

Deanshanger Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121813
Local Authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	314108
Inspection dates	26–27 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Graeme Bassett

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	373
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tracey Pearson
Headteacher	Stuart Churchill
Date of previous school inspection	20 October 2003
School address	The Green Deanshanger Milton Keynes MK19 6HJ
Telephone number	01908 268920
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This much-larger-than-average school draws most of its pupils from the immediate neighbourhood of Deanshanger and from nearby Milton Keynes. Most pupils are White British, with a small number from minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average. Children's attainment on entry to the Foundation Stage has fallen over the past few years and is currently below expected levels, especially in their communication, language and literacy skills and in their development of calculating skills in numeracy. The school has a Basic Skills award and Healthy School status.

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 with several exceptional features. The headteacher leads and manages the school excellently and because of this outstanding contribution, the quality of education, including standards and achievement, has improved effectively since the last inspection. Accurate and rigorous analysis of the work of the school, involving all staff and governors, ensures that challenging targets are set. The impact of these targets upon improvement is evaluated very effectively. Actions that follow make certain that performance in all areas of the school continues to improve. Governors carry out their responsibilities very well and give good support to the staff and pupils. Good teaching and learning result in standards being above average, and with achievement being good by the end of Year 6, most pupils are doing as well as they can. Because of the good provision in the Foundation Stage, children settle well, make good progress and most are working securely within standards expected by the time they enter Year 1. Currently, standards in Year 2 are broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics, and pupils make good progress, especially in reading and writing. In Year 6, pupils maintain good progress and standards are above average in English, mathematics and science.

Pupils enjoy lessons because teachers know their subjects well and plan interesting work, especially through themes such as 'Tudor times' in Years 4. Good use is made of information and communication technology (ICT), with motivational use of interactive whiteboards, video clips and the Internet. However, there are occasions when teachers do not plan a wide enough range of tasks to challenge all the pupils when they regroup into ability classes for English and mathematics. Some of the more able pupils in each ability class are not always challenged enough, particularly in mathematics.

The curriculum is outstanding and is very strong in the development of the arts and ICT, where standards are high. Valuable and purposeful cross-subject links are an excellent feature of the curriculum and pupils successfully transfer their above average writing standards to work in subjects such as history and religious education and in the use of ICT. The school provides excellent opportunities for pupils to join out-of-lesson clubs and to partake in visits that enhance their learning. The contribution pupils make to the local community and especially the links with the local secondary school and the allotment association are very strong and rightly valued by the school as assets that support pupils' learning very well. The dedication of all staff ensures that all pupils are valued. All adults set good examples and give good care, support and guidance that strongly influence pupils' good personal development and well-being. Pupils' attitudes are very positive and they willingly offer help to one another. Behaviour is good overall throughout the school. Pupils are very aware of how to stay safe and how to avoid taking unnecessary risks. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and most have a good understanding of how other people live. The whole-school tracking of each pupil's long-term progress is good and reliable. The end-of-year targets for each pupil are used effectively to check that they are making the expected progress. However, teachers do not always involve pupils enough in the setting and reviewing of their personal targets and do not check that pupils respond to written comments in their books.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The teaching and curriculum planning in the Foundation Stage are good. Staff give good care, support and guidance to all children and make certain that they quickly settle into their routines.

Children cooperate well during directed tasks and when working independently. Comprehensive records enable each child's progress to be tracked. Records show that most children have many weaknesses in their reading, writing and calculating skills and at present few exceed the expected standards.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the planning to make certain that all pupils are challenged enough to ensure that they all do as well as they should, especially when they are regrouped into ability classes for mathematics.
- Improve the involvement of pupils in setting and reviewing their personal targets, and ensure that they respond to written comments so that it is clear that they understand how well they are doing and what they need to do next.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The good progress seen in the Foundation Stage continues throughout Years 1 and 2 and is especially evident in the accelerated development of pupils' reading and writing skills. Currently, standards in Year 2 are broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics, and in Year 6, where progress continues to be good, they are above average in English, mathematics and science. Cross-subject links clearly promote higher standards and pupils' enthusiasm for writing. This is particularly clear in the animated stories written and produced by pupils in Year 6, who use movie technology and achieve standards in their descriptive writing and ICT that are high. However, some of the more able pupils in each ability class for mathematics do not always do as well as they should. Although progress is better this year, this was also apparent last year when pupils' progress in mathematics was not as good as that in English and science.

Teaching assistants and teachers support pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities very well both in the class and in small groups so that they make good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' attitudes to their work are good and the above average attendance and punctuality reflect this enthusiasm well. Relationships between most pupils are good. Nearly all demonstrate a good understanding of right and wrong. Younger pupils benefit from the occasional links with an older pupil for reading activities. Occasionally, a few pupils have minor disagreements and display more immature conduct in the playground. The actions of staff quickly resolve these incidents. All areas of pupils' personal development regarding 'Every Child Matters' are well developed. Pupils make an excellent contribution to the school community and to the village neighbourhood. They are prepared well for the next stage in their education and the world of work. Pupils have a good understanding of the need to adopt a healthy lifestyle, although they still admit to enjoying sweets and crisps in their lunchboxes. Pupils are knowledgeable about different religions around the world. They develop a good understanding of the arts through the school orchestra, choir and drama productions. An active school council makes outstanding contributions to school life and helps to improve facilities.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy their work because teachers know their subjects well, establish a purposeful working atmosphere in their classes, and establish good working relationships with their pupils. Good use is made of praise, encouragement and rewards to improve and maintain pupils' willingness to learn. Teachers make good use of question-and-answer routines, enabling pupils to give well-thought-out and sensible answers. Pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, receive good support during lessons to help them understand what they need to do next. However, some lessons do not include a wide enough range of tasks to challenge all pupils. When pupils regroup according to ability for English and mathematics, teachers sometimes misread the full range of ability within the class and often set the same task to all pupils.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The school's curriculum is extremely well organised to stimulate pupils' interests. Pupils say they enjoy coming to school to learn because their lessons are fun. This is evident from their enthusiasm when pursuing investigational work in mathematics. The cross-subject links establish a meaningful style of learning that enables pupils to apply their reading, writing and ICT skills very well. The introduction of a modern foreign language and the newly revised curriculum for literacy and numeracy are well underway. The school has embarked upon new strategies that are raising reading and writing standards and currently children in Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 make better progress than in the previous year.

Provision of extra-curricular activities is excellent. Visits and residential visits effectively enhance pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pastoral care and guidance are good and all pupils are included in all that the school does. All reasonable measures are taken to ensure pupils' safety and protection. There are good links with outside agencies and pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are supported very well. Parents are fully supportive of the school and make a good contribution to their children's education, often helping with reading and other activities in school. Displays value pupils' work, are very colourful and stimulating and echo the imaginative development of spacious buildings and exciting grounds. Academic support and guidance are good. Classroom assistants are especially effective with their support for different groups of pupils, such as those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Assessment tracking of each pupil's long-term progress is good and reliable records are used frequently to make sure that all pupils remain on course to reach their predicted standards at the end of each year. Although this element of tracking pupils' development is good, pupils are not yet involved enough in setting and reviewing their own day-to-day targets. Teachers do not check that pupils respond to the written comments in their books and consequently they cannot be certain that pupils know how well they are doing or what they need to do to improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher provides excellent leadership and management. The school runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis. Responsibilities for developing leadership and management are delegated very well and senior members of staff and subject leaders working alongside the headteacher and governors monitor and evaluate the school's performance. The school's evaluation of its work is accurate and all staff understand the objectives in the school's development plan. Pupils and staff are set challenging targets to continue the improvements in standards and achievement. Some subject leaders are new to their appointments and the school is aware that their roles need further development through training but, nevertheless, clear action plans are established for all subjects.

The governors are knowledgeable, well organised and fully committed to raising standards and achievement. They carry out their responsibilities well and maintain a prudent watch over the budget. Leadership and management plan to make good use of additional funding generated by the increase in pupil numbers to increase resources and facilities.

Areas for improvement at the last inspection are fully completed. With outstanding guidance from the headteacher and overall good leadership and management of other staff and governors, the school continues to improve.

For example, new strategies for teaching reading and writing are proving successful in increasing the progress of pupils in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. The school has good capacity for further improvement in the future.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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?	1
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	2
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?	1
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

28 November 2007

Dear Children Inspection of Deanshanger Community Primary School, Deanshanger, Milton Keynes, MK19 6HJ

Thank you for helping us when we recently visited your school. We enjoyed meeting you and finding out about your school. We found that your school provides you with a good education and that you do some very exciting things. There is a good team spirit in your school and it is a happy place.

- These are the things that are particularly strong in your school:
- Those who lead and manage your school have very clear ideas of how to bring about improvements and, as a result, it is a good school with outstanding features.
- Your headteacher provides excellent leadership and management to the school.
- Throughout the school, you make good progress and by Year 6 your work is above average.
- Your work in ICT is excellent and very exciting, especially when you make movies and newspapers.
- You are all developing good attitudes towards your work and towards each other; you have a good understanding about how to keep safe and how to remain healthy.
- Your work in the local village is outstanding and we are very impressed with your allotment.
- You are very polite and your behaviour is good, although a few of you find it difficult at times to behave well in the playground.
- Staff look after you and care for you very well.
- The teaching is good overall and teachers plan interesting tasks for you.
- The links that the school makes between subjects make your learning more interesting and meaningful. There are still some ways in which your school could be better. We have asked your headteacher and governors to:
 - Ensure the work you are given in lessons is at the right level to ensure that all of you do as well as you can, especially when you regroup for maths.
 - Involve you more when your targets are set and reviewed and to make sure you respond to the comments your teachers make in your books so that they can check that you understand what you are doing. Once again, thank you for your cooperation. You can help by asking your teachers how you can make your work better.

Graeme Bassett Lead inspector

28 November 2007

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Graeme Bassett
Lead inspector