

Denfield Park Primary School

Victoria Road, Rushden, NN10 0DA

Inspection dates

5-6 February 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- From starting points that are often below those expected for their ages, especially in their communication skills, pupils make good progress and achieve well. They make particularly marked progress in mathematics because this subject has been a recent focus for improvement.
- Progress in reading is good and standards close to those expected. This is partly the result of the new system for teaching pupils how to link sounds and letters.
- Pupils' behaviour and safety are outstanding. Excellent attitudes towards learning are evident in all lessons.
- Teaching is good. Recent training in teaching reading and mathematics has improved teachers' knowledge and skills in these areas. A major strength is the way pupils with disabilities or who have special educational needs are included in day-to-day lessons.
- Leadership and management are good. The headteacher, well supported by her leadership team and the strong governing body, has led the school through its recent changes outstandingly well. Throughout she has ensured all have kept a strong focus on raising standards.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Standards in writing are improving but not at the same rate as those in reading and mathematics especially among the youngest children.
- Many of the subject leaders are new and have not developed their roles fully. This is particularly in relation to checking on the quality of teaching and the progress that pupils, especially the more able, are making in their subject.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 21 lessons or parts of lessons, some jointly with the headteacher.
- Meetings took place with the headteacher, staff, pupils, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors talked to a number of pupils, listened to some read and looked closely at a wide sample of their work.
- Inspectors analysed and took account of the responses of 31 parents and carers to the online survey (Parent View), and 51 staff questionnaires.
- Inspectors looked at key documents, including the school's self-evaluation, policies, performance information, procedures for safeguarding, and the school improvement plan.

Inspection team

Geof Timms, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Sa'ad Khaldi

Additional Inspector

Heather Phillips

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Denfield Park is a larger than average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average.
- The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The school has specially resourced provision for pupils with special educational needs. This currently supports 14 pupils with autistic spectrum disorders.
- Most pupils are White British and a very small number of pupils are from a minority ethnic background.
- Since the last inspection, the school has changed from a junior school to a primary school with a nursery unit. This has resulted in a higher staff turnover than usual.
- A below average proportion of the pupils qualify for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in local authority care, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, or those who have a parent in the armed forces.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school does not offer any alternative provision for its pupils.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Speed up the progress made by pupils and raise standards in writing by:
 - ensuring sufficient focus on writing skills in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to develop their vocabulary in lessons through talk, role play and drama
 - improving the accuracy of pupils' spelling, handwriting and punctuation.
- Improve the impact that subject leaders have on the work of the school and pupils' achievements by:
 - ensuring that they track the progress of individual pupils and different groups of pupils to make sure that all groups, but particularly the most able, reach the levels of which they are capable
 - ensuring that they check the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects on a regular basis
 - providing greater opportunities for them to spread the existing outstanding practice more widely across the school.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Most children start in the Nursery class with levels of knowledge and understanding below those typically found at this age, especially in their communication and language skills. They quickly settle into school routines and the consistently good teaching helps them make effective progress. Even so, on entry to the Reception classes, attainment is still below that expected for their ages.
- Progress is good in most areas of learning during the Reception year. However, not enough opportunities are provided during the Early Years Foundation Stage for developing basic writing skills. By the end of the Reception year, most children are still below the levels expected for their ages in communication, language and literacy skills.
- In the 2012 Year 1 reading check, the school was well below the national average. This was immediately tackled through a new scheme of work, resources and training for staff. This has had a positive impact on the way the links between sounds and letters are taught and the reading standards now attained in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Currently, Reception, Year 1 and 2 pupils have good skills and they can read new words accurately.
- In Years 1 and 2, progress is now good in reading and mathematics but slower in writing. Pupils enjoy reading a wide range of books and can explain why they choose the books they do. Most are well supported in reading at home. While they make adequate progress in writing, and many make good progress, their skills in handwriting, spelling and punctuation remain below those expected.
- Year 6 standards in 2012 were broadly average in reading and mathematics. This represents good progress from pupils' prior attainment in reading and excellent progress in mathematics. Although the teachers work hard to address weaknesses, and standards in writing in Key Stage 2 are rising rapidly, pupils' progress is not as good in writing as it is in reading and mathematics. In addition, not enough pupils throughout the school reach the higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Not enough opportunities to take part in discussions and drama or role play to develop their speaking and listening skills limit pupils' ability to develop more interesting and imaginative writing. Even so, since the amalgamation of the two schools, there is clearly a picture of rapidly rising standards and there is a growing amount of good learning in writing. This was highlighted in an outstanding lesson in Year 3 where pupils clearly made excellent progress in learning to write an informal letter.
- Pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals make good progress from their different starting points. Any gaps in achievement between these pupils and others are quickly identified and the school works rapidly and effectively to narrow them. Overall, as pupils move through the school, the gap in achievement between those eligible for free school meals and others is closing as a result of additional support they receive such as one-to-one tuition.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress because they are very well supported. There were no significant differences in the achievement of different groups, including the very small number from a minority ethnic background, in the evidence gathered during the inspection. The achievement of the pupils taught in the designated resource provision is outstanding due to the excellent provision in the unit.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching is good and has a positive impact on pupils' learning. Teaching has been very effectively improved through extra training especially in reading. The school has identified that the teaching of writing is not so strong and changes to the way pupils are taught to ensure more opportunities for pupils to improve their vocabulary are already having a positive impact. Other skills are very well taught. For example, in two strong history lessons, pupils developed good research skills using a variety of sources of information.
- Since the amalgamation of the schools, teachers have worked hard to ensure the school is seen as one entity and to improve the consistency of their practice. New and recently qualified teachers have been well supported from the moment they arrive. Teachers and other staff state clearly that they are proud to be a member of staff at the school.
- A rising proportion of the teaching is outstanding. This occurs where careful planning by teachers in the same year group provides imaginative and challenging tasks for pupils. For example, in two outstanding Year 6 literacy lessons, pupils were provided with excellent opportunities to explore and talk about a text, create imaginary conversations and write extracts of a traveller's journals. Relationships between teachers and pupils are very strong and this has a very good impact on learning.
- Teaching assistants often provide very effective support to teachers and pupils. This is particularly the case when working with pupils who have disabilities or special educational needs, including those with a statement of special educational needs. The pupils in the designated resource provision are often taught outstandingly well by very knowledgeable and expert staff. The outstanding progress these pupils make is closely tracked by the staff and the special needs coordinator.
- Teachers have an improved understanding of how well their pupils are doing through regular meetings with senior staff and subject leaders, and a better understanding of pupil performance data. This means they can tackle any possible underachievement quickly. Even so, the most able pupils are not always sufficiently stretched so that they reach the higher levels of which they are capable.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Behaviour and safety are outstanding overall, and there are clear examples of excellent attitudes towards learning in lessons. These have a very positive impact on pupils' learning and progress. Pupils' behaviour around the school is excellent and they are extremely polite and thoughtful about others.
 - The pupils catered for in the designated special provision often find behaving well more challenging. However, the excellent provision and caring staffing ensure that their behaviour generally is as outstanding as that of their peers. This helps them make good progress because they are so settled.
 - Pupils say they feel safe at school and this is supported by the views of parents and carers. Older pupils say bullying is non-existent but if it occurred they are confident it would be well dealt with. They trust the adults and would share any concerns or worries with them. Pupils are very aware of different types of bullying, including through the use of new technology.
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Consequently, they know how to keep themselves safe including when using the internet.

