

The Donington Cowley Endowed Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120556
Local Authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	313669
Inspection dates	3–4 July 2008
Reporting inspector	Kenneth Thomas

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	220
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Gill Lunn
Headteacher	Mr J C Such
Date of previous school inspection	7 July 2003
School address	Towndam Lane Donington Spalding Lincolnshire PE11 4TR
Telephone number	01775820467
Fax number	01775821866

Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The Donington Cowley Endowed Primary School is an average size school. Attainment on entry, taken overall, is broadly average. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds, with a very small number from minority ethnic backgrounds. Virtually all pupils have English as their first language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well below average, as is the percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals. The school has a significant number of pupils joining or leaving other than at the normal admission or transition times.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The school judges its effectiveness to be good and inspectors agree. Concern for each child underpins pupils' good personal development. Good quality of care, guidance and support, along with the carefully planned curriculum, promote academic achievement and social development well and meet the wide range of pupils' needs. Pupils' educational experiences are considerably enriched by outstanding provision for music and the performing, visual and creative arts, together with an excellent range of extra-curricular activities. This is made possible by good leadership and management which focus strongly on the whole child, ensuring a well-rounded and balanced education. The school provides good value for money and has good capacity for continued improvement.

Pupils' achievement is good. When children enter Reception their attainment is broadly in line with the expected levels. Because the quality of teaching is good, overall standards rise to be well above national averages by the time pupils leave school. This provides a good foundation for their future economic well-being. At the end of Key Stage 2 in 2007, standards in English, while above average, were below the high standards achieved in mathematics and science. Through systematic self-evaluation, the need to raise standards in writing has been identified as the key to further raising standards in English. Class teachers have implemented a number of well-considered strategies. Consequently, standards in English have improved to those of the other core subjects in the unvalidated 2008 results.

Pupils' good personal development is most evident in their confident and responsible approach to their work, where, whether in groups or independently, they seek out information and solve problems. They feel safe and secure because of the good quality support and guidance staff provide. Pupils enjoy their education and their behaviour is good. They understand the value of healthy lifestyles and make excellent contributions to the school and wider communities. This is most clearly seen in the numerous high quality musical performances, in a variety of community activities, and the many charitable events in which pupils' engage.

The overwhelming majority of parents are positive about the school. Many praise the good standards of education, with one typically stating that the 'school has provided all one could wish for'. Governors are also very supportive. However, the effectiveness of the governing body has been significantly weakened by the recent departure from the area of several of the more experienced governors.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The overall effectiveness of the Foundation Stage is good. Children experience a very happy start to their school life and as a result thrive in a stimulating, safe learning environment. They make good progress towards achieving the early learning goals and by the end of the Foundation Stage virtually all children have met or exceeded these. The good range of interesting and exciting learning activities inside the classroom and the attractive outdoor area ensures that children have fun while they learn. Children learn to co-operate with each other and develop positive attitudes, which equip them well for their school lives. Good leadership and management are seen in the strong teamwork and in the progress made by the children. Regular checks on children's progress support their personal development. As a result they quickly become independent learners with developing self-confidence.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that there is a full complement of governors and that they are able to capably fulfil their roles as critical friends.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

From starting points that are broadly average in terms of national expectations, children make good progress in all areas of learning the Foundation Stage. Good progress continues through Key Stage 1 and is reflected in standards that are consistently well above the national average at the end of Year 2. Overall standards are also well above average at the end of Year 6 and represent good achievement when standards on entry are taken into account. In relation to the national picture, the 2007 test results in English, although above average, were below those obtained in mathematics and science. Strategies to further improve writing standards have raised these results in the 2008 tests. Standards in music and the performing and creative arts are high. All groups of pupils, including those who join the school part way through and those with particular learning needs, make equally good progress. The school sets, and generally achieves, appropriately challenging targets.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

