

Dingle Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103829
Local Authority	Dudley
Inspection number	308433
Inspection dates	5–6 February 2008
Reporting inspector	Anne Pitt HMI

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	175
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Keith Corns
Headteacher	Joy Wheeler
Date of previous school inspection	9 February 2004
School address	Madeley Road Kingswinford DY6 8PF
Telephone number	01384 818305
Fax number	01384 818306

Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors. The following issues were investigated:

how well children in the Reception class make progress in communication, language and literacy

how well the school caters for specific groups of pupils, such as looked-after pupils, those with learning difficulties and those of higher ability

how well the school's leadership sustains improvement.

Evidence was gathered from observation of lessons, the pupils' work, discussion with them, the staff, some parents and governors, and a scrutiny of school documents and parent questionnaires. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation form, were not justified.

Description of the school

Dingle Community Primary is smaller than most primary schools. Pupils are mainly White British. The school's context is fairly typical although the proportion of pupils identified by the school as having learning difficulties is higher than usual. School assessments indicate that currently pupils start in the Reception class with skills that are generally below national expectations, but this fluctuates from year to year.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school which is going from strength to strength. It is effective in almost every element of its work. Parent questionnaires indicate that parents are largely happy about what is on offer. It is a place where the focus on pupils and their well-being shines through, including the good relationships formed with pupils, families and other community partners. Together they create a genuine team, determined to help every pupil to achieve their potential. The school is well led and managed. The astute vision of the headteacher and senior team and the strong support of the governing body have led to great improvements in the school building, the quality of teaching and the progress pupils make. All the issues from the last inspection have been addressed well, and the school has good capacity to achieve even more. Academic performance across the school is good, and improving. Children get off to a well-rounded start in the Reception class. The practical, hands-on approach means that by the time that they move into Year 1, they have achieved well in personal, social and emotional skills, although they do not do quite as well in reading and writing. Pupils in the rest of the school make good progress in English and mathematics. The latest test results show that standards are improving, and work seen in pupils' books during the inspection suggests that this trend will continue. This is due to successful initiatives that have changed the way teachers assess and track pupils' progress and teach writing. Nevertheless, the school is not complacent and realises that there is more to do.

Personal development is also a strength of the school. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils commented on how well they all get on with each other. They also said that they enjoy learning because the school provides interesting activities. Their enjoyment of school is reflected in their improving attendance. The behaviour seen during the inspection was excellent because good behaviour is positively encouraged and rewarded. Pupils and parents remarked that bullying and name-calling are rare and that adults deal with them quickly if they occur. They also commented on how lunchtime behaviour has improved now that pupils eat in smaller groups. Toys and structured activities are available on the playgrounds, thus making lunchtimes more social and harmonious.

The strength in pupils' academic and social performance does not happen by accident. Much of it is the result of good teaching and learning. This is because the staff have high expectations of behaviour, which encourages pupils to settle down quickly and think hard. Typically, lessons are well planned and structured with good use of information and communication technology, such as electronic whiteboards to provide visual examples that stimulate interest and help pupils learn. Work is usually set at the right level, but occasionally teaching is rather 'safe' and does not excite or challenge pupils sufficiently. Teachers and support staff know pupils well due to effective assessment procedures. Detailed records of how individual pupils are progressing are kept. Marking is very good and effectively helps pupils know what they need to work on.

The effective curriculum includes a wide range of experiences which contribute very well to pupils' learning. Before- and after-school activities are highly valued by pupils. The range of sporting and team activities makes sure that pupils' health and well-being are promoted successfully. The school is particularly effective in engendering a sense of community, responsibility and mutual respect. Older pupils provide good role models for younger ones, helping in their learning, such as at the recent 'Thomas the Tank Engine' event. Pupils know how to look after themselves safely and understand the importance of a healthy lifestyle. Many undertake jobs around the school, such as being playground pals or members of the school

council, and this gives them good opportunities to develop responsibility. Community cohesion is developing well. The school has a clear understanding of its own community and learners' needs. Pupils are building a firm understanding of the cultures of different types of people, for example by visiting the Muslim event at Merry Hill. The school provides a good caring and supportive environment in which pupils thrive. Pupils with learning difficulties are catered for especially well through targeted intervention and liaison with outside agencies. A number of parents wrote on the questionnaires about how appreciative they are of such good support. The senior team shows a determination to improve. The school tracks individual pupils' progress particularly well and challenging targets are set. It is continually demanding of itself. For example, although it monitors its achievements well, it is seeking ways of analysing and comparing the data it has even more effectively to check on the progress of specific groups of pupils and measure whether initiatives have a positive impact. The senior team's monitoring is appropriately rigorous and actions taken by the school are well chosen. The school's views of its own effectiveness, as reflected in its self-evaluation form, are accurate. Members of the senior team are well aware of the general concerns that parents raised in the questionnaires. They are available to hear the views of pupils and parents on the playground at the beginning of the school day.

In summary, the school does a good job in providing a well-rounded education for its pupils. It successfully achieves its mission statement of promoting 'Learning to learn for life'.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Good links with the pre-school ensure that children settle quickly in the Reception class. Purposeful practical activities engage and interest the children, enabling them to make steady progress. There is a good balance between the activities children get on with unaided and those where adults teach specific skills. Personal, social and emotional development is taught particularly well and children learn to behave and cooperate together ably. The indoor and outdoor environment is attractive and caters well for children's physical development. The staff are skilled at making ongoing observations of children in order to track their progress. Records show that children's language skills when they start school are below those normally expected. Activities seen during the inspection indicate that there is an increasing focus on writing and teaching sounds, but staff are not yet doing enough to develop these skills fully.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve pupils' progress in writing even more, especially for the youngest children.
- Use assessment data to measure the school's success effectively and track the progress of different groups even more.

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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?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
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

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	1
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

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

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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

7 February 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Dingle Community Primary School, Kingswinford DY6 8PF

Thank you for welcoming me to your school and being so friendly and helpful. I particularly want to thank the pupils who gave up their time to talk to me.

You go to a good school, and this is what I liked most about it:

- you enjoy school, and do well with your work
- you get on well with each other and your behaviour is outstanding
- adults take good care of you so that you feel happy and safe in school
- lessons are usually good
- the headteacher, staff and governors are keen to help your school get even better.

What I have asked your school to do now:

- make sure that your writing improves
- look at your test results in more detail to see if anything needs to change to help you do even better.

You are very lucky that you go to a caring school where everyone gets on so well. I hope that you will do your best to make it even better.

Yours sincerely

Anne Pitt HMI

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