- The care, especially that provided by special needs staff and by the parent support advisor, has a very positive impact on the progress of those who find learning a challenge or who face other difficulties outside school. Parents and carers appreciate this work.
- Parents and carers say their children enjoy coming to school. This was supported by discussions held with pupils. One said when asked what they would change about the school 'I wouldn't change anything – it is perfect as it is!' Pupils talk animatedly about the lessons they enjoy and they agree that teachers help them to learn new things. They also enjoy taking responsibility such as being a member of the school council or helping look after younger children since the school's amalgamated. Attendance is above average.

The leadership and management are good

- The school has been through significant changes since the last inspection. Firstly federation and then amalgamation with a local infant school have resulted in a change of status to a primary school. New and refurbished buildings have provided the school with an excellent learning environment. Throughout these changes the headteacher led the school outstandingly well. She worked very effectively with senior staff and governors to minimise any negative impact from the changes. In addition, she has given the school firm focus on raising standards.
- Senior leaders are clear about their roles. However, a number of changes to staffing and responsibilities mean that subject leaders are at an early stage in developing their role. Many have not had time to monitor the teaching and learning in their subject in order to support senior leaders in improving classroom practice even more rapidly. This is particularly with respect to spreading the best teaching in individual subjects across the whole school, a task that senior leaders cannot do on their own.
- The local authority provides a 'light touch' approach to supporting the school as a result of its success and good levels of achievement. Two annual visits help maintain a focus on standards and check that the school continues to have a good capacity to improve. The designated special provision is largely funded by the local authority. This has excellent leadership from knowledgeable and skilled staff and has a very positive impact on the pupils' learning and lives beyond school.
- The use of performance information in tracking pupils' progress is good. This information is used accurately and effectively to identify and address any underachievement quickly. It is discussed at regular meetings between teachers and senior staff. The underachievement is then dealt with, often through very effective targeting of pupils to work in small group or to receive individual one-to-one support.
- While the tracking of pupils' progress, both in terms of individual pupils and different groups is generally robust, it is mainly done by senior leaders with insufficient involvement of subject leaders. Sometimes, as a result, not enough attention is given to thinking about whether the most able pupils are making as much progress as they could.
- Through its website, the school provides some very good information for parents and carers about the use and impact of the money available through the pupil premium. The inspection evidence shows that the spending is effective and having a positive impact on those pupils' progress.

- The management of teachers' performance has been used successfully to identify strengths and weaknesses in the quality of education provided. Challenging targets are set for teachers, recently based, for example, on lifting academic standards in mathematics. This work has been especially positive in creating consistency of provision as the two schools amalgamated.

 - The way subjects and topics are taught develops pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness well. Recent changes to planning to ensure a more creative approach to teaching have introduced a number of very effective links between subjects under some imaginative overarching themes. Enrichment activities support pupils' interests well and many effectively make demands on the most able in music, sport or computer studies, for example. The school makes sure all pupils have equal access to all activities and does not tolerate any discrimination.

 - **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body supports the school well. This has been especially important over the last two years and through the school's change of status. Governors ask searching questions of leaders about its work and closely analyse the data about pupil progress. They are currently reviewing their skills to offer the best support for the school that they can. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses because they work closely with the school and senior leaders and visit regularly. Visits are well planned, with a clear purpose, and the results are shared in written reports for governors. In addition, governors have a clear picture of the work being done to improve teaching quality and of its success through improved results. They understand clearly how targets are set for teachers and how the school deals with any underperformance. Governors ensure salary increases are linked to progress made by pupils and good or better teaching. They have made good decisions over the spending of the pupil premium, especially through the appointment of the parent support advisor. The impact of spending is checked carefully against the outcomes achieved to ensure best use of this funding. The governing body makes sure all statutory requirements, including those for safeguarding, are met.
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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	121942
Local authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	380361

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	504
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Vaughan Carradice
Headteacher	Angela Griffiths
Date of previous school inspection	10 February 2011
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