

Dover Road Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118581
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	313000
Inspection dates	3–4 July 2008
Reporting inspector	Joan Lindsay

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	555
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Finnan Rook
Headteacher	Miss Rebecca Smith
Date of previous school inspection	7 March 2005
School address	Dover Road East Gravesend Kent DA11 0RB
Telephone number	01474 352488
Fax number	01474 352413

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a much bigger than average primary school with a large Nursery. Almost two thirds of pupils are of White British heritage and approximately a third come from an Indian background. A growing proportion of pupils are East European. The proportion of pupils who have English as an additional language is well above average. Slightly more than the average number of pupils claim free school meals. An above average number of pupils have a learning difficulty and/or disability. These pupils have a range of difficulties, the biggest group having speech, language and communication problems, then behaviour, emotional and social needs. The school recently achieved the Healthy Schools Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school. The school is improving and there are some good features, such as the partnerships with others that support pupils in many ways, the pastoral care and the way pupils' personal development and well-being are nurtured. Parents have generally positive views of the school, although a small number have some concerns about behaviour. However, the school's positive approach to behaviour and the high priority given to showing respect for others has had a big impact on standards of behaviour, which are now good. Overall, pupils' personal development is good.

Most children start the Foundation Stage with skills and knowledge that are well below expectations for their age. A relatively high number have little or no English and/or specific learning needs. With good teaching, they get off to a flying start in the Nursery and make good progress here and in the Reception class. Progress and standards in the rest of the school have been hampered in the past by inconsistent teaching and learning. As a result, standards have been unsatisfactory for a number of years. However, through more rigorous monitoring and support, teaching is now judged to be satisfactory overall with some good aspects. Consequently, although standards are still below average, they are improving and achievement is satisfactory overall. Teachers are now armed with more effective tools to spot pupils' underachievement and the additional support that is then put in is beginning to have an impact. Whilst standards across the school need to be improved, writing is an area requiring particular focus. In addition, not enough pupils are achieving the higher levels in all subjects, indicating more able pupils are not achieving as well as they could.

An improved, more creative curriculum has increased pupils' enjoyment but, because its impact on standards and achievement remains limited, the curriculum is judged satisfactory overall. There is a greater focus on the use of information and communication technology (ICT) across different subjects and literacy and numeracy skills are also now being emphasised in other areas such as history.

Pupils are well looked after in school with a wide range of specialists used to help them with specific learning, social or emotional needs. Tracking data is now being used more effectively to support pupils academically as well. However, marking and pupils' targets are not used consistently across the school to ensure that all pupils know what they need to do to improve. Therefore, although pastoral care and support is good, overall care, guidance and support are judged satisfactory.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher provides strong leadership and is held in high regard by staff. Initiatives to focus on raising standards and achievement through improving teaching are now beginning to have an impact and middle managers are confident in monitoring and managing their subjects.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children come into the Nursery with particularly poor speaking and listening skills and personal, social and emotional development. With a strong focus on these areas,

they make good progress so that when they enter the Reception Year, they are below the levels expected for their age rather than well below. Their good progress continues and, when they move to Year 1, overall they are reaching expected levels, although there are some areas such as reading and writing that are still below. About 10% of children achieve better than expected for their age. Staff all care for the children well, which adds greatly to their safety, welfare and enjoyment of school. Whilst teaching is good overall, it is more consistently good in the Nursery, where an excellent rapport with children and good use of questioning to develop speaking skills is evident. In some lessons in the Reception class, it takes too long for children to be actively involved and some opportunities are missed to interact with children during their activities to maximise learning. Teaching assistants are effectively used throughout the Foundation Stage, playing an active part in delivering the well planned curriculum. The leadership of the Foundation Stage is good and, through careful monitoring and tracking, is ensuring that children make good progress. Children in the Reception class do not have easy access to a suitable outdoor play area, which means they are restricted in choosing independent outdoor activities. There is no covered outdoor area for Nursery or Reception children, which again restricts their outdoor learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise achievement and standards across the school but especially in relation to writing.
- Improve teaching by ensuring there is a consistency of practice in the best use of time and the methods used to challenge all abilities.
- Ensure marking and the use of pupils' targets is consistent across the school so that all pupils are supported well and know how to improve.

A small proportion of 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

Standards overall have improved slightly, especially in mathematics at the end of Year 2 and in writing at the end of Year 6. However, they remain below average in English, mathematics and science across the school. Past problems with behaviour and inconsistent teaching have had an impact on standards. However, after a strong focus on both these aspects, there are clear signs of improvement in pupils' progress now throughout the school. More pupils in the current Year 2 have reached the higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics than in 2007. School data and inspection evidence suggest that more pupils in the current Year 6 will also achieve higher levels in English, mathematics and science, although there are still not enough who do. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those with English as an additional language benefit from the targeted support and so achieve at least as well as others.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are all good. They show high levels of respect for others and play well together in the playground. Pupils understand and largely keep to the 'Golden Rules' and a consistent approach to behaviour has reduced the number of exclusions and incidents of bullying. Pupils say that any intimidation that occurs is dealt with effectively and so they feel safe in school. Younger pupils benefit from the help of older ones as buddies and play leaders. Pupils enjoy their lessons and eagerly approach their tasks. Attendance has improved well, reflecting their growing enjoyment, and is now close to the national average. Pupils have a good awareness of how to lead a healthy life and participate enthusiastically in the 'Get Active' week. The school council meets regularly. As a result, pupils feel that they have a voice and are able to bring about improvements, to toilets for example. This gives a good sense of community. With improving literacy and numeracy skills and all pupils involved in a business enterprise scheme such as selling pizzas, they are adequately prepared for the next stage of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

A lack of consistency reflects the overall satisfactory quality of teaching and pupils' learning, although there is some good teaching. Measures to improve the quality of teaching are in place but they have yet to make a full impact on performance. The most successful lessons are based on good relationships and class management and questioning that tests pupils' level of understanding. However sometimes, work is not planned adequately to meet the range of needs and so, the more able in particular, are not challenged enough. When the pace of the lesson is too slow or pupils are given too much time to complete a task, their progress suffers. Teaching assistants work well alongside teachers and do a good job supporting particular pupils, such as those who find learning difficult. The quality of teachers' marking is inconsistent and does not always show pupils how to improve their work. Pupils' targets are not referred to enough to enable pupils to know how they are progressing towards them.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Although still developing, there have been significant changes to the curriculum, making it more creative and linking subjects through topics. However, the impact of this on standards is only just beginning to show. Nevertheless, there are clear improvements in pupils' interest and enjoyment as they now gain first hand experience through visits such as to the Ebbsfleet rail terminal, other cultures are celebrated through the curriculum. There has been for example, a focus specifically on Gypsy, Roma and Traveller groups. Pupils throughout the school receive French lessons. Sport is promoted well through the local Sports Partnership. Links with secondary schools provide older pupils with good opportunities to learn more about science, ICT and technology. A reasonable range of clubs and activities are offered each term and the school has plans to extend these when teaching staff are ready to take on more.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The pastoral support for pupils is good. The school provides an effective haven for vulnerable pupils. The small core of pupils who can be disruptive at times are managed well through appropriate behaviour programmes. There are very effective links with other agencies and very good liaison with families. The good support for pupils with English as an additional language and those who have learning difficulties helps them to progress as well as others. Pupils feel that there are always adults they can turn to and who will listen, which means they enjoy school and are ready to learn. They are particularly appreciative of all members of the Inclusion Team, including the learning mentor. As one said, "If you feel down you can always go to her." Child protection and safeguarding matters are all in place.

Academic guidance is satisfactory and improving. Teachers now have detailed systems for tracking pupils' progress. All pupils have targets for improvement in reading, writing and numeracy. Some marking of pupils' work is helpful but the use of assessment data, marking and the process of setting targets needs to be more consistent to be effective in supporting all pupils to achieve as well as they can.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Although leadership and management are satisfactory overall, the headteacher leads and manages the school very well. She has overseen major refurbishments that have greatly enhanced the buildings and have impacted on pupils' attitudes to school. A period of staff turnover and a new staffing structure has resulted in a good team spirit. The subject leaders for English, mathematics and science, for example, now have a clear sense of the strengths and weaknesses in their subjects. All staff are fully committed to raising pupils' standards and achievement and realise that the key to this is to improve the quality of provision, particularly teaching. A robust programme of monitoring and other initiatives such as data analysis and tracking of pupils is beginning to impact on standards and progress as teachers become confident in their use. Governors have become increasingly involved in calling the school to account for its performance, while at the same time being supportive. The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation is sound. This, coupled with signs of progress in pupils' achievement, combined with improving teaching, gives the school a satisfactory capacity to improve.

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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?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of boarding provision	
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
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?	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	3
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	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of 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.

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	3
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

Annex B



7 July 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Dover Road Community Primary School, DA11 0RB

Thank you very much for welcoming us into your school. We enjoyed talking to you and your teachers, coming in to lessons and assemblies and having a chat with you about your school. We think your school is satisfactory and has some good things about it.

Here are some of the things we like best about your school:

- You get off to a flying start in the nursery and Reception because of the good teaching and care you receive.
- You enjoy school, behave well and feel safe there because you have lots of adults you know will help you.
- You know how to stay healthy and really enjoyed your 'Get Active' week when we were there.
- There are good links with people outside the school who help in different ways, such as through teaching you more about sport, ICT and science.

This is what we have asked the school to do next:

- Improve your skills in all subjects, but especially in writing.
- Ensure that all teaching makes you think and work hard, particularly for those of you who are capable of achieving the highest levels.
- To use targets and marking so that you all know what you need to do to make your work even better.

You can help your school by continuing to work hard and behave well. Thank you again for a very enjoyable visit to your school and best wishes for your future.

Yours sincerely

Joan Lindsay
Lead Inspector