

Denby Free CofE VA Primary School

Church Street, Denby Village, Ripley, DE5 8PH

Inspection dates 18–19 September 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.

- Pupils make good progress and reach levels above those expected in reading, writing and mathematics by the time they leave the school.
- The progress made in other subjects and by children in the Reception class is also good. Recent changes to the curriculum have supported the good progress made by all pupils.
- Pupils feel safe in school. They behave well and have very positive attitudes to learning and good relationships with adults. They are well prepared for the next stage in their education.
- Teaching has a good pace and teachers' questioning means pupils are fully involved. The marking of pupils' work and feedback provided for them has improved since the last inspection and is now of good quality.
- The headteacher provides strong and effective leadership. This has been important through a time of significant staff changes.
- The governing body has improved since the last inspection and is aware of the school's successes and areas for development.
- The headteacher, leaders, managers and governors have together helped to bring about improved teaching and better achievement for pupils.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The standards attained, and progress made in aspects of mathematics, are not as strong as those in reading and writing.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to use their number skills to solve problems or to support their work in other subjects.
- Teachers do not always use the available information about progress to provide sufficient challenge for pupils, especially the most able.
- At times activities provided are led too much by teachers and do not give pupils enough opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed seven lessons and parts of lessons. Many of these were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- Meetings and discussions took place with the headteacher, governors, pupils, staff, parents and a representative of the local authority.
- Samples of pupils' work were scrutinised. Some pupils read books with the inspector.
- The inspector analysed and took account of 20 responses from parents and carers to the online survey Parent View.
- The 13 staff questionnaire responses were considered.
- The inspector looked at key inspection documents, including performance data produced by the school, procedures for safeguarding, self-evaluation work, reports to the governing body and the school's plans for raising attainment.

Inspection team

Geof Timms, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Denby Free Voluntary Aided Primary School is a smaller than average-sized primary school.
- Since the previous inspection there have been a significant number of staff changes including to senior and other leaders.
- The large majority of pupils are White British. There are very few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds or who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average overall and very high in some year groups.
- A below-average proportion of the pupils are supported by the pupil premium, which in this school provides additional funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards and increase progress in mathematics by:
 - providing more challenging practical and problem-solving activities
 - giving pupils more opportunities to use their mathematical skills in other subjects.
- Increase the amount of outstanding teaching by:
 - ensuring lessons provide sufficient challenge for all pupils, especially the most able, by developing the teachers' understanding and use of available assessment data when planning lessons and activities
 - providing tasks that encourage pupils to be more independent and take more responsibility for their learning.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children typically start in the Reception class with knowledge and understanding below the expected levels for their age, especially for their communication, reading, creativity and knowledge of the wider world. They make good progress during the year and the levels at the end of Reception are often above those found nationally.
- The school's results in the 2012 Year 1 reading check were above average and the results in 2013 were even better. The school has continued to improve the teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make) and pupils are usually grouped so that teachers and teaching assistants can target lessons better to meet pupils' needs.
- Standards at the end of Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics are rising although there was a dip in 2012 for some of the pupils. Even so they made progress at least in line with that expected from their different starting points.
- In 2013 results rose significantly and pupils are about two terms ahead of similar pupils nationally. This represents good progress. They reached standards that were the highest for the past five years. The school's data on progress in other years such as Year 4 is also currently better than that normally expected in reading and writing.
- Standards at the end of Year 6 are above average and results have risen year on year even with differences in year groups' prior attainment. Currently the school's data show that progress is better than that expected especially in reading and writing.
- Pupils' attainment in mathematics, although above average, is lower than that in reading and writing. This is mainly because fewer pupils reach the higher levels. They do not have well-developed problem-solving skills or enough opportunities to use their skills in other subjects.
- The work in pupils' books shows good progress in the development of their writing skills. This is clear for all, but especially some of the boys whose standards have been a recent focus for improvement. For example, Year 2 pupils wrote high quality sentences describing a book character and happily talked about how they enjoyed writing.
- Good examples of the use of speaking and listening skills to help develop pupils' vocabulary were evident in many lessons. In Year 1, for example, adults used role play to encourage pupils to ask questions of another child and of an adult dressed as bears from the story they are studying.
- The number of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is too small to comment on their attainment. However, the evidence suggests that they make progress that is at least in line with, and often better than, that of their peers and is narrowing the gaps in attainment that remain in some cases in English and mathematics.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress because they are very well supported. There are no marked differences in the achievement of different groups, including the very small number from a minority ethnic background.

The quality of teaching is good

- The good quality of teaching has a positive impact on pupils' learning. A number of teachers have joined the school recently but a strong team ethos has rapidly been created. A particularly positive feature is the willingness of staff to initiate opportunities to work together, and with staff from other local schools, in order to learn from each other and spread good practice.
- Teachers have created a purposeful climate for learning in their classrooms. Pupils talk about how they enjoy lessons and how the teachers help them learn new things. Relationships between adults, including teaching assistants, and pupils are very strong and this supports learning as well as having a very positive impact on behaviour. The best lessons are paced and keep pupils' interest well. Teachers often ask good, open questions which require pupils to think before answering. This happened in Reception when the teacher got children to explain how they knew the identity of a hidden number.
- Teaching assistants provide effective support to teachers and pupils, particularly when working with disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. Interventions by adults, whether on a one-to-one basis or in small groups, are very effective in supporting those pupils' individual learning and social needs. Teaching assistants spoke positively about their role and about training they have received, especially, for example, regarding the teaching of phonics.
- Teachers often plan activities that are supported by a stimulating range of resources to ensure that pupils are interested and enjoy their work. At times however, the activities lack challenge especially for the most able pupils. In mathematics, for example, teachers do not always provide sufficient opportunity for pupils to use their basic number skills in practical situations and to solve problems. Pupils do not always have enough time to plan their own learning and to work more independently. Good homework systems do provide more of these opportunities.
- Recent changes to marking and the way teachers provide feedback to pupils on their work have had a good impact and the way pupils respond to this advice is evident in their books. The feedback helps pupils know what they have done well and how they can improve. Targets are clearly set out in the books and this helps pupils know what is expected of them.
- In the Reception class, children's good progress in learning basic skills is supported through well-chosen resources and opportunities for children to choose learning activities for themselves. The use of the outdoor learning has improved through changes to the accommodation.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Teachers establish strong and positive relationships with children when they start in Reception, which supports children's attitudes to school and learning. The current group has settled quickly and happily into the expected routines.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning in lessons throughout the school. One described the school as 'friendly and warm' to the inspector. In Years 5 and 6, for example, pupils joined in enthusiastically in a physical activity designed to reinforce their understanding of punctuation.
- Pupils' behaviour around the school is good. Parents and carers are positive about behaviour and most agree the school manages behaviour well. Pupils are friendly, polite and considerate to others, including visitors. They respond very strongly to responsibility. Pupils in Year 4 who have jobs in the library trained others to take their places for the next year without being prompted by an adult. Disruption to lessons is uncommon.

- Pupils say that bullying does not occur in the school. They are confident that if any occurred it would be dealt with well by staff. They have a good awareness of how new technology can be used for bullying purposes, and how to avoid it. The recent development of the 'Cosmic Room' has been very popular with staff and pupils. This is being used very effectively to help promote even better nurture and care for pupils who lack self-esteem or have emotional or social difficulties.
- Attendance, although above average nationally, is average when compared with similar schools. It dipped slightly last year. There are very few persistent absentees. The school works hard to encourage full attendance.
- Behaviour and safety are not outstanding because pupils talk about a small number of low-level incidents that affect their learning, and a few support staff and parents say incidents that are difficult to deal with occasionally occur.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and other senior staff lead the school well. Because of this, it has improved significantly since the last inspection. Detailed development planning and rigorous evaluation of past improvements, provide the school with a clear set of targets and aims for the future. Responsibilities are divided appropriately, given the size of the school. The work of subject leaders and others with leadership responsibilities, such as for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, shows that the school has a strong capacity to continue improving.
- The headteacher and subject leaders monitor teaching and learning by observing lessons and checking pupils' work and teachers' planning. In addition, pupils' progress and attainment are carefully tracked so that the performance of individuals and groups can be analysed. Regular meetings between headteacher and teachers regarding pupils' progress are held so that any underachievement can be quickly identified and tackled. However, teachers are not yet using the available progress data. Because of this there are times when tasks planned are insufficiently challenging. Even so, the school is largely effective in its work to ensure equality and a lack of discrimination.
- Teachers' performance is checked carefully to identify strengths and weaknesses through a good appraisal system. The challenging targets set for teachers are based appropriately on improving pupils' progress, the priorities in the school improvement plan, and individual professional development.
- The leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. There have been staff changes but a major strength has been the way the staff teaching the Reception children have worked together to plan well for the recent changes to the curriculum and to make use of the improved outdoor accommodation.
- The local authority provides appropriately light-touch support for this good school. Training for staff and the governing body is provided as requested and regular checks are kept on the school's performance through a range of activities such as lesson observations carried out jointly by a local authority advisor and the headteacher.
- The funding available through the pupil premium is used effectively to help eligible pupils to take a full part in school life, and receive, where appropriate, specific resources and adult time. The

progress made by these pupils is monitored by the headteacher and governors, and any remaining gaps in attainment are narrowing. The school has good plans in place for the money it will receive to fund more sporting activities and to assess its impact.

- The curriculum is good. It has recently been improved by imaginative links between subjects that bring learning to life. For example, the Year 3 and 4 pupils are enthused by the topic on Egypt that they are currently studying. Excellent use of outside expertise such as a visiting artist enhances and enriches the curriculum. The curriculum, together with close links to the church and local community, contribute well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body has a good knowledge and understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The governors have access to a lot of data, and there are plans for further training in understanding and using this. A number of the governors visit the school regularly and report to the others on their findings. For example, a recent visit was focused on the provision for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. Governors have an appropriate understanding of the school's performance management and appraisal systems, and how these have been used in the past. They have a good understanding of the quality of teaching in the school and how staff are working to increase the amount that is outstanding. Decisions about teachers' pay are closely linked to performance and responsibilities, so the school's systems for this meet requirements. Governors track finances well and support the school in deciding how to spend the money to support pupils eligible for the pupil premium. The governing body ensures that arrangements for pupils' safeguarding meet the current regulatory requirements.

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	112881
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	424982

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	104
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sue Smith
Headteacher	Tracey Gill
Date of previous school inspection	22 September 2011
Telephone number	01332 880416
Fax number	
Email address	info@denbyfree.derbyshire.sch.uk

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