

Denton CE School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120518
Local Authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	322302
Inspection dates	24–25 June 2008
Reporting inspector	Nada Trikic 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	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	63
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Julie Harrod
Headteacher	Mrs Sheriden Edwards
Date of previous school inspection	13 February 2007
School address	Church Street Denton Grantham Lincolnshire NG32 1LG
Telephone number	01476 870649
Fax number	01476 870649

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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

Denton is much smaller than most primary schools. It serves the local community, neighbouring villages and the town of Grantham. All children are from White British backgrounds. The number of children entitled to free school meals is very low. The proportion of children with learning difficulties and disabilities is well above the national average.

The school has gained Investor in People, Activemark and Basic Skills awards.

When the school was last inspected in February 2007, it was judged to require special measures.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

Denton is a good and rapidly improving school. The headteacher has provided strong strategic leadership, effective management, stability, drive and vision to secure rapid and focused improvement since the time of the last inspection. She has made excellent use of external support to address weaknesses in assessment, teaching, leadership and governance to ensure capacity for good and continuous improvement. Expectations and morale are high, and children respond well to exciting learning challenges, a good and expanding curriculum, and high quality guidance to support next steps in learning.

Crucial to this improvement is the meticulous approach to assessment for each child. Rigorous assessment and moderation systems are in place to set challenging targets and track progress, and to identify learners requiring additional support to boost skills in reading, writing and number. Assessment of learning in other subjects has commenced but is less well developed. The quality of teaching and learning overall is good because teachers are mapping children's progress against targets regularly to inform lesson planning to reflect the assessment of individual needs. In addition, the involvement of children in setting learning objectives and assessment of their work, particularly for older learners is increasing responsibility for learning. As a result of these actions children have exceeded the above average standards reached in 2007 at the end of Key Stage 1. Significant weaknesses in standards and achievement highlighted in Key Stage 2 at the last inspection arising from a legacy of disruption and inconsistent teaching have been resolved. Current standards at the end of Key Stage 2 are above average, a significant improvement on recent years, representing good pupil progress.

The strong inclusive ethos permeates the school as reflected in good personal development, and good quality care, support and guidance. This is evident in positive relationships, good attendance, behaviour and attitudes that contribute well to a very vibrant and thriving learning environment. Outstanding partnerships with the church, local schools and support services ensure that all children, including the most vulnerable receive high quality levels of care and opportunities to extend experiences within the community. The curriculum places a very strong emphasis on developing literacy, numeracy, and scientific skills through careful planning, well focused teaching, and opportunities provided in other subjects. A cross-curricular themed approach is developing well to help learners to make connections between subjects. However the school recognises that this can be developed further, to strengthen creativity, to reinforce key skills, and to extend opportunities for independent learning.

Leadership at all levels is now good. Subject and wider leadership team roles and responsibilities have been clarified and strengthened. Subject leaders relish the challenges now provided by secure monitoring information to support improvement, as demonstrated by rising standards, good curriculum planning and progression guidance. The governing body has benefited from training and support from additional local authority governors to develop expertise. As a result, governors' contribution to the school's improvement has increased greatly; they now offer good levels of support and challenge. Regular visits to monitor and evaluate priorities for improvement have led to a significant improvement in governors' knowledge and understanding of the school's work.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Whether they start in Nursery or Reception, children get a good start to their education in the Foundation Stage. Induction arrangements are a strength of current provision, which along with high quality care, ensures that children settle quickly and engage happily in their learning. The school has improved the way it evaluates children's attainments, both on entry to school and throughout the Foundation Stage, and staff use this information well to promote effective learning. Careful joint planning with the combined Year 1 and 2 class allows them to ease the transition from Foundation Stage to Key Stage 1. By matching provision closely to children's learning needs, they promote good progress across the ability range. Children's learning is based on practical, 'hands on' activities, with lots of opportunities for imagination and play, and is particularly effective in the outdoor environment. As a result, children's achievement is good. By the time children move to Year 1 they are achieving at least what is expected for their age.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure curriculum plans create further opportunities to link learning between subjects, reinforce key skills, and promote independent learning.
- Extend established assessment and tracking systems to all subjects to ensure a consistent approach to teaching and learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children enter the Foundation Stage with a wide spread of ability and progress well. In 2007 standards reached at the end of Key Stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics were above average supported by stronger performance of girls. Weaknesses in boys reading accounted for a dip in overall standards from 2006. End of Key Stage 1 assessment for 2008 indicate well above average standards for boys and girls in all skill areas, a significant improvement on recent years. This results from greater emphasis on regular assessment, monitoring to track progress and good tailoring of learning activities to meet individual needs.

Successful action has tackled the significant underachievement and rapid decline in standards in Key Stage 2. Effective intervention strategies, careful planning and regular pupil progress meetings ensure strong accountability and timely action to keep children on track. Standards have risen rapidly in English, mathematics and science because of this approach. The tracking of standards and achievement in other areas of the curriculum is developing.

Children with a range of learning difficulties and disabilities progress well and benefit equally from regular assessment, in addition to the targeted support and encouragement of teaching assistants. Children are responding well to high expectations and learning targets, and discuss their work and progress with greater confidence.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Children enjoy school; a fact reflected in attendance that has risen above the national average. Behaviour is good. Most children are attentive and try hard in lessons, although the unsettled behaviour of a small minority sometimes slows the pace of learning. Staff promote spiritual,

moral and social development effectively. Assemblies are times of joy and celebration. Most children act on their understanding of right and wrong and show care and respect for others. However, children do not currently learn enough about cultural diversity in modern Britain.

Relationships are strong. Children work and play happily in groups that are mixed in terms of age, ability or gender. They fully understand the hazards that face young people and know how to keep safe. Enthusiasm for sport and a positive response to the school council's fair trade tuck shop show that they recognise the need to keep fit and healthy. Children's keen sense of responsibility is evident in their contributions to the school council and in the work of play leaders. Children also contribute positively to the local community, for example by participating in May Day celebrations or submitting plans to improve local amenities. Good standards of literacy and numeracy, along with positive attitudes and values, equip children well for their future lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Good relationships create an enjoyable and purposeful learning environment. The quality of teaching and learning has improved significantly because of effective recruitment and the drive to accelerate pupil progress. This is supported well by structured opportunities for paired and group work to engage learners, and to make them think about their work. For example, in Year 5 and 6 children regularly assess and discuss the level of their work with each other. The concept of 'editing to improve' is a routine feature in these lessons resulting in high levels of confidence. Children are highly motivated, enthusiastic and keen to improve. Classroom displays invariably provide a rich resource for learning with key vocabulary, facts and guidance for writing.

In some satisfactory lessons, work does not always take full account of learners' prior knowledge, and occasionally a few children become unsettled. Learning slows when learning objectives are not expressed in 'child friendly' language, and when understanding of tasks is not checked sufficiently. However, good procedures are in place to check the quality of lessons and appropriate support and training provided to strengthen consistency.

Teaching assistants work flexibly and very skilfully across classes, and engage children actively in learning tasks. Careful planning with teachers ensures good provision to support the learning of targeted individuals and groups. Classes benefit from the regular support of parent helpers.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Partnership with local schools to provide access to specialist knowledge and facilities such as in information and communications technology, science and physical education (PE) have added breadth and quality to the curriculum. Effective adjustments meet the needs of learners such as planning for guided reading, problem solving and scientific enquiry to ensure a consistent approach to delivery.

Children enjoy the developing cross-curricular themed approach because it makes learning relevant and includes fun 'hands on' activities such as in science. In addition, whole school learning events, such as the observation of chicks hatching makes learning inclusive, exciting and enjoyable. Good provision for personal, social, health, and spiritual development means

that children are aware of global issues, and their responsibilities for health, safety, and the environment.

The provision of physical education has improved through off-site facilities to enable children to take part in a wider range of sporting and PE activities. The curriculum is enriched further by regular visitors and visits, and the opportunity to learn French. A good range of extra-curricular activities, particularly in art, music and PE are appreciated by parents and children.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Children thrive in the school's caring atmosphere. Indeed, one child spoke of the school as 'one big family'. Children feel secure because all staff attend to their needs and readily provide guidance in matters of personal development. Checks on the suitability of staff and procedures for child protection are thorough and meet current requirements. Training for staff and governors is up-to-date. Children say that bullying has been eliminated and the school's records show that serious behavioural or racist incidents are rare. Risk assessments are detailed, although checks by governors to ensure that staff carry out some agreed policies conscientiously are only just beginning to take place.

Constructive marking and on-going dialogue ensure that older learners get effective guidance on how to improve their work. Children in Year 5 and 6 increasingly set their own targets and evaluate their progress towards them. This arrangement works well because these children set themselves suitable challenges and are well-motivated to succeed. Learners' role in this process is developing well in other year groups. However, staff turnover, in lower Key Stage 2 means that it has yet to be embedded to impact fully on learning and achievement. Support assistants give sensitive support to children who find learning difficult and enable most to progress at a similar good rate to others.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school is emerging from a period of accelerated improvement driven by the headteacher. Strong leadership, the promotion of good teamwork, and access to quality training have ensured that skills have been developed and refined effectively linked to assessment, teaching, learning, and subject leadership.

Adults know children extremely well because of the very effective systems for gathering information that encourages all round development. Everyone works tremendously hard, and in partnership to provide a very open, caring and inclusive experience. The success of the school's leadership is reflected in the children's' enthusiasm for learning, their positive attitudes, and the brisk pace of progress. Parents appreciate the warm, friendly and welcoming ethos, and opportunities to contribute to their children's learning.

The quality of self evaluation is accurate, and based on a good range of monitoring activities including effective tracking of pupil progress, observation of teaching, planning and work scrutiny. The published monitoring timetable agreed between the headteacher, subject leaders and governing body is providing regular opportunities to discuss progress on school priorities, set against milestones to measure progress. This is proving to be an effective mechanism to

sustain improvement. The school is constantly looking to improve and innovate, and there is no hint of complacency in its work.

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	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

26 June 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Denton CE School, Denton NG32 1LG

Thank you for being so welcoming and helpful when I inspected your school recently, and during my previous visits. Your friendly smiles and cheerful greetings have made it a pleasure to spend time in your school.

I was very impressed with your positive attitudes to work, good behaviour, and the way everyone got along. Your school is a busy place and you told me that there are always many exciting things to do. The play leaders are doing a good job and making play and lunchtimes more active and fun. You clearly enjoy school and appreciate the care and support you receive from all staff and helpers.

Denton is a good and improving school. The headteacher, staff and governors have all worked extremely hard to support your progress in reading, writing, numeracy and science, and to provide new and exciting opportunities for learning in other subjects. They are checking on your progress very carefully and making sure that lessons help you to reach even higher standards. I could see that you enjoyed your lessons and the chance to talk about your learning with a partner or in groups. Class 3 are always ready for a challenge whether it is debating animal testing or investigating battery powered vehicles. The younger children were having a great time finding out about caterpillars, and enjoying the outdoor area. I am sorry that I was not visiting when you were observing and caring for the baby chicks.

Many of you are very clear about your learning targets and levels in literacy and numeracy, and what you need to do to improve. This means that you can take more responsibility for your own learning. The school has been asked to extend this to all subjects such as history and music. To be even more successful the school is going to plan more projects and topics that involve a range of subjects and activities, with opportunities for you to show what you can do working on your own.

The school council is making a very good contribution to life at Denton and I am sure it will continue to make suggestions to improve the school further, and plans for activities and charity events to benefit others.

My very best wishes for the future.

Nada Trikić

Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools