

Great Dalby Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119911
Local Authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	339552
Inspection dates	14–15 September 2009
Reporting inspector	Christopher Parker

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 of pupils on the school roll	135
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dr Peter Topham
Headteacher	Christopher Hannon
Date of previous school inspection	6 June 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 11 lessons and held discussions with pupils, staff, the headteacher and governors. They observed the school's work and looked at data showing the pupils' progress, documents, policies and records of self-evaluation. Questionnaires returned by pupils, parents and staff were analysed.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at four points:

- the steps the school has taken to improve the performance of boys, and how it has evaluated its actions
- the ways in which improvement is being led and managed
- how the quality and provision of the Early Years Foundation Stage is being monitored, evaluated and improved
- the effectiveness of the school's actions to promote community cohesion.

Information about the school

The school is much smaller than average. Almost all of the pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is smaller than in most schools. Few pupils are entitled to free school meals.

About a tenth of the pupils reside in the village of Great Dalby. Half of the pupils travel from Melton Mowbray, the rest come from surrounding villages.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

The school continues to provide a good education for its pupils. Overall, attainment is above average and most pupils make good progress. Over the last few years the school has, with some success, worked to close the gap between the attainment of girls and boys. Nevertheless, a few boys, although making satisfactory progress, are still not reaching their potential.

The headteacher and staff are striving to improve provision that they make for all pupils. Monitoring and evaluation of the school's work are comprehensive and have successfully maintained a good level of performance. However, in some areas monitoring and evaluation are not precise enough to improve provision to the very highest standard. Although good, self-evaluation is not sufficiently sophisticated to achieve excellent outcomes for pupils. There have been many improvements and enhancements to the curriculum to motivate and interest boys. The teaching is good, but in some lessons a few boys still do not show the level of commitment needed to make consistently good progress. The school's success in improving aspects of provision and outcomes for the pupils reflects its good capacity to continue improving.

The pupils' personal development is good, although they have few opportunities to develop an understanding of wider British society. This is because the school's approach to community cohesion has not been given a sufficiently high priority. In all other respects the school is successful in creating an environment where pupils feel safe, recognise the importance of a healthy lifestyle and behave well. High levels of attendance reflect the pupils' generally very positive views of school.

Over the last year the good provision made for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage has been very successfully developed and extended under the ambitious leadership of the coordinator. As a result, the children made rapid progress last year. Only a few days into their school lives, the new cohort of children have benefited from a smooth transition and are already displaying considerable confidence and independence.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the achievement of the few boys who are not reaching their potential by strengthening their commitment to learning so that they become fully engaged in all lessons and make rapid progress.
 - Sharpen monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning to take full account of its impact on the progress of groups and individuals.
 - Raise the profile of community cohesion by:

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- extending opportunities for pupils to gain a broader understanding of a multicultural society
- evaluating the impact of such opportunities on the outcomes for pupils.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Lessons are interesting and well organised, so that most pupils learn and make good progress. The teachers have given thoughtful consideration to how they can engage boys through, for example, diverse activities that are practical and lively. In a literacy lesson for Years 1 and 2, the pupils acted out the sequence of events from a story in preparation for writing about how to plant a seed. In Year 6 the pupils were engaged in extensive debate about how they could work together in a small group to tell a story. Activities of this type are part of the school's strategy to motivate and prepare pupils for writing tasks. It is clear that this has been largely, but not completely, successful. Occasionally, a few boys, while 'doing just enough', do not show the level of commitment or engagement needed to make the rapid progress which they should. Over recent years the results of national tests have shown a wider than usual gap between the attainment of girls and that of boys. The school's work to close this gap is evident from the national test results at the end of Year 6 in 2009, where the performance of girls and boys was very similar. However, achievement in lessons indicates that some discrepancy remains in some classes.

