

Dove Holes CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112809
Local Authority	DERBYSHIRE LA
Inspection number	311013
Inspection dates	23–24 January 2008
Reporting inspector	Raymond Jardine

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	76
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Andrew Snadden
Headteacher	Mr Philip Raw
Date of previous school inspection	1 April 2003
School address	Halsteads Dove Holes Buxton Derbyshire SK17 8BJ
Telephone number	01298 812808
Fax number	

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This small rural school has served its community for over 100 years and takes its pupils from the village of Dove Holes and the surrounding area. There are more boys than girls in most year groups. Almost all are from White British backgrounds and very few are at an early stage of learning English for whom additional support is provided. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is below average. An average proportion has learning difficulties or disabilities. Pupils' attainment on entry to Reception is wide in range but broadly in line with that expected for their age.

The school has gained national Healthy Schools and Activemark awards in recognition of its work to promote pupils' health and fitness.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Dove Holes Primary provides a satisfactory education for its pupils and makes good provision for their care, welfare and personal development. Pupils' academic achievements are satisfactory and they typically reach about average standards by the time they leave school. The staff promote a strong Christian ethos and encouraging atmosphere for learning which help pupils to mature and grow in confidence. Pupils' personal development is good, particularly their spiritual, moral and social development. They enjoy school life, behave very well and learn to work collaboratively and independently. The great majority of parents express confidence in the staff and the impact they have on their children's learning. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Staff work well together; responsibilities for managing the school's provision are distributed appropriately among all teaching staff. Arrangements for monitoring and improving the school's performance are in some respects not consistent or rigorous enough, particularly in monitoring and improving teaching quality and checking on the progress the school makes in its key priorities.

Standards in Year 2 and in Year 6 are broadly average overall, although there are variations by Year 6, where standards in mathematics and science have tended to be better than in English. The main weakness, rightly diagnosed by the school as a current priority, is in pupils' basic skills in writing, including writing at length. Children receive a good start at the school in their Reception Year, where they make good progress. Pupils' progress in later years, while satisfactory overall, is better in Years 4, 5 and 6. This reflects the impact of variations in teaching quality, which overall is satisfactory. There is some good teaching, but it is not consistent enough across the school to enable all pupils, particularly the more able, to build on their knowledge and skills consistently well. Pupils enjoy learning, and those needing extra help, for example with literacy and numeracy, receive good support from well-trained teaching assistants. Pupils have curriculum targets for their writing and mathematics but these are not used to best effect to involve them in reviewing their work and guiding their next steps.

The curriculum is planned soundly to develop basic skills and to provide a breadth of experiences. Pupils eagerly take responsibility in lessons and around the school, for example, as playground buddies, managing playground equipment and through the pupil council. They enjoy the many additional activities, clubs, themed weeks and out-of-school visits that promote their personal development in particular. Pupils receive very good guidance in how to live healthy, fit and safe lives, which most put into good practice, for example at lunch times and through the daily fruit provided.

The school has made reasonable progress in addressing the issues arising from the last inspection. Performance in national tests are analysed and plans made for improvement, for example in writing. However, school priorities are not sharply focused enough, nor are success criteria specific and measurable to enable governors and staff to monitor rigorously the pace of improvement and to challenge how well the school is doing. This limits the pace and potential of the school's improvement beyond its currently satisfactory level. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children make good progress in all the areas of learning, particularly in their personal, social and emotional development. An experienced and knowledgeable leader plans the curriculum carefully and a good range of resources is available. Lessons are exciting and enjoyable for all children. Activities are planned around clear objectives and, through them, children acquire skills and knowledge in most areas of learning. When learning to take numbers away, children used movement, singing and writing to express their working and show how many ducks from 12 were left when some jumped in the water. Activities are matched well to the range of abilities, with very good support provided by teaching assistants. Current developments are focusing on how best to extend children's own choices in play. By the end of reception, most achieve the goals expected and some exceed them.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise pupils' achievement, particularly their skills in writing in a range of contexts and purposes.
- Monitor and develop teaching quality more rigorously, building on the best practice, so that teaching is consistently good or better across the school.
- Make effective use of targets with pupils to involve them more fully in reviewing their progress and guiding their next steps.
- Ensure that governors and staff monitor and review the progress of key priorities rigorously, using measurable success criteria, in order to accelerate the pace of improvement.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards in Year 2 have fluctuated year-on-year but are broadly average compared to schools nationally. Taking account of pupils' standards on entry to Year 1, most make the progress expected, although their progress is better in reading and mathematics than in writing. The satisfactory progress continues in Years 3 to 6, although progress across year groups for some pupils is uneven reflecting variations in teaching quality. By Year 6, standards are about average and most pupils' achievements are satisfactory. In 2007, results in mathematics were average and lower than in previous years. In the past, they were sometimes above average. Those pupils identified as needing additional support for literacy and numeracy respond well and the additional support they receive enables them to make good progress. The school is rightly focussing attention on improving pupils' writing, which has lagged behind reading, mathematics and science in recent years. The school exceeded its 2006 and 2007 Year 6 targets by some margin but these were too low and those for 2008 are only adequately challenging.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The school provides a welcoming and harmonious learning community for its pupils. They play well together and behave very responsibly and safely in lessons and around the school. Pupils say that bullying is very rare and that it is resolved quickly if it occurs. Attendance is above

average. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, although their understanding of other cultural traditions in modern Britain is not as strong. The school's Christian ethos and values are evident in pupils' very good relationships and understanding of right and wrong. They are represented well by their very active pupil councillors; together they demonstrate their concern for those less fortunate through the considerable funds that they raise for charities. Pupils enjoy the emphasis placed on celebrating achievement. Their involvement in clubs, sports and residential visits helps them to grow in confidence. They make a good contribution to their school and the local community through their involvement in many local events and festivals.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning varies across the school. While some is good, mainly in Reception and Years 4, 5 and 6, overall it is satisfactory. Pupils find most lessons interesting and they say that they enjoy learning. The good teaching is characterised by stimulating activities and careful planning for the range of abilities and ages so that all pupils progress well. In the weaker teaching, questions and tasks are not challenging enough to enable the more able pupils to make consistently good progress. Teaching assistants provide good support to targeted pupils in lessons and through small groups, particularly in literacy and numeracy. As a result, lower attaining pupils and those who have learning difficulties generally progress well. Marking provides helpful correction and feedback, especially in writing and mathematics, but pupils are not involved enough in using the literacy and numeracy targets displayed in classrooms to review their work or to guide their next steps.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum provides a broad range of experiences that involves pupils in learning at first-hand. There is satisfactory provision for developing literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology skills. The school is currently working to extend opportunities for pupils to write at length in different styles and contexts. Pupils learn to work collaboratively and independently, preparing them soundly for their future economic well-being. French is being introduced from Year 3. Themed weeks such as a music and sound week, visits locally and further afield, including a well-established residential visit to an outdoor pursuits centre, all enrich pupils' experiences. The good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education helps to ensure that they know how to be safe and healthy. The well attended clubs and variety of team sports with other schools add to pupils' enjoyment.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Staff provide good standards of care, guidance and support for pupils' personal development, particularly in promoting positive attitudes and good behaviour. Systems for ensuring pupils' safety and safeguarding their welfare meet current requirements. Provision for vulnerable pupils and those who have learning difficulties or disabilities is good. It is managed well and draws on a range of specialist expertise where necessary to assess and help train staff to meet these pupils' needs. Good arrangements exist to smooth pupils' induction to Reception and transition

to their next school. The school regularly checks on the academic progress that pupils make in key areas such as reading, writing and mathematics to help it identify and address potential underachievement. However, these central records are too fragmented and consequently cumbersome to use. They also lack long-term targets that could act as a benchmark for each pupil. Initiatives are currently underway to improve them.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Management responsibilities are distributed appropriately and staff work well together to promote the school's aims, Christian ethos and values. Day-to-day management is effective and the school runs smoothly and calmly. All teaching staff are involved in monitoring the school's performance, including teaching, and developing the school's provision, but some aspects of school improvement lack rigour. The school analyses its performance in national tests and other assessments carefully to help decide its priorities. Arrangements for monitoring and developing teaching quality are weaker. They lack consistency of approach and there is too little emphasis given to evaluating the impact of teaching on pupils' learning and progress. Staff plan for improvements through detailed action plans. Collectively, the school's improvement plan has clear strategies, but it lacks clear direction because there are too many priorities listed. Success criteria within the plans are too vague to enable governors, in particular, to check how well the school is progressing and to hold it adequately to account. In other respects, governors are supportive in guiding the school and fulfil their statutory duties.

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Annex A

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?	3
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?	3
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
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	2
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	2
The behaviour of learners	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	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
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?	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?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
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	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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

25 January 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Dove Holes Primary School, Buxton, SK17 8BJ

Thank you for the warm welcome that I received when I visited your school recently. I spoke with many of you and the information you gave me helped to confirm what your parents and staff had to say about the quality of education that you receive. I am writing to tell you about what I learned about your school.

The school provides you with a satisfactory education so that you make the progress that you should by the time you leave. Children new to the school receive a good start in their Reception Year. I was impressed by your good behaviour and the respect and care that you show each other. You enjoy taking responsibility. Those of you who are playground leaders and buddies to younger children do a good job in ensuring that everyone enjoys their time at school. Through your pupil council, you do a lot to help those less fortunate than yourselves; well done! There is plenty of fruit on hand at school daily and I was pleased to see that you make good choices to stay healthy and fit. Your teachers and other adults at the school look after you well and help you to mature into confident young people who work well together. You told me how much you enjoy the additional activities provided, especially the fun you have during the week's stay at an outdoor pursuits centre!

The staff and governors try hard to make things even better. They are currently trying to improve the quality of your writing. You can help them by using your targets to help you to review your work and to remind yourselves of what you need to do next. Teachers and teaching assistants do a good job of helping pupils who find learning more difficult, for example, in literacy or mathematics. I have asked Mr Raw to look more closely at how to make all the teaching as good as the best so that you can all make good progress. The staff and governors are also going to check carefully how well the school is improving in its priorities to ensure that things get better even faster.

With all good wishes for your future at Dove Holes Primary School.

Ray Jardine

Lead inspector