In this calm and happy community pupils develop good relationships with each other and with adults. Pupils are caring towards others and there is a strong spiritual element to the many creative activities in which they engage and in the development of their appreciation of the beauty in the natural world around them. They know how to lead healthy lives and there is a high participation in sporting activities. Behaviour is good and pupils say they feel safe in school. Most pupils enjoy learning and are prepared to work hard. Attendance is average, mainly because of family holidays taken during term time. Pupils take the responsibilities given to them seriously and make an excellent contribution to the life of the school and the wider community. Through these and many other activities, they gain skills that are the basis of responsible citizenship and provide a good foundation for their future well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Enthusiastic staff who are willing to try out new ideas and approaches to learning are key to the good progress pupils are making. Strong features of all lessons are good planning and assessment, and very effective classroom management. These promote good behaviour and effective small group work. In most lessons, there are high levels of challenge and sharp, incisive questioning is used to assess pupils' understanding, share ideas and shape pupils' learning. The use of interesting resources and activities enlivens lessons and, as one pupil said, 'our teachers make learning fun but still make sure we do our work well'. In a few lessons the pace is slowed because introductory activities are too long and pupils spend too much time listening to the teacher. Teaching assistants are a valuable asset and work effectively to support pupils with particular learning needs.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is rigorous in promoting good basic skills. It focuses strongly on pupils becoming inquiring learners and taking growing responsibility for their own learning. The curriculum has recently been reorganised to develop more extensive connections between subjects. These come through a series of topics, which better match the needs and interests of pupils. The changes are well-conceived and feature prominently the use of information and communication technology but are yet to impact fully on pupils' learning and achievement. The curriculum is significantly enriched by outstanding provision for the performing, visual and creative arts. Pupils also benefit from participation in Shakespearean productions, Morris dancing, the school orchestra, choir and an excellent range of sporting and other extra-curricular activities. Good links with other organisations and schools mean that projects and visits broaden the experiences of gifted and talented pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides good quality pastoral care for all pupils. Adults know pupils and many of their families well and are alert to pupils' needs. Pupils learn in a safe environment where relationships are good. Those who find learning difficult receive good support from teachers and teaching assistants and their progress is closely monitored. There are rigorous procedures for child protection, risk assessments and for medical and emergency aid. The school works closely with outside agencies to ensure that pupils who need extra help receive the necessary support. In most classes, pupils' progress is well monitored by good tracking procedures. Pupils know their individual targets and have a clear understanding of how to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The very effective leadership of the headteacher and his deputy, with good support from others with leadership roles, ensure that this is an inclusive, friendly community. The school has a clear sense of direction because self-evaluation, involving both senior and middle leaders, is effective. As a result, senior staff understand the strengths and weaknesses of the school well, and are able to pinpoint where improvements are most needed. All staff benefit from continuing professional development and this is well planned to tackle any weaknesses. This, together with exceptionally good teamwork amongst all staff, is having a positive impact on standards and equips the school well for further improvement. However, because several governors have recently moved from the area, the governing body is significantly under strength. This means that, although the remaining governors are very supportive, there are barely enough of them to allow the governing body to fulfil its strategic role in guiding and challenging aspects of the school's work.

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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?	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	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ 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

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	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
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	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

7 July 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Donington Cowley Endowed Primary School, Donington, PE11 4TR.

Following our visit to inspect your school, I am now writing to tell you what we found out. Before I do, I would like to say thank you for making us feel so welcome and making our visit one that we will remember for a long time. We have told your teachers how you were all so helpful and polite. Through our discussions with you, it was good to hear how much you enjoy school, the after-school clubs, and other activities that are available for you. We particularly enjoyed your singing in assembly, listening to the orchestra and watching the rehearsal for *The Tempest*. It was clear to us that these activities are a very special part of Donington Cowley Primary School.

Our main finding is that this is a good school and one that is helping you to do well. You told us how, in most of your lessons, teachers and other staff make learning challenging but fun, and this helps you to make good progress. By the end of Year 6, you achieve well in English, mathematics and science.

You know that your headteacher, governors and all of the adults who work with you want you to do as well as you possibly can and help the school to become even better. The school governors play an important part in this, but because some have moved away from Donington, there are not as many governors as there should be. We have asked the school to recruit more governors to fill the vacancies.

You have a very important part to play in the school's success. Having met you, we know you will all want to try your very best to help your teachers. Through your good behaviour, hard work and the care you show each other, together with willingness to take on responsibility, you all help to make this a really happy school.

With our best wishes for your future

Yours sincerely

Dr Kenneth C Thomas Lead inspector