The results of national tests fluctuate from year to year because cohorts are relatively small. The results over the last few years show that, at the end of Year 2, attainment is above average, and by the end of Year 6 many indicators are significantly above average. In 2007, results at the end of Year 6 were high; they dipped in 2008 and rose again in 2009. The results in English, mathematics and science in 2009 were well above average.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are achieving well because of the good support they receive through small-group work in English and mathematics. In conversation, pupils say they feel safe in school. While they acknowledge that there are squabbles from time to time, they feel that behaviour is generally good and they show little concern about bullying. Many pupils enjoy the range of sporting opportunities the school provides. The Healthy School Award is reflected in the good-quality meals enjoyed by many pupils. Their personal qualities are being developed well through a wide range of interesting activities. The curriculum provides them with opportunities to learn about a range of faiths, though few opportunities to develop a broader understanding of multicultural society in Britain. Links with schools in France, Australia and Canada are being fostered to provide the pupils with a good international dimension to their learning.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is effective and lessons are lively and interesting, ensuring that the vast majority of pupils are engaged by the tasks they are set. Most pupils concentrate and produce the volume and quality of work expected of them by their teachers. While most pupils make good progress, one or two boys in some classes are not as committed or productive as they should be and do not reach their potential.

Teachers make good use of a wide range of resources. Interactive whiteboards and visualisers are used well to provide a good focus for learning. For example, in Years 3 and 4 when pupils were creating persuasive holiday posters, the teacher used examples of their work, on the visualiser, to discuss with the class how the text might be improved to grab the reader's attention and encourage them to book a holiday. Good questioning by the teacher drew out good improvements, illustrating well the good learning and progress of most pupils.

The school has improved how teachers mark the pupils' work. There are examples of good and effective marking that point out exactly how a piece of work can be improved. Target setting is well established. However, some pupils do not yet fully understand how to use the recently introduced extensive success criteria for writing tasks. Nevertheless, this is a very positive development introduced to extend the good arrangements for target setting and assessment.

The curriculum is well organised and extensively enriched by visits to places of interest,

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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events at school, and a wide range of extra-curricular activities. Many of these opportunities add to the good progress that pupils make in their broader personal development.

Care, guidance and support are strong features of the school's provision. The most vulnerable pupils are well supported through effective links with external agencies. The school works closely with parents to provide therapy and medical support for individuals so that they overcome substantial barriers and play a full part in lessons and activities. Those who have a special educational need or disability receive carefully tailored support. These programmes help them to benefit from class lessons as well as small-group activities.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Following a number of changes of teaching staff over the last year, the headteacher has moulded an ambitious team with high expectations. Monitoring arrangements are rigorous, and self-evaluation provides an accurate picture of the school's performance. Records of the monitoring of the quality of teaching, for example, are accurate and provide helpful points for development. However, few lesson observations focus sharply on the progress of groups or individuals. Consequently, these activities are not providing a sharp insight into how the school might build on its good performance and achieve excellent outcomes for all pupils.

There is a comprehensive development plan that clearly outlines areas for improvement. While the detail set out in the plan is likely to ensure that the school's good performance is maintained, it is unlikely to move its performance to outstanding because it is not precise enough.

The governors hold the school to account and are rigorous in evaluating the impact of, for example, the school's disability and gender policies. Governors have monitored the performance of boys 'at almost every meeting', and recognise that, although some improvements have been made, the school has yet to find a solution which ensures that all boys do as well as they should. The governors ensure that the school's arrangements for the safety and well-being of pupils are well developed. The school has very positive relationships with parents and keeps them well informed through frequent newsletters. Parental comments on pupils' annual reports show a high level of satisfaction with the information they receive about how their children are doing. The school's wider

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partnerships provide pupils with a good range of after-school activities. For example, Leicester Tigers lead tag rugby activities.

The school has taken steps, based on its rural context, to develop a cohesive community within the school. Within the curriculum it promotes an understanding of religious and ethnic diversity, but has only recently identified the need to promote engagement with community groups in contrasting areas. This is an area for improvement within the current school development plan. Evaluation of the school's work on community cohesion has been patchy, and this important area has not been given a sufficiently high priority.

The resources available to the school are used well to achieve good outcomes for pupils, and provide good value for money.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

The provision for the youngest children has improved since the last inspection and is outstanding. An analysis of the performance of the children in the Reception class last year shows that they made excellent progress, with a high proportion developing the range of skills expected for their age. The children who have just entered school are making an impressive start. This is because the 'smooth' transition and induction arrangements are exemplary, care for the children is outstanding and the learning experiences are both imaginative and stimulating.

The children are already demonstrating an excellent understanding of the daily routines. Most of them play and work well together and are happy to pursue their own learning

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interests independently, using the wide range of activities planned for them. Adults monitor the children's choices diligently and record incidental observations in some detail to add to the impressive learning journeys that also take full account of the child's own views, their development at pre-school, and their parent's views.

Detailed planning and very lively teaching ensure that lessons are vibrant with well-resourced opportunities. Children explore the world around them, develop their language, number, and information and communication technology skills, and extend their personal development. As a result, children demonstrate high levels of enjoyment, curiosity, independence and concentration. Evaluations of some of the activities carried out last year give an excellent insight into how children are involved in planning learning and the great fun they had as 'super heroes'.

Activities flow freely from indoors to out. All of the adults take every opportunity to develop the children's learning, whether they are in 'the beach shop' or improving their balancing skills in the outdoor area.

The work of the Early Years Foundation Stage coordinator has been pivotal in extending and developing the provision to a high standard. A local authority visit last year highlighted many strong features, but also pinpointed a few areas for improvement. The areas for improvement have been tackled speedily and robustly to the benefit of the children. This illustrates well the ambitious and determined leadership of the coordinator.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

The questionnaires, responses and other evidence provided by the school show that there is a high level of satisfaction among parents. Many parents added written comments to their responses highlighting how effective and supportive the school staff have been in ensuring that their child makes good progress, is happy and well cared for at school. A few parents expressed concerns about how well conflicts between pupils are dealt with. Discussions with pupils indicate that they are not aware of oppressive behaviour that extends beyond the 'usual squabbles'. Records kept by the school show that parents are involved where a pupil has been hurt by another. Such incidents are infrequent.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Great Dalby Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspector received 86 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 135 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	52	60	32	37	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	55	64	28	33	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	42	49	37	43	2	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	45	52	28	33	4	5	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	50	58	30	35	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	49	57	29	34	3	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	50	58	30	35	3	3	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	42	50	32	38	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	50	58	29	34	3	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	38	44	33	38	8	9	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	40	47	36	42	2	2	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	45	52	35	41	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	56	65	25	29	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



17 September 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Great Dalby Primary School, Melton Mowbray, LE14 2HA

This letter is to tell you about the findings of the recent inspection and to thank you for taking the time to talk to me about your work and your school. I am also grateful to those of you in Key Stage 2 who completed the questionnaire. Most of you like school. Some you said it was 'great!' In my view, you attend a good school which is friendly and caring. You behave well. You told me that you feel safe at playtimes and that the 'usual squabbles' are sorted out quickly. Some of you also said that the school provides lots of interesting opportunities and I agree.

The headteacher, teachers and teaching assistants are helping you to make good progress. They set you targets in your work which help you to concentrate on what you need to improve. The introduction of comprehensive success criteria in some lessons will take this further. The teachers have focused on helping boys to achieve as well as the girls. They have been successful, but there is still a little more to do to make sure everyone does as well as they possibly can. Consequently, I have asked the governors and the headteacher to look very closely at how a few of the boys can be helped to make faster progress.

The headteacher is leading the school well, and is constantly looking at how well it is doing so that improvements can be made to the opportunities that the school provides for you. I have asked that the school checks carefully how activities help you to make the best possible progress. I have also asked the headteacher and teachers to consider how they can help you to develop a better understanding of communities in Britain to build on your work in the local community.

I hope that in the future your school is even more successful in helping you to do as well as you possibly can.

Yours faithfully

Christopher Parker

Lead Inspector

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