

Drapers Mills Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118407
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	312927
Inspection dates	14–15 May 2008
Reporting inspector	Graeme Bassett

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	2–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	466
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Ian White
Headteacher	Mr John Viner
Date of previous school inspection	24–27 January 2005
School address	St Peter's Footpath Margate CT9 2SP
Telephone number	01843 223989
Fax number	01843 230679

Age group	2–11
Inspection date(s)	14–15 May 2008
Inspection number	312927

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This large primary school, with 17 classes and a nursery, draws most of its pupils from its immediate less advantaged neighbourhood. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. A small number of Traveller children attend the school and there is a growing proportion of pupils joining the school from Eastern Europe whose first language is not English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well above average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above average. The school has been awarded the Healthy Schools award, Investors in People, Basic Skills Quality Mark, Quality in Study Support (QiSS) award, a Travel Plan platinum award and an ActiveMark.

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 but steadily improving school. Against a backdrop of significant staffing turbulence and a history of issues with pupils' behaviour, the headteacher and senior leadership team have managed to establish strength and depth in terms of leadership and management skills across the school and the governing body. Responsibilities are delegated effectively and challenging targets are established that are steadily improving standards and achievement. There is a particular strength in the good care, guidance and support given to all pupils because of the efforts and endeavours of all staff. The successes so far show that the school has good capacity for future improvement.

Under the very clear guidance and direction of the headteacher, the school has recently established an excellent nursery. The stimulating and well organised provision in the Foundation Stage is having a strong influence upon children's attitudes and establishing a secure base that ensures all children make a very positive start at school. It is evident from parental comments that pupils' progress in the past has been disrupted by unacceptable behaviour. The school has rightly and successfully concentrated upon improving behaviour and it is now satisfactory. Most pupils now behave well, especially in the older year groups, although a small minority sometimes still show unacceptable conduct. Some other aspects of pupils' personal development are good. For example, they have a good awareness of how to stay safe and how to adopt a healthy lifestyle and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

Standards when pupils leave at the end of Year 6 have been improving but have still been low for several years, and in 2007 achievement was still unsatisfactory. In response, the headteacher and senior staff reorganised the older pupils into new class groups so that the style of teaching could be varied to better suit the pupils' needs. With good and often outstanding teaching in the new classes in Year 6, this has resulted in the progress of the older pupils accelerating particularly well. Standards are currently below average, and achievement for these pupils during their time in school has been satisfactory overall. Furthermore, more able pupils in Year 6 are now making good progress and the proportion reaching the higher National Curriculum Level 5 is in line with that expected nationally. Throughout the school, good support is also ensuring that pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities progress in line with their peers and pupils for whom English is not the first language make particularly good progress in acquiring English as a spoken language.

Teaching is often good and sometimes excellent in the Foundation Stage and in Year 6. However, many teachers do not plan activities sufficiently well to meet the needs of all pupils. When marking work teachers give pupils copious encouragement but most do not write constructive comments that show pupils what they need to do to improve their work. Also, pupils are not given enough opportunities to take an active role in assessing their work or discussing their own targets. The reorganisation of teaching groups promotes good pastoral care, resulting in older pupils being more interested in their learning. For some, this new approach to learning is a revelation and they say that 'lessons are much more fun than playtimes'. The curriculum is satisfactory but good enrichments, including whole class musical tuition, enhance pupils' learning and raise their interests.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

The Foundation Stage is outstanding. The curriculum is vibrant and exciting and offers children a wide range of stimulating play-based experiences. Teaching is good overall and often excellent. Assessment records are maintained very thoroughly, giving a very accurate picture of each child's development across all areas of learning.

Attainment on entry to the Nursery class is low, especially in literacy and numeracy, but by the time they enter Year 1 most children have made considerable progress and come close to gaining the skills and understanding expected for their age. However, with language being slower to develop standards are still well below expected levels in their speaking, reading, writing and mathematics. Children make most progress in their physical development, where skills are broadly as expected by the time they enter Year 1.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the teachers' planning to make certain that all pupils are consistently challenged by tasks that match their abilities.
- Involve pupils more in setting and reviewing their personal targets and ensure that marking clearly shows pupils what they need to do next to improve.
- Eradicate the disruptive behaviour shown by a minority of pupils, in order to create a consistently purposeful atmosphere for learning.

A small proportion of the 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

Throughout the school, the achievement of most groups of pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, is satisfactory. The trend over time shows that standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2 have been well below average, but this is improving and standards are currently below average.

The pupils currently in Year 6 have made satisfactory progress overall since the end of Year 2 and current standards are below average in English, mathematics and science. The progress of most pupils in Years 5 and 6 is now accelerating. This is most noticeable for the more able pupils in Year 6 who are improving more swiftly, with many making good progress. As a result, their standards are above the national average in mathematics and broadly average in English. Skills and understanding in information and communication technology (ICT) are a relative strength and are broadly average in this year group. Standards of pupils for whom English is not the first language are progressing well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils enjoy coming to school and say that their teachers make lessons fun. Attendance is improving and is now satisfactory. Pupils make good friends and have positive relationships with their teachers. They are invariably polite and friendly to adults and visitors to the school. Pupils from different cultural backgrounds generally mingle well and the school provides good opportunities for everyone to understand the customs and traditions of other people. Pupils know whom to turn to if they have a problem and say that on the occasions when bullying or name-calling has occurred it has been dealt with quickly. Most of the oldest pupils behave well, but some pupils in other classes find it very difficult to sustain concentration. They are prone to restless behaviour which slows down the pace of learning and disturbs others around them. Pupils make a satisfactory contribution to the school's community, with many willingly performing tasks as monitors. The way pupils are prepared for their next school and later life is satisfactory. In spite of some good aspects of personal development, their below average standards in literacy and numeracy and the untidy presentation of their work impede their economic development and understanding.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching is satisfactory overall. There are some good and sometimes outstanding lessons, especially in the Foundation Stage and in Year 6. However, there are some inconsistencies in the teachers' planning and often teachers do not make enough use of what they know about each pupil's achievements when they plan their lessons. This results in pupils often being set the same task regardless of their previous learning. Likewise, comments in the teachers' marking, although full of praise, do not show pupils what they must do to improve.

The support from teachers and teaching assistants for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good. There is also good teaching and support for those for whom English is not their first language and these pupils quickly begin to understand and speak English.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is enriched by visitors from local organisations and businesses, who give pupils an understanding of opportunities for their future and in the world of work. The strong curriculum and teaching links between the Foundation Stage and Year 1 are proving beneficial and raising pupils' interests. The school is beginning to develop a more creative curriculum, sometimes based upon the themes of Every Child Matters, which has led to more increased enjoyment by pupils throughout the rest of the school. However, the cross-subject links are not yet fully developed across all classes. Provision for music is good with pupils learning to play a range of instruments, including violins, recorders and ukuleles. Pupils have opportunities to gain maturity and social development through activities on an adventure week, many other visits and after-school clubs. Effective inclusion and pastoral support teams

ensure that the learning needs of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are met effectively.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

This is an area of strength. Specific staff teams are very active in supporting pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. New arrivals to the school, especially those for whom English is not the first language, are quickly integrated into the life of the school and have the benefit of help from staff who speak their language. Tracking records are particularly comprehensive and are used well to identify and support children who are falling behind. Within the newly established class groups in Years 5 and 6 the teachers are now able to give all pupils additional support and good guidance to show them how to improve their work. Most pupils understand that they have challenging targets that show what they need to learn next, but these targets are not always readily available and pupils are not sufficiently involved in deciding when they have completed them.

There are rigorous and effective procedures for checking attendance and these have reduced absences. All statutory requirements and procedures to ensure pupils' safety are in place.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Under the very clear direction of the headteacher, the school's leaders have successfully focused upon improving pupils' behaviour and this has had a significant influence on improving most pupils' attitudes. The senior leadership team works very effectively with the headteacher to compile an accurate self-evaluation of the school's work that forms the foundation for suitably challenging whole-school targets. Monitoring strategies are good and largely effective, although the development of marking and planning has not been monitored rigorously enough in all classes to ensure that strategies have been completely fulfilled.

The delegation of responsibilities to subject leaders and other senior leaders is good. They have a good understanding of their roles and share planning for future developments. The governing body fulfils its responsibilities well and is thoroughly involved in monitoring whole-school progress and identifying targets for future development.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', 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
---	-----------------------

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of pupils?	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 pupils' well-being?	3
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of boarding provision	
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do pupils achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by pupils	3
How well pupils make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of pupils	3
How well pupils 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 pupils?	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils adopt safe practices	2
How well pupils enjoy their education	2
The attendance of pupils	3
The behaviour of pupils	3
The extent to which pupils make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well pupils 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 pupils' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils?	3
How well are pupils 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.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all pupils?	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 pupils achieve as well as they can	3
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 pupils meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Annex B

15 May 2008



Dear Children

Inspection of Drapers Mills Primary School, Margate, CT9 2SP

Thank you for helping us when we recently visited your school. We enjoyed meeting you and finding out about your school. We found that your school provides you with a satisfactory education and that you do some exciting things.

These are the things that are particularly strong in your school.

- Your headteacher provides very good leadership and management.
- All the staff, and especially those who lead and manage your school, have very clear ideas of how to bring about improvements and as a result your school has some good features and is improving.
- The teaching in some classes is often good and sometimes excellent.
- The staff care for and support you well.
- Most of you are developing good attitudes towards your work and each other.
- You know a lot about keeping safe and you understand how to remain healthy.
- Your progress is improving, and some of the older pupils in Year 6 are already making good progress.

There are still some ways in which your school could be better. We have asked your headteacher and governors to do these things.

- Make certain that you are set tasks in lessons that match your abilities, so that you do as well as you can to raise your standards.
- Ensure that your teachers help you to understand how you can improve by making written comments in your books and involving you more in setting and reviewing your personal targets.
- Improve the behaviour of the small number of pupils who still disrupt some classes, in order to create a better environment for learning.

Once again, thank you for your cooperation. You can help even more by asking your teachers how you can make your work better.

Yours sincerely

Graeme Bassett
Lead inspector