



# Denby Church of England Voluntary Aided First School

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 107742  
**Local Authority** Kirklees  
**Inspection number** 300479  
**Inspection date** 13 February 2007  
**Reporting inspector** Sara Morrissey HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	First	<b>School address</b>	Goose Green
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided		Upper Denby, Huddersfield
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5–10		West Yorkshire HD8 8UN
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01484 222913
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	38	<b>Fax number</b>	01484 222909
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Mr D Pollick
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Lesley Butcher (acting)
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	18 January 2006		

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## Introduction

Denby Church of England (A) First School was last inspected in January 2006, when it was served with a notice to improve because of significant concerns relating to leadership and management of the school. This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Denby Church of England (A) First School is a very small school in a semi-rural area on the border between Kirklees and Barnsley. Pupils come to school from a range of backgrounds including more affluent neighbouring villages and outlying rural farms. A small number join the school from the Barnsley area. Children arrive at school with a broad range of pre-school experiences and so their attainment on entry varies widely. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average and no pupils have a statement for their special educational needs. All pupils are from White British backgrounds. Since June 2006 the school has been led by an acting headteacher.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

In accordance with Section 13 (5) of the Education Act of 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement. Denby Church of England (A) First School is a rapidly improving school, where a vibrant and positive learning environment has been established and standards are rising. The acting headteacher has transformed the school through her outstanding leadership. She has created a team approach to school improvement, involving staff, parents, governors and pupils. High expectations have been communicated and reinforced so that pupils behave well and enjoy coming to school. The quality of teaching and learning has improved because of a programme of training and support that has empowered teachers to use a range of strategies to motivate and inspire pupils to learn. As a result pupils make good progress overall towards meeting their targets and enjoy their learning more. However, the school recognises the need to embed recent improvements in teaching to increase the proportion that is good or better to raise achievement further and to eliminate remaining inconsistencies in progress made by pupils between year groups and subjects.

School self-evaluation has improved and identifies effectively what is working well and what needs further improvement. Progress towards measurable targets is monitored carefully by staff and an effective governing body, so that actions can be prioritised to raise achievement. Pupils are involved in this process too and understand better what they need to do to improve.

Parents, staff and governors have united to improve the quality of education for pupils at Denby. The strong sense of community is reflected in the regular contact between home and school, for example through the pupil planners and the number of parents who willingly support school events and activities. Pupils' and parents' views have been sought to help inform plans for improvement. Relationships with parents have been strengthened further through consultation, for example during a review of the home-school agreement. Parents say they feel more involved with the school and so are able to support their child more. Despite its small size, the school plays an important part in community life and plans are being developed to secure its long term future. It provides good value for money and has good capacity to improve further.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Increase and embed the proportion of good teaching to further raise pupils' achievement and reduce remaining inconsistencies in their rate of progress
- Develop the long term strategic plan for the school's future to reflect its role within and contribution to the local community.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Standards have risen in reading, writing and mathematics since the last inspection and are above average. They remain higher in mathematics and reading than in writing

overall. In 2006, results in writing rose significantly and at a faster rate than in mathematics or reading in tests taken by seven year old pupils in 2006. These results must, however, be treated with caution due to the small size of the group.

Children arrive at school with a wide range of skills and individual needs. Activities are planned through the Foundation Stage to ensure that they make at least satisfactory progress towards early learning goals and begin Year 1 with standards that are slightly above the national average. Between Years 1 and 5, pupils' progress has accelerated and is good overall. This is because of improvements in the quality of teaching and learning, a better use of assessment information to set individual targets for pupils and close tracking of their progress. The quality of writing has improved particularly as a result of targeted action and whole school moderation of pupils' work in literacy. However, the school recognises that some inconsistency remains in the relative progress made by pupils in different years and between subjects.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

The school has worked hard to develop a strong Christian ethos that promotes pupils' personal development and well-being effectively. Spiritual, social, moral and cultural development are good. Opportunities are built in to the day for personal reflection as well as to find out about different cultures, for example during 'Caribbean Week'. Pupils feel safe, secure and well cared for. Older pupils act as good role models for younger children in the mixed-age classes. Pupils report that there are few instances of poor behaviour or bullying and know that there is always someone to talk to if they have any concerns. They enjoy coming to school and attendance is good. Staff work well together to build pupils' confidence and reinforce positive attitudes to learning. Pupils speak with pride about the weekly Star Assemblies and bright wall displays around the school that celebrate their skills and achievements. High expectations are communicated through the recently reviewed behaviour code, which is clearly understood by pupils and appreciated by parents. Behaviour is good: pupils are considerate and courteous to each other. They play and work together in groups well and are beginning to become more independent in their learning. In the Foundation Stage children learn to play together cooperatively and develop basic skills and routines well. Pupils are proud to be members of the school council and feel that they contribute to improving the school environment as well as raising funds for different charities. Improvements in their basic skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT), prepare pupils well for the next steps in their education.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

The quality of teaching has improved significantly as a result of a team approach to improvement, informed by effective monitoring by the headteacher and targeted support from the local authority. As a result teachers feel empowered to use a wider range of teaching strategies and value the links established with other schools to share good practice. Relationships between adults and children are warm and based on mutual respect. Pupils are keen to participate in and contribute to lessons. Most lessons are well planned to meet a range of needs and activities engage and motivate pupils well. Pupils know their targets and how to improve their work better because the quality of marking has improved. Opportunities are built in for pupils to evaluate what they have learnt. Teaching assistants make an effective contribution to pupils' learning, for example, by leading outdoor investigations with children in Reception or being involved in activities to develop the literacy skills of targeted groups of pupils. They help pupils to develop their thinking, speaking and listening skills. Where teaching is less effective, teachers do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their learning. This means that pupils are sometimes not always sufficiently challenged to extend their learning further and their rate of progress becomes inconsistent.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum has been adapted to cater better for the changing and varied needs of specific pupils. Greater attention has been given to providing more challenge for high attaining pupils and extending the variety of ways in which the curriculum is delivered to engage pupils more actively in their learning. A comprehensive programme of personal, health, social and citizenship education contributes well to pupils' understanding about how to stay healthy and safe. The small size of the school does not hamper the range of activities on offer to pupils who enjoy a range of extra-curricular activities, for example the very popular history club, run by a parent, and the school's newspaper club. Pupils take an active part in improving provision by allocating funds from their own school council budget to particular projects, for example the replacement of the school climbing frame. ICT is taught as a discrete subject but pupils also value the many opportunities to develop its use through all subjects. They report that ICT enhances their learning.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 2**

The school places great emphasis on providing good care, guidance and support which underpins its positive Christian ethos. Central to this is a good understanding of individual children's needs and effective staff team work to match appropriate support

to nurture and guide pupils effectively. Procedures for safeguarding children are securely in place. Parents value support provided by the school's effective links with external agencies to assist pupils with specific needs. Pupils know their targets and how to improve and parents feel more informed about the progress of their child. Good links established with middle school ensure a smooth transition at the end of Year 5.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The acting headteacher has provided outstanding leadership and a clear direction which is shared by all staff. She has used a well focused plan to prioritise actions effectively and accelerate the pace of change. As a result progress on areas identified for improvement at the time of the last inspection has been good. Standards are rising as a result of more accurate and effective monitoring and evaluation. The quality of teaching has improved because of a focused programme of training and support. Good practice is regularly shared and recent improvements in the quality of teaching are becoming more established. Whilst still relatively new the team approach adopted by staff means that agreed procedures have become quickly embedded. Team work has also been effective in the review of a range of policies in consultation with parents and pupils. Consequently, information is now freely shared and the high expectations of the school are clearly understood by all stakeholders. Leadership of the Foundation Stage is good and enables children to develop skills and qualities that they need for the future.

The governing body has been re-structured and new committees formed. Governors have monitored areas for improvement identified at the time of the last inspection closely and hold the school rigorously to account. Although their focus has been on the short term targets for school improvement, governors have begun to plan more strategically to secure the long term future for the school. Resources have been prioritised to improve the quality of the learning environment for pupils, for example in the refurbishment of the ICT suite and re-decoration of classrooms in response to views expressed by pupils.

The school runs smoothly and harmoniously on a day to day basis. Pupils and staff report that this is a happy school and that they enjoy being part of the community. This is echoed by many of the responses made by parents. Measures taken to improve the quality of education at Denby First School have been well chosen and had a significant impact: staff morale has improved and the school is well placed to improve further.

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## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	2
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	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

### Personal development and well-being

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

### The quality of provision

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

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you very much for welcoming me to your school recently and for the time you spent talking to me about your work and general life at school. I was particularly impressed by the wonderful Valentine's Day cards that you brought into school as part of the 'Friends of Denby School' competition. It must have been a hard job to judge the winner!

I am pleased to tell you that because of the hard work of Mrs Butcher and all the staff at your school, there have been some important improvements that make Denby a good school. Many of you told me how much you enjoyed being a pupil at Denby. You enjoy your lessons more because your teachers use lots of different activities to help you learn well. Some of you told me how you enjoy learning more now and that you are very clear about how you can improve your work further. You also feel that you have a say in helping Denby to improve: for example through the school council. Behaviour is good at your school and you feel safe and cared for because of the ways in which staff work together to help and support you. Your parents share these views and feel that they know more about what you are learning and doing in school.

Mrs Butcher checks very carefully the progress that the school is making to find out what works well and what might be improved further. I have agreed with her that there are a few things that everyone at Denby can do to help it become even better. In order for you to make even more progress in your learning, I have asked Mrs Butcher to work with teachers to increase the number of lessons that help you to make good progress in all your subjects and also to make plans so that children in your local community can enjoy being a part of the school in the future. You have an important part to play by continuing to come to school regularly, behaving well and doing your best in your work.

With best wishes for your future success