

Arbourthorne Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	133994
Local authority	Sheffield
Inspection number	381587
Inspection dates	25–26 January 2012
Lead inspector	Terry McDermott

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 of pupils on the school roll	449
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Caroline Beattie
Headteacher	Vanessa Langley
Date of previous school inspection	17 September 2008
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Introduction

Inspection team

Terry McDermott
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Steve Rigby

Additional inspector
Additional inspector
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 28 lessons taught by 15 teachers for a total of approximately 15 hours. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, staff and members of the governing body. Inspectors observed the school's work, listened to pupils reading, looked at its methods for tracking pupils' progress, and at a range of school documents, including its policies, minutes of governing body meetings, monitoring records, samples of pupils' work, and reports from the school's professional partner. Responses from 129 parents and carers to the Ofsted questionnaire were considered, along with questionnaires completed by staff and pupils. Responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) were inaccessible to inspectors.

Information about the school

This larger than average sized primary school serves a large estate on the outskirts of the city. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is high. An average proportion of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds. A few of these pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below average, but the percentage with a statement of special educational needs is well above average. The school has resourced provision (the IRU) for pupils from across the city whose learning needs cannot be met in their own communities. A greater proportion of pupils than is normal enters or leaves the school other than at the usual times. The school meets the current government floor standards. The governing body manages two breakfast clubs. The school has made significant staff changes in recent times.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	1

Key Findings

- Arbourthorne is a good school. It has some outstanding features. The management group developed by the excellent headteacher is particularly strong. Her relentless pursuit of the highest possible standards and integrity in all of the school’s work is transforming the school community. The excellent curriculum, based on upholding eight core values, leads directly to pupils’ outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils’ achievement is good. From exceptionally low starting points, they make good progress to reach below average standards in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6. Standards are higher in mathematics than in English. The school’s accurate assessment and tracking procedures clearly indicate accelerating progress and rising attainment as recent improvements gather momentum. No group of pupils underachieves.
- Teaching is good. It is characterised by consistently excellent relationships between adults and pupils. Several examples of outstanding teaching were seