

Dogsthorpe Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110719
Local Authority	City of Peterborough
Inspection number	322299
Inspection dates	8–9 July 2008
Reporting inspector	Alan Alder HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Infant
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	242
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Headteacher	Mrs Gwyneth Mantom
Date of previous school inspection	16 January 2007
School address	Central Avenue Dogsthorpe Peterborough PE1 4LH
Telephone number	01733 566849
Fax number	01733 349208

Age group	4–7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's inspectors and one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

When Dogsthorpe Infant School was inspected in January 2007, it was judged to require special measures.

The school serves an area of higher than average disadvantage. When pupils start school in Reception, their attainment is below average. There is a higher than average proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups. There are also higher than average proportions of pupils who speak English as an additional language, are eligible for free school meals or have learning difficulties. The proportion who have statements of special educational need is lower than the national average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures. There has been a significant improvement since the last inspection. Fundamental to this has been the work of the deputy headteacher in establishing a means of recording pupils' progress, based upon frequent and regular assessments. These assessments are accurate and the information is used to ensure that those who are falling behind are given the support they need. In addition to this, the leaders for literacy and numeracy are well involved in monitoring teaching and learning in their subjects. They observe lessons and look at pupils' work. This has resulted in them providing, or arranging, training for their colleagues on helping pupils to improve their learning. Overall leadership and management are satisfactory. The judgement of the school and the local authority that teaching is satisfactory, is confirmed by the inspection. All lessons observed were at least satisfactory and a reasonable proportion were good. It is also confirmed by the quality of work in pupils' books and by the progress they are making. Teaching is more purposeful than previously. There is a greater range of short, well-designed practical activities to help pupils' learning and which also increase their motivation. In general, lessons are well-planned. Some literacy lessons do not have sharp enough objectives, however.

There is a strong drive to improve standards throughout the school. The evaluation of the school's work is generally thorough. In some areas, though, it lacks detail. For example, there is not sufficient analysis of how well different groups in the school are progressing both academically and in their personal development. The fact that the extent of the use of 'seclusion', for when pupils' behaviour is not as good as it should be, shows a difference between ethnic groups has not been noted by the school's leaders. This means that underlying causes have not been identified and where possible corrected. The evaluation of pupils' academic progress and the actions taken if it is not as good as it should be are having a good effect. The standards reached by the end of Year 2 are higher than for some years and are in line with national averages. However, the standards reached by pupils from some minority ethnic groups tend to be below that achieved by pupils overall. Nevertheless, the schools data shows that the pupils have made satisfactory progress since the end of Reception and they have almost all achieved their targets. The preparation for pupils' next stage of education is satisfactory, though there is no assessment of pupils' knowledge and skills in information and communication technology (ICT). This means that there are insufficient means of ensuring that pupils are making the progress they should be.

Pupils say that they feel safe in school. There is some occasional bullying, but it is dealt with effectively. Teachers ensure that behaviour is satisfactory both in lessons and around school. The school's survey of parents shows that the great majority are happy with behaviour, as they are with pupils' enjoyment of school. Their enjoyment is satisfactory, as are their attendance and punctuality. Despite the increasingly stringent measures being taken when pupils are unnecessarily absent, attendance rates have fallen this year. Pupils are healthy. They are aware of the need to eat healthily, and the school's provision of meals helps them to do this. The amount of time given to PE in the curriculum is below the national recommendation. However, this is compensated for by the use of play equipment and the deployment of sports leaders at lunchtime and the number of extra curricular sports clubs. The curriculum is satisfactory and is adapted reasonably well to take into account what pupils need to develop their learning.

They make a good contribution to the community through, for example, the school council and the raising of money for charity.

Pupils are well-cared for. Statutory requirements for their safeguarding are complied with. The arrangements to help them to transfer to junior school are thorough.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

When children begin Reception, their attainment is below average, particularly in numeracy and literacy. By the end of the year, more than half reach the expected level in literacy and almost three quarters in numeracy. This reflects the good teaching they receive. There is a good emphasis on learning. For example, a teacher's evaluation of one lesson was that the children had not properly understood the work. The topic was returned to the next day and this enabled them to make the planned progress. Children enjoy their work and develop the ability to work well with others as well as by themselves. They share resources and take turns amicably when learning together, such as when playing counting and adding games on the computer or interactive whiteboards. Their enjoyment is helped by a good variety of practical activities which stimulates their interest. They are safe and well-cared for. Parents are kept well-informed about the progress their children are making.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve pupils' writing, for example by ensuring that all lessons have a clear purpose.
- Develop evaluation processes to ensure staff know more precisely how the work of the school helps all pupils develop academically and personally so that they can make any necessary improvements.
- Improve pupils' attendance and punctuality.
- Ensure that pupils' progress in ICT is assessed regularly so actions can be taken if they fall behind.

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

At the beginning of Year 1, pupils' standards are generally in line with those found nationally, as they are at the end of Year 2. This indicates that they make satisfactory progress in that time. This picture is confirmed by inspectors' observations in lessons, and an examination of pupils' work. The school's end of Year 2 assessments, which have been verified as accurate by the local authority, show there has been good improvement. This is especially true of writing, though this remains the weakest area. The national results for 2008 are not available at the time of the inspection, however reading, writing and mathematics results are all broadly average when compared with the results found nationally last year. Pupils with learning difficulties are making satisfactory progress, their results are best in mathematics.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils have positive attitudes to their learning, especially when they are clear about what they are learning and why. They respond well to short practical activities that contribute to their learning, such as those which use some of the mathematics equipment. Pupils listen to each other politely and make relevant responses to each others' contributions in lessons. The use of 'talk partners' helps pupils to relate sensibly to each other and pupils from all backgrounds work well together.

Pupils say that they enjoy school, though attendance is below average. The school is working hard and, with support from the local authority, is taking strong measures to improve it, but there has been a decline this year. While the school monitors pupils' lateness closely, its procedures are not yet resulting in improved punctuality.

Pupils say they feel safe, that although there is some occasional bullying, it is dealt with quickly. They are committed to healthy eating and enjoy the fruit and vegetables which the school provides at breaktime. They are involved with the community through, for example, the school council, which is involved in matters such as choosing playground equipment and raising money for charity.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Lessons generally have clear objectives which enable pupils to understand what is expected of them. However, in some writing lessons, the objectives are too general to guide pupils' learning as well as they should. When this occurs, work can focus too much on completing the task. Teachers plan in teams and thereby share successful strategies and ideas. This helps them present learning in interesting ways. Pupils are usually interested and attentive in lessons, helped by the range of strategies used. However, there is not enough attention given to extending the more able. Pupils respond very well to practical activities.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum meets statutory requirements. There is a reasonable amount of extra curricular activity, such as sports clubs. There is also a good emphasis on both morality and spirituality. This is developed through religious education and celebration, and also by giving good opportunities for pupils to appreciate and enjoy aspects of the natural world. The curriculum is adapted well to meet a variety of needs. For example, for some pupils there is additional time for literacy, and opportunities for some to improve their motor skills. In literacy there is a good emphasis on basic grammar, spelling and punctuation, but not on developing joined handwriting.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Marking of pupils' work is often good. Pupils are given clear guidance on how to improve their work. This is particularly the case in the marking of writing assessments in which teachers identify pupils' next learning steps precisely, focusing on the specific skill or strategy to be

developed. However, in lessons there are often not specific enough objectives to guide pupils' learning. There is no formal assessment of pupils' skills in ICT.

The use of data to identify pupils who are underachieving is a strength. While this is generally used well to allocate extra support to those who need it, some of the support provided does not target the area for improvement precisely enough.

There is an extensive range of activities to help pupils prepare for their move to the junior school. This includes using the school's breakfast club for families, run jointly with the junior school. In addition, vulnerable pupils go to the junior school each week, and all pupils visit at some stage to be read to by pupils in the junior school. Parents also say that the arrangements for joining the infant school are good.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

There has been a strong focus on developing teachers' skills and a good range of strategies has been employed to this end. There has been good support from the local authority. One area which has been given attention, the accurate use of phonics by pupils, has still not yet brought about sufficient improvement.

Monitoring and evaluation have improved. However, support of pupils with learning difficulties is not specific enough. There is not enough done to check how well pupils from different ethnic groups prosper, for example in terms of academic achievement, and in personal development such as attendance and behaviour.

Governors know the school well, work hard on its behalf and are becoming increasingly challenging.

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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	3

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
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	3
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
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?	3

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	2
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

10 July 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Dogsthorpe Infants School, Peterborough PE1 4LH

Thank you for your help when we visited your school. We spoke with quite a lot of you, in lessons, in the playground or in the meeting we had with some of you.

You told us that you feel safe in school. Bullying usually stops when you tell a teacher. Your school teaches you well about health. It helps you learn about healthy foods and to take exercise.

You are learning better than when we last visited. Teaching is better. Your school works harder to help you to learn. There are some things your school can do to help you learn more. One is to make sure you all attend regularly and get to school on time. You can help with this! Your school should also make sure it is checking how well you are doing in ICT so that it can be sure you are doing as well as possible. The work you do in writing is not quite as good as in reading or in numeracy. Your school should try to improve this. The last thing is that it should be more clear about what works well and what does not, so that it knows what to work on in the future.

Best wishes for your future,

Alan Alder

Her Majesty's Inspector.