Date of previous school inspection	16 February 2011
Telephone number	01298 812808
Fax number	01298 812740
Email address	info@doveholes.derbyshire.sch.uk

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