

Dunstall Hill Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104335
Local Authority	Wolverhampton
Inspection number	324023
Inspection dates	18–19 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Helen Morrison

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	247
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Holmes
Headteacher	Bethan Francis
Date of previous school inspection	20 June 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Dunstall Avenue Wolverhampton WV6 0NH
Telephone number	01902 556417
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

Most of the pupils who attend Dunstall Hill Primary School live locally in an area where many families experience significant socio-economic disadvantage. A high proportion of pupils are eligible for free school meals. Nearly all pupils, many of whom are in the early stages of learning English, are from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities is increasing and is now close to the national average. There are significantly more boys than girls in some classes. Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage in the Nursery with skills well below age-related expectations.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Dunstall Hill Primary School is a good school. It welcomes pupils from many different backgrounds and helps them to settle quickly so they become confident and successful learners. It celebrates the diverse traditions, heritage and beliefs of the school community and uses them as a valuable resource to enrich pupils' learning. This is reflected in the display of pupils' work around the school which shows that the good curriculum provides a wide range of learning experiences, with a particular strength in sport.

Dunstall Hill's motto, 'Together everyone achieves more', is a strong feature in the life of the school and pupils are rightly proud of the harmonious way those from diverse backgrounds work together. The good pastoral care pupils receive ensures that their personal development and well-being are promoted well. Pupils are polite and friendly, and welcome visitors with enthusiasm. They clearly enjoy school and want to do well because they feel safe and cared for as individuals and are given good support. Behaviour, both in lessons and around the school, is exemplary because good attitudes to learning are promoted and celebrated consistently by all. Parents are pleased with the way the school supports pupils' learning. As one parent said, 'My daughter enjoys school so much she misses it during the holidays.'

Pupils are also taught well, which means they build steadily from their low starting levels of skills and knowledge and as a result, they achieve well. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are eager to learn and want to show what they know and can do. The introduction of a structured programme for teaching letters and sounds has improved pupils' progress in reading and writing, although standards in writing remain below average. Pupils who have English as an additional language and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are supported well. However, more able pupils are not always given work that is challenging enough. Pupils make good progress as they move through the school and, by the time they leave Year 6, they reach average standards. Pupils' work is marked regularly but the positive comments teachers make do not always help pupils know what they need to do to improve.

The headteacher provides calm, steady leadership and, together with the school's senior leaders, sets high standards. Leaders have an accurate understanding of the areas in which further work is needed, although they tend to be modest in recognising the strengths of the school. Pupils' academic guidance is not as strong as their pastoral support. For example, the introduction of a new system to track pupils' progress against their targets is still developing but is beginning to help leaders raise attainment in writing. As a result, care, guidance and support are satisfactory rather than good. Steps already taken to raise standards demonstrate that there is good capacity to make further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Most pupils start the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills that are well below the levels usually seen for their age, especially in communication, language and literacy, and problem solving, reasoning and numeracy. Children of all abilities make good progress throughout the Nursery and Reception classes as a result of good teaching and support, although they do not meet the expected goals for learning by the time they start Year 1. The Early Years Foundation Stage gives children a good start to their time in the school. They settle in quickly and enjoy the wide range of activities provided. There is a strong emphasis on children's personal and

emotional development so that children feel happy and secure. As a consequence, they grow in independence, behave well and become active and confident learners. Leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good and the curriculum is well planned. Good records are kept of children's progress in each of the areas of learning. However, this information is not always well used to raise children's achievement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing by sharpening the tracking of pupils' progress so that activities, especially for the more able, are better matched to their abilities.
- Improve teachers' marking to ensure that all pupils know how to develop their learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

From their very low starting points, children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Boys and girls from different ethnic backgrounds achieve well and they leave school having reached broadly average standards. Pupils achieve satisfactorily in Key Stage 1 and standards have risen consistently, although they remain below average. At Key Stage 2, pupils make good progress to reach standards that are broadly average. The structured programme for teaching letters and sounds and the school's strategy for developing pupils' calculation skills have raised standards in English and mathematics, although attainment in writing is still too low. Throughout the school, pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because of the targeted support they are given. However, more able pupils are not always given work that is sufficiently challenging and data are not yet used consistently to track pupils' progress in writing.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and their behaviour throughout the school is outstanding. Relationships are racially harmonious and pupils care for one another very well, for example when older pupils act as peer supporters at break and lunchtimes. Pupils say they feel safe at school and that bullying is rare. Older pupils have a good understanding of internet safety. Pupils have an exceptionally good awareness of how to keep fit and healthy and of the importance of a good diet and regular exercise. They make good use of the wide range of opportunities to be physically active through the regular lunchtime 'huff and puff' sessions, after-school sports activities and by representing the school in competitions against other schools in the city and the region. Attendance has improved and is now satisfactory.

An active school council is helping to develop the school, for example through planning the gazebo. Pupils also make a good contribution to the wider community through collections for local and national charities. They develop sound basic skills in literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology which results in them being prepared satisfactorily for the next stage of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Lessons are interesting and, as a result of good teaching, pupils make good progress. Very good relationships between pupils and teachers give pupils the confidence to work independently and try out new ideas. Opportunities for pupils to discuss their ideas with a partner are used well throughout the school and encourage pupils to extend their thinking. For example, in one lesson pupils shared ideas about why email is a good method of communication. Interactive whiteboards are often used to motivate and interest pupils, such as in one lesson where pupils were enthralled to see pictures of a visit by police officers the previous day. Teaching assistants play an important role in providing good support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and for those learning English as an additional language. However more able pupils are not always challenged sufficiently.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is rich and provides a good range of learning experiences that are celebrated well in displays around the school. There is a strong focus on the basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics. The recent improvements, such as the school's strategy for developing pupils' calculation skills in mathematics and the structured programme for teaching letters and sounds, have begun to raise pupils' attainment. The school has rightly identified the need to focus on helping pupils to use and apply their writing skills in other subjects and providing further opportunities for them to solve mathematical problems. This work is in its early stages. The curricular provision meets the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those learning English as an additional language well. Sport is a strong feature of the curriculum, which is extended further by the wide range of after-school clubs provided for all pupils, from the very youngest to the oldest. A good range of visits and visitors contributes well to the curriculum so that pupils enjoy learning. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage benefit from a good curriculum, which results in their good progress.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school responds well to individual pupils' needs. Pupils say they like being at school 'because it is easy to make friends and is a fun place'. Relationships are very good. Pupils feel safe and secure, and, as one parent said, 'Staff are caring and welcoming.' Safeguarding and child protection procedures meet current government requirements. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those learning English receive good support and encouragement, and teaching assistants play an important part in helping them learn. The school has established good links with parents so that they can support pupils' learning, for example through workshops in literacy and numeracy.

Academic guidance is satisfactory. The tracking system records pupils' progress but is not currently used widely enough to enable teachers to plan activities that are always matched to pupils' learning needs. As a result, pupils' progress in writing is sometimes too slow and more able pupils are not always given work that is challenging enough. In addition, marking does not currently enable pupils to have a clear view of how well they are doing and how to improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school is led very well by the headteacher who provides a clear direction for the school. Her high expectations are shared by senior staff and this has enabled the school to make effective improvements and to raise standards. Pupils' progress has improved in mathematics and in writing, although there is still some way to go. The school sets challenging targets for pupils' attainment. However, the recently introduced system for tracking pupils' progress is not yet used rigorously enough to ensure that all pupils, particularly the more able, make as much progress as they should. Leaders assess the school's areas for improvement accurately but they do not always recognise its successes sufficiently. They ensure that a rich range of good resources enhances pupils' learning. Governors are supportive, well informed about the school and provide a satisfactory level of challenge. However they do not hold the school to account sufficiently for the standards pupils attain.

Community cohesion is promoted well. The school celebrates successfully the values and beliefs of the many traditions represented in the school community. It gives pupils a very good understanding and respect for the large range of cultures in Britain and the wider world. There are strong links with pupils' families, the local community and places of worship. Policies to promote equal opportunities and to eliminate discrimination are good.

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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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	1
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 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?	3

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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

22 June 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Dunstall Hill Primary School, Wolverhampton, WV6 0NH

Thank you for welcoming us to your school and showing us what you are learning. We were very impressed by your excellent behaviour and delighted that your cricket teams did so well in their tournament finals. Because you were so friendly, polite and helpful we found out quite a lot about your school.

- The school gives you a good education so you enjoy school and make good progress.
- Your headteacher leads the school well.
- Your teachers and teaching assistants work hard to make lessons interesting and provide you with lots of extra clubs and activities.
- You all get on very well together and care for one another.
- You know a lot about how to keep healthy and you enjoy sports.
- Your teachers care for you and look after you and so you feel safe.
- The children in the Nursery and Reception classes get a good start to their school life.
- Those of you who find work difficult and those who are learning English as an additional language are given lots of support so you make good progress.

To help your school get even better, we have asked your headteacher, staff and governors to do two things.

- Help you all, especially those who find learning easy, to write well by checking that you are given activities that challenge you.
- Make sure marking helps you to know how well you are doing and what you need to do to get better, so that everyone does as well as they can.

You can help your teachers do this by making sure you come to school regularly and by always doing your very best.

I wish you lots of success in the future.

Yours faithfully

Helen Morrison

Lead inspector