

Duffield The Meadows Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112690
Local Authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	325663
Inspection date	11 February 2009
Reporting inspector	Jane Melbourne HMI

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	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	307
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	Mr Alan Wisdish
Headteacher	Mrs Christine Watkins
Date of previous school inspection	12 January 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Park Road Duffield Derbyshire DE56 4GT

Age group	5–11
Inspection date	11 February 2009
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an Additional Inspector over one day. Inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- how well the school is closing the gap between the standards girls and boys achieve in writing and in raising the percentage of pupils achieving above average standards in English and science
- how effective the new creative curriculum is for foundation subjects
- what the school is doing to ensure that all teaching at the school is as good as the best
- the quality of the leadership and management across the school
- whether the school is embracing all of the welfare and learning and development requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage and if the leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage is really effective.

Evidence was gathered from observing lessons and pupils' work; scrutinising school documentation, analysing parents' questionnaire responses and records of pupils' achievement and progress. The team also held discussions with the headteacher, senior staff, governors and with pupils. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail but the inspection found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included, where appropriate, in the report.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average sized primary school. Attainment on entry to the Reception class is generally above that expected for children of this age, although this is variable between cohorts. The vast majority of pupils come from White British backgrounds, although there are a very small number from minority ethnic backgrounds and who speak English as an additional language. There are significantly fewer pupils than is typical eligible for free school meals. There is a well below average percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, although there is an average number of pupils with a statement for their special educational needs. Children are mostly taught in single age classes. There is an independently run pre-school and before and after-school provision on the site. These were subject to parallel inspections during the same week as the school inspection and separate reports were generated.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Duffield The Meadows Primary School provides a good standard of education and care for its pupils. There are some outstanding features. There has been an improvement in some aspects of the school's performance since the last inspection and it has successfully maintained its strengths. Points for improvement from the last report have been tackled successfully. Staff continually seek ways to further improve the quality of the provision, and are focused on aiming to raise the standards and achievement of each cohort. The school has correctly identified key issues for improvement with sensible priorities for action and timescales, which are already making a difference. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school and it continues to rise in popularity, as seen in its increasing roll and encouraging Early Years Foundation Stage intake.

Although cohorts vary, standards on entry to the school are usually slightly above what is expected nationally. All children are effectively supported to achieve the early learning goals by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage. By the end of Key Stages 1 and 2, the vast majority of pupils achieve standards in national tests that are above local and national averages. Those who need additional help with their learning or English language are identified quickly and are supported well to ensure that their achievement is as expected for their age. If they do not make the gains expected of them, the school is effective in seeking professional advice and in applying appropriate intervention strategies. Pupils consequently make good progress during their time at the school. Local authority and school data confirm that there is a continuing upward trend in standards at the end of Key Stage 1 with more pupils now achieving the higher, above average, levels. The school correctly recognised that children were not making enough progress in lower Key Stage 2 and are effectively addressing this. Because pupils' progress accelerates in upper Key Stage 2, the number of pupils achieving the expected levels at the end of Year 6 is again above local and national averages in most subjects. Accurate analysis of data revealed that standards in writing across the school were not as good as in reading. However, there has been a very successful whole school focus on writing, and this is now bearing fruit as standards are improving and the gap between boys and girls has narrowed. The school sets itself challenging targets and has high expectations for its pupils. Although pupils made good progress overall, as reflected in the standards of their work and the school's ongoing assessments, fewer than expected reached the highest levels in national tests at the end of Year 6 last year. Teachers are making greater use of assessment data to track pupils' progress and this, along with a continued drive towards improvement, is giving a determined steer to teaching and learning.

Pupils' personal development is outstanding. Their enjoyment of school is high and their attendance continues to be above, and often well above, average. They respond very well to the school's expectations for exemplary behaviour and older pupils genuinely care about the younger ones. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils feel safe and secure and know who to turn to for help when they need it. They have an excellent understanding of keeping healthy and adopt healthy eating, take regular exercise and participate in sports. The school council, team captains and playground buddies all make a positive contribution to the school community and take their responsibilities seriously. Pupils' good basic skills, proficiency with technology, and ability to work independently or as a group, are all helping to equip them well for the future.

The quality of teaching and learning is of consistently good quality and often it displays outstanding features. Teachers provide a thoroughly planned range of activities, usually taking account of pupils' different learning styles. Occasionally activities are not interesting enough, but lessons are always effective when staff come up with their own ideas and tailor the activities more specifically to the group's needs, accounting for pupils who learn quickly or more slowly than others. Staff mostly take account of pupils' prior learning and give many opportunities for them to apply their existing knowledge and learn independently. Learning objectives and expectations are always clear. Pupils are sure of their targets in English, although they sometimes forget them in mathematics. They know what they have to do to reach the next level when their work is marked in detail, but this does not happen enough in some classes. Pupils are well cared for and are well supported. The school is developing strategies whereby pupils assess their own work and they are becoming more accomplished in this when these opportunities are provided regularly.

The curriculum is good. Pupils receive their full curricular entitlement and a broad range of extra-curricular activities enhances the provision. Staff demonstrate commitment to developing the new 'creative curriculum', where pupils learn in multidisciplinary areas through topics. Although cross-curricular links are considered, occasionally not enough is made of reinforcing pupils' basic skills in every subject area, for example sufficiently extending pupils' writing in their topic work. Provision for physical education is good and families are encouraged to take part in before-school 'wake and shake' sessions. There is strong provision for information and communication technology (ICT) to enhance the curriculum, which is used well across the whole school. In order to improve the quality of writing, staff have introduced new initiatives to ensure boys develop an enthusiasm for writing. Events such as 'Writing Week' help to harness an enthusiasm for writing. All pupils, and particularly the boys, are inspired by theatre companies and living authors. Pupils also enthusiastically participate in the annual 'Writing Challenge', which always culminates in a display of their written work. The school now has a cycle of reviewing and monitoring the curriculum in which governors are also involved. This helps the school to focus on consistency in standards, marking and presentation. Staff regularly consult pupils' views on their lessons.

Leadership and management are good overall. Some aspects are outstanding. The leadership has been strengthened with the restructuring of the senior management team to incorporate a substantive headteacher and two assistant headteachers. This team are very focused on school improvement and are clear of their roles and responsibilities. School self-evaluation is accurate and involves a range of stakeholders. Staff are correct in believing that the many improvements made since the previous inspection are making an impact, including sharpening the school improvement plan, improving the use of data and improving the quality and standards in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They rightly want to further their work on the use of targets. They are beginning to make better use of assessment-on-entry data to enable them to accurately assess pupils' progress over time. The school has maintained its above average standards and improved pupils' progress in some areas, such as all subjects at Key Stage 1, science in Key Stage 2 and writing across the school. Leadership of core subjects, including ICT and personal, social and health education, is strong. Good leadership by the music coordinator has ensured a high take-up of musical instrument tuition, participation in performance and the school achieving a Derbyshire music award. Subject coordinators have a clear overview of their subject area and how to take their subject forward. The senior management team rigorously scrutinise work samples, consult with pupils and analyse their findings carefully. The school makes good use of its resources. It has made some wise decisions in the re-allocation of staff to year groups

and class teachers and pupils have adjusted well where changes have been made. It makes efficient use of support staff and volunteers, including visiting governors, utilising the skills and knowledge of the whole team to positive effect. Delegation is effective and success is achieved through total commitment. The governing body supports the school well. It fulfils its statutory duties and effectively holds the school to account. Members have undertaken training, resulting in increased awareness of the Early Years Foundation Stage and the use of school data. There is a good two-way flow of information between the school and the governing body so that everyone is kept very well informed. Equality of opportunity is promoted most effectively at the school. The school contributes well to community cohesion, including links with the neighbouring secondary school and their recent embark on a county wide community cohesion programme to link them with other Midlands schools in different catchment areas. It is too early to judge the impact of this initiative. There is a strong sense of the school being a significant part of the local community. Working in partnership with others is a real strength. Based on its past performance in sustaining school improvement, how well it knows itself and the high quality of some aspects of the provision, the school has a good capacity to improve.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children do well in the Early Years Foundation Stage because the provision here, and the care they receive, is outstanding. This is due to the good and developing leadership and management within this phase and staff's commitment and dedication to getting children off to an effective start to their education. All adults welcome children warmly and get to know them well, which means they settle extremely quickly. The provision for children's welfare, health and safety is outstanding. Children are helped to feel safe and secure, and to grow in confidence. Children's personal development and well-being are met outstandingly well. The early and successful emphasis on promoting independence means, for example, that children move sensibly around the classes, responsibly choosing their own activities and resources. Adults are extremely positive role models for children in setting and reinforcing high standards of behaviour. Children show high levels of concentration. Staff check that children are satisfied with their efforts, effectively encouraging them to see tasks through. Careful and regular observations are made of children as they go about their work and they are offered an appropriate balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities, which are immediately tailored to meet their needs and interests. All achieve well relative to their starting points and capabilities, including those who find learning more difficult. Children often surpass expected levels of attainment in all areas. Adults are clear of their responsibilities and work very closely and effectively as a team. They have worked hard to ensure the curriculum adequately embraces outdoor learning in all of the curriculum areas.

What the school should do to improve further

- Give greater consideration to the quality of learning activities and make sure these are adapted sufficiently for the whole range of learners, so that pupils always do as well as they can.
- Ensure that pupils have a greater understanding of their mathematics targets and that marking consistently provides pupils with a clear steer on points for improvement.
- Make greater use of data on entry to accurately ascertain the pupils' progress over time.

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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?	1
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?	1
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?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
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	2
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?	1
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	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	1
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 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

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	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
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	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

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

12 February 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Duffield The Meadows Primary School, Duffield DE56 4GT

Thank you for being so willing to talk to Mr Wiggins and I during the recent school inspection. We thought you were extremely polite and very well behaved while we were visiting. We think that you belong to a good school, which has many outstanding features. We can see why you are all so happy and why the majority of your parents are also pleased with the school. Mrs Watkins and her team lead the school well. Reception children settle quickly and get off to a good start. They have lots of really interesting things to do. Older children are working hard and are well supported so that, by the time they leave the school, they achieve good standards, which are often above what pupils achieve in other schools around the country. You all make at least the progress that is expected of you, and most of you make good progress during your years at Duffield The Meadows Primary.

Your lessons are of consistently good quality and in the best lessons enjoyment is high because you work hard together to find out facts and solve problems, for example in science. Across the school, you are now doing better in your writing and the boys are now almost catching up the girls! You need to keep up the good work in this area. Your teachers are trying very hard to give you a high quality curriculum, and I know you are really enjoying all of the new topics. It is pleasing to know that many of you play musical instruments and join in with the band and orchestra. I am sorry I was unable to see you all playing.

The governors are doing a really good job. They are making sure you are safe, cared for and educated well. I have asked your teachers to think about making some of the learning activities even more exciting and to make sure they match these to meet all of your needs. Sometimes you don't always remember your mathematics targets and I have asked your teachers to make sure, when they mark your work, they always tell you how you can make it better. The school works hard to track your progress and I have suggested that they use the information from Reception children better to make sure they know exactly how much progress you have made over your years at the school. Keep up the good work and keep focused on your targets in all subjects - it really will help you to succeed.

Yours sincerely

Jane Melbourne

Her Majesty's Inspector