



Drove Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 131566
LEA Swindon
Inspection number 285396
Inspection dates 26 April 2006 to 27 April 2006
Reporting inspector Christopher Schenk HMI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Drove Road
School category	Community		Swindon
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		Wiltshire SN1 3AH
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01793 529009
Number on roll	440	Fax number	01793 610256
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs Debbie Greenough
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable	Headteacher	Dr Nicholas Capstick

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Drove School is a larger than average primary school that serves an ethnically diverse and rapidly changing part of Swindon. Four fifths of the pupils are of minority ethnic heritage, and most of these speak a language other than English at home. There are 28 different languages represented in the school community. Over the last few years, a growing number of Konkani speakers of Goan heritage have come to live in the area, and they now account for just over a fifth of the pupils. There is a high turnover of pupils: during the last academic year, nearly a third of the pupils came to the school other than at the usual time of first admission. Of these pupils, about half arrived with little or no previous English-medium education, and were at an early stage in learning English. The proportion of pupils identified as having learning difficulties or disabilities is around the national figure. The school provides many facilities for the community, including adult education, family learning programmes and family support services. There are plans to expand these facilities further. After-school care provision has recently been opened, and it was inspected by a childcare inspector from Ofsted at the same time as the school inspection; the report is attached at Annex C. The school attained the Basic Skills Agency Quality Mark, the Healthy Schools Award and Investors in People in 2001, and all three awards were revalidated last year.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is an improving school that has a highly committed and professional staff who are doing their best in difficult circumstances. However, these circumstances restrict the school's overall effectiveness, which is currently no more than satisfactory. The school judges it to be good, and indeed the school has many good features and some that are outstanding, but the school's evaluation of the pupils' achievement and standards is too optimistic. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Nevertheless, the school gives good value for money, making good use of the limited resources available, and coping well with a decline in the financial support available for pupils at an early stage of learning English at a time when the number of these pupils was rising considerably. The school is outstandingly good at working in partnership with others, and has developed strong links with the communities it serves, encouraging parents to be involved with their children's education and to develop their own learning. The school is also outstandingly effective as a community in which all pupils feel included and valued and to which they can all contribute. As a result, their moral and social development is very good and their spiritual and cultural development is outstanding, enriched by the experience of living in a diverse and harmonious community. The provision in the Foundation Stage is good and pupils make satisfactory progress, which continues in Key Stage 1 and 2, as a result of the good teaching they receive. The high turnover of pupils means that the school's results are adversely affected by the relatively poor performance of pupils who have not been at the school for very long when they take the tests. Those pupils who have been at the school for some time attain standards by Year 6 in mathematics and science that are broadly in line with national expectations, but the standards they attain in English are too low. The school carefully identifies pupils with learning difficulties and gives them the support they need. Pupils who are at an early stage of learning English are also identified, and some valuable support is given, but it is not enough to meet their considerable needs. There is no systematic identification of pupils with particular gifts and talents. Following the last inspection in 2001, which found the school to be rapidly improving, improvements continued for a couple of years and the senior leaders of the school clearly demonstrated their capacity to initiate beneficial changes. Since then, the rapid change in the nature of the school's intake has deflected attention from the improvements that were taking place in the pupils' achievements and made it impossible to sustain them. Given a period of greater stability, the school has a very good capacity to improve and has already made suitable plans for development.

Parents and pupils think highly of the school. A parent commented: 'The school is a dynamically-led, happy community,' and a pupil said: 'It's a school in which learning, fun and good times are all mixed into one.'

What the school should do to improve further

- improve the standards achieved in English
- increase the support for pupils at an early stage of learning English
- identify pupils with particular gifts and talents and ensure they are given suitable challenges.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement is satisfactory. When children enter the nursery at around the age of 3, many do not have the social and communication skills expected for their age. They make satisfactory progress during the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, but even so the standards they attain at the age of 7 are still well below average. The results of the tests at the age of 11 in 2005 were exceptionally low in English, mathematics and science, but these statistics need to be interpreted with care. A third of the year group had come to the school in Year 5 or Year 6, many with little or no previous experience of English-medium education. Those pupils who had been at the school for two years or more attained standards broadly in line with national expectations in mathematics and science but well below average in English. The situation this year is similar: overall results are likely to remain exceptionally low, but those who have been at the school for some years are performing better than those who entered during Key Stage 2. The school analyses test results carefully to identify any individuals and groups that are underachieving. The school recognises the need to give further support to pupils who come to the school with little English, particularly at the early stages, so that they can more rapidly gain access to the curriculum. In the lessons observed during the inspection, pupils never made less than satisfactory progress and in some lessons their progress was good.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development is good. The pupils behave well and have positive attitudes to learning. They concentrate in lessons and work hard. They have a strong sense of right and wrong and show considerable interest and respect for those with other faiths and from other cultures. In an assembly attended during the inspection, good attention was paid to spiritual development and pupils were encouraged to value diversity and to grow in self-esteem. Pupils are given many responsibilities within school and contribute outstandingly well to the wider community, for example, through events to raise money for charity and in a project that involves painting murals to improve the local environment. The school council is well established and gives pupils further opportunities to contribute to the life of the school. Through art, music and dance, pupils have a rich experience of British and other cultural traditions. Their moral and social development is very good and their spiritual and cultural development is outstanding. The recent introduction of a new programme concerned with the social and emotional aspects of learning has had a very positive impact on pupils' personal development and well-being. Pupils speak highly of the ways in which it has helped them to improve their behaviour and raise their self-esteem. The strong emphasis given to physical education, combined with excellent, nutritious school lunches and a good programme of health education, encourages pupils to adopt healthy lifestyles. Pupils feel secure, follow safe practices, and know who to talk to if they need help. The school makes a good contribution to the present economic well-being of its pupils through its adult education out-reach, and a satisfactory contribution to their future

economic well-being. The school has recently introduced thorough procedures for following up poor attendance and punctuality and for rewarding good attendance. These have led to clear improvements, although there are still too many unauthorised absences: the efforts to persuade all parents of the importance of regular attendance need to continue.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The teaching is usually good, sometimes outstanding and never less than satisfactory. Planning is thorough and well focused on learning outcomes: teachers benefit from the opportunity to plan together, to a common format. Lessons are often lively, and contexts are well chosen to interest and motivate the pupils. Particularly good use is made of paired and small group discussion, giving all pupils the chance to articulate their ideas. In most lessons, assessment is well used and pupils are given work at the right level, with extra support available for lower attainers and extra challenge for higher attainers. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to the pupils' progress, and so do the bilingual assistants, who have been employed on the school's own initiative since last September. Nevertheless, the support that is available for pupils at an early stage of learning English is not sufficient to meet their considerable needs. From Year 2, pupils are regrouped for literacy and numeracy by attainment; this has the advantage of reducing the range of attainment within the class. However, the school is also aware that it has the disadvantage of not providing pupils in the lower attaining literacy groups with good role models from their more articulate peers. As a result, the arrangements are being reviewed and a more flexible model is being piloted in Year 5. Pupils are given very clear learning targets and the teachers' thorough marking tells the pupils what they need to do to improve as well as giving encouragement. The work in the pupils' books shows a high degree of consistency across the school in the teachers' expectations, although standards of presentation could with benefit be even more consistent. As the school is aware, the quality of learning is often not as good as the quality of teaching, largely because some groups and classes do not have enough articulate pupils to raise the levels of language and discussion. In several lessons observed during the inspection, pupils made no more than satisfactory progress in their learning, even though the teaching was good. However, there were also lessons observed in which progress was good, showing the impact of recent initiatives to improve the quality of the learning and the pupils' rate of progress. These initiatives will be very important in helping to ensure that the good quality of the education provided by the school is successfully translated into higher achievements.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. It is adapted well to meet the specific needs of pupils, to help them enjoy their education and to increase their knowledge and understanding. Considerable emphasis is placed on using a multi-sensory approach, using vision, hearing and touch, and making effective use of the interactive whiteboards. This has a positive impact on the learning and understanding of pupils, particularly those with learning difficulties and those who are in the early stages of learning English. The school continually evaluates, revises and improves its curriculum. For example, a comprehensive programme of social and emotional aspects of learning has been introduced this year. In addition, as a result of recent initiatives, further emphasis is now being given to speaking and listening skills across the curriculum and to using and applying mathematical skills in numeracy. There is a good range of additional activities to enrich the curriculum. The expertise of local coaches and visitors from the community is effectively used.

Pupils have good opportunities to participate in dance, music and drama events. Local artists are regularly invited into school to broaden pupils' skills and experiences. Teachers organise numerous visits to support the curriculum, including two residential trips which not only enhance pupils' learning but also have a positive impact on their social development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. Pupils are well looked after and have good relationships with their teachers, the teaching assistants and other staff such as lunch-time supervisors. The school employs a nurse who makes a valuable contribution to the pupils' care and to their awareness of the importance of adopting a healthy lifestyle. A learning mentor supports those pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties and liaises with their families. Academic guidance is thorough. The progress of individual pupils is carefully tracked. There are regular assessments which help to identify those pupils who need extra help and support, but they are not yet being used systematically to identify pupils with particular gifts and talents to ensure they are given suitable challenges. Parents are kept well informed about their children's progress. A questionnaire sent out to parents at the time of the inspection resulted in an overwhelmingly positive response. There was unanimous agreement that their children are safe and well cared for at school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher is inspirational and innovative and provides very effective and purposeful leadership. He has an enterprising approach to tackling new situations, such as the significant increase in

the number of pupils at an early stage of learning English during the last two years. One Year 6 pupil commented that 'he always has ideas to improve things and it is good to have a headteacher like that.' He has ensured there is good communication and teamwork among staff, together with a clear and shared focus on improvement. He is effectively supported by his deputy, who gives particularly good advice and guidance to new staff, and by the three assistant headteachers who lead the phase teams within the school. The school's self-evaluation is perceptive and informative. It gives an accurate picture of many of the school's strengths and weaknesses and a clear direction for the school to follow. However, the document is too optimistic about the standards currently achieved. Performance data are analysed very carefully and information used well to improve provision, for example, in the recent initiative to give more emphasis to using and applying mathematical skills in numeracy lessons. The school has very effective arrangements in place to monitor teaching, planning and pupils' work. Through this monitoring, it has accurately and perceptively identified that the learning is often not as good as the teaching. As a consequence, all teachers are implementing strategies to improve the learning and these are beginning to have an effect. The continuation and extension of these initiatives is a key focus for the school improvement plan. The school ensures that all pupils have equal opportunity and are proud to be part of a community in which they are all valued, respected and included. The school makes very good use of all its resources and therefore provides good value for money. This is despite the fact that over the last two years the number of pupils in the early stages of learning English has doubled while funding for them has decreased substantially. The governance of the school has significantly improved during the last year. A new chair of governors has been appointed who works closely with the headteacher and supports the school well. Many new governors are becoming increasingly aware of the need for detailed information in order to fulfil their responsibilities to provide challenge for the school. They are becoming more actively involved and organised and are now more proactive in the formulation and evaluation of the school improvement plan.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	3	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Dear Pupils Thank you for making us feel so welcome when we visited your school recently. We think you behave well, have good attitudes to learning and work hard. We are particularly impressed by the way you respect and take an interest in each other's cultures and religions, and gain such a lot from working and playing together harmoniously. All the adults in the school look after you well and you told us that there is always someone to help you when you need it. You enjoy your school work and have a good time. As one of you said to us: 'It's a school in which learning, fun and good times are all mixed into one.' We think your teachers are really committed to doing their best for you. Your headteacher and the staff are always wanting to make things even better. We have suggested that there are three things they should do to improve the school further:

- help you all to get better in English
- give more help to those of you who are just beginning to learn English
- see what some of you can do really well, so that they can give you some challenging things to do.

With best wishes Christopher Schenk HMI