



Denton CE School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 120518
Local Authority LINCOLNSHIRE
Inspection number 291766
Inspection dates 13–14 February 2007
Reporting inspector Geof Timms

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Church Street
School category	Voluntary controlled		Denton, Grantham
Age range of pupils	4–11		Lincolnshire NG32 1LG
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01476 870649
Number on roll (school)	69	Fax number	01476 870649
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr M Bennett
		Headteacher	Mrs J Hadley
Date of previous school inspection	12 November 2002		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The school is much smaller than most primary schools. Pupils come from Denton and local villages or the town of Grantham. Very few pupils are entitled to free school meals and none is from minority ethnic families or has English as an additional language. An above average proportion of the pupils have learning difficulties or disabilities. The attainment of most children when they start school is above that typically found. The school has Investors in People status and a Basic Skills Quality Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standards of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

The overall effectiveness of the school is currently inadequate because the progress made by pupils is unsatisfactory. This is due to a variety of factors but is largely because leadership and management are inadequate, and do not provide the school with a clear educational direction. The school's self evaluation of its work is poor and does not highlight accurately the current weaknesses, and thus does not help staff to prioritise needs and raise standards. The governing body has not held the school sufficiently to account for the standards achieved. Improvement since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory and standards have fallen. As a result, the school does not provide value for money.

Most children start school with standards that are above those expected given their ages. They make good progress in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2. This leads to consistently above average standards by the end of Year 2. In Years 3 to 6 progress is inconsistent. Year 3 and 4 pupils make satisfactory progress in English and science, but in mathematics it is inadequate. In Years 5 and 6 progress in all subjects is inadequate and by the time they leave the school standards have fallen to a level that is currently broadly average. This represents inadequate achievement given the same pupils' attainment at the end of Year 2.

Part of the reason for the fall in standards from Year 2 is the unsatisfactory teaching of mathematics. In Years 5 and 6 teaching is weak overall because of the ineffective management of the staffing of the class and an over-reliance on support staff. There are too few opportunities for pupils to develop independent learning skills and insufficient work that is hard enough to really challenge them and develop their knowledge and understanding. The quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2 is good and has a positive impact on pupils' progress. Some of the teaching in Years 3 and 4 is also of good quality, especially in English. The recent introduction of a small group of Year 6 pupils receiving extra support in preparation for their English and mathematics tests is proving very effective, and they are being very well taught.

Pupils' personal development, the curriculum and the care, guidance and support offered to pupils are all satisfactory. Most pupils clearly enjoy school. They have a good awareness of how to lead healthy lifestyles and staff strive to provide good opportunities for physical education given the limited accommodation. Pupils make a good contribution to the local and wider community. They are aware of how to stay safe but the inadequate aspects to their education means they are not being sufficiently well prepared for the future. The school makes satisfactory efforts to extend the pupils'

skills and awareness through support for those with learning difficulties and specialist teaching in science and sport.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and the achievement of pupils by the end of Year 6.
- Strengthen the leadership of the school by improving the strategic planning and the school's self evaluation.
- Improving the role of the governing body in evaluating, challenging and planning the work of the school.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by ensuring all work is sufficiently challenging and provides enough opportunities for independent learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Although standards in English, mathematics and science are broadly average by the end of Year 6, achievement is inadequate overall because pupils make insufficient progress, especially in Years 5 and 6. In their Reception year children make good progress and most develop good learning habits and attain standards at least in line with and often better than those expected. The good progress continues through Years 1 and 2 and the standards reached at the end of Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics are consistently above average. However, there is a different picture by the end of Year 6. The progress made in Years 3 to 6 is inconsistent, with some important weaknesses, particularly in mathematics. In Years 5 and 6 there is significant underachievement in all subjects and the standards attained by the end of Year 6 have fallen over the last three years, and are currently no better than average. This is largely due to inconsistent and often inadequate teaching and management in that class.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Most pupils enjoy school and this is supported by the majority of the parents. Pupils' attendance is broadly average. The pupils are largely willing to learn and keen to take part in the more interesting activities provided for them. However, many of the older pupils do not take a very active part in lessons. There is a school council which has had a minor impact on issues regarding the playground but this is not effectively used to provide pupils with a voice. Behaviour is satisfactory, although some parents and pupils feel there are times when it is not so good and bullying can occur. Pupils are mostly happy that this is dealt with satisfactorily by adults. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 4

Although the teaching and learning are inadequate overall, there is good practice to be found in the school. The best teaching is evident in Reception and Years 1 and 2, and in the 'booster' groups set up recently to raise standards in Year 6. Where the teaching is most effective staff have very good relationships with their pupils. Work is well planned and activities are appropriate for the aims of the lesson. However, where the teaching and learning is less effective teaching assistants are not sufficiently involved when teachers are talking to the whole class, while on other occasions they are given too much planning and teaching responsibility. Activities are not sufficiently challenging or matched to the pupils' prior attainment. The marking of pupils' work in Years 3 to 6 does not help them understand what they have done well or how they can improve. Pupils have insufficient opportunities to develop effective independent learning skills. Some teachers' subject knowledge and understanding is inadequate. This is particularly true in mathematics. The teachers are making better use of information and communication technology (ICT) than was the case during the last inspection; pupils' skills are satisfactory and improving.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school has planned the curriculum so that the statutory requirements are met over a two year cycle for mixed age classes. It is extended through the teaching of a modern foreign language in some lessons. The curriculum in Reception and Years 1 and 2 is good and well planned. The use of the much improved outdoor area for Reception is good. The school does not yet make many links between subjects that would help pupils see how their learning in one subject can be of use elsewhere. The staff have made some effective use of outside expertise to widen pupils' learning about science and life in Nepal for example. Teachers work hard to provide good sporting, musical and other opportunities through after school clubs and enrichment activities.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

This is a caring school and, although it has weaknesses in aspects of its work, all staff work very hard to care for and support the pupils. When health issues arise they are dealt with well and procedures are robust. The support offered to those with learning difficulties or disabilities has improved under the current coordinator and is now good. The school works hard to ensure the safety of the pupils and the requirements for checking the backgrounds of adults helping or working in school are met. However, the procedures and management of child protection are too much invested in one person and more training among all staff is needed so that they are confident in

recognising signs of concern. The setting of targets to help pupils improve is new and yet to have much impact, although pupils are more aware of what they need to do to improve. There are good relationships with outside agencies and these provide effective support for many pupils.

Leadership and management

Grade: 4

This aspect is inadequate because the school has had insufficiently clear and strong leadership recently to enable it to evaluate accurately the success of its work, and to plan for future improvement. There is currently a long term instability at senior leadership level that leads to an inadequate capacity to improve. There is no overall agreed strategic vision for the school that is shared with everyone. Subject leadership has been a recent focus for improvement and the staff involved have worked hard to develop their skills, although as yet this has had little impact on provision. For example, a recent analysis of test questions is yet to be used sufficiently in the planning of activities. The governing body has not been involved enough in evaluating the quality of what the school provides, and have not had enough input to the school's self evaluation and development planning. The school is at a very early stage in tracking pupils' progress and using this data to set targets, raise standards and improve provision. The management of teachers and teaching assistants has not been effective and this has a negative impact on classes which have more than one teacher. Too many demands have been made on the skills of some hard working teaching assistants, particularly in Years 5 and 6.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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?	4
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	4
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	4
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The behaviour of learners	3
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	4

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	4
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	4
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	4
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	4
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	4
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	4
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	Yes
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

15 February 2007

Dear Children

Denton CE VC Primary School, Church Street, Denton, Lincolnshire

I want to thank you very much for the welcome you gave me when I visited and the help you gave me in finding out about your school. You told me how much you enjoy school and I hope you all have a good time on the exciting visit to see 'Cats'!

There are a number of satisfactory things about the school. All of the adults care for and look after you well. They work very hard to provide you with some interesting out of school activities and lots of visits. In Reception you have a good time and learn a lot about working and playing together. This prepares you well for Years 1 and 2 and you carry on learning well and are good at reading, writing and mathematics. The school council told me that you behave well most of the time, and that they feel safe in school.

Unfortunately the school is not as good as it should be in meeting your needs and helping you reach high enough standards by the end of Year 6. Because of this there are a lot of important improvements that I have asked the governors and staff to make. These will help the school provide a better education for you in the future and will help your learning improve.

The school needs to help you learn more and make better progress by the time you leave Year 6. To do this the school needs to be much better led and organised. The teaching needs to improve and the governors need to be better at checking how well the school is doing. Inspectors will be visiting your school regularly to check the progress being made.

Many thanks again for your help during the inspection. Keep working hard and you will help the school get much better.

Yours sincerely Geof Timms Lead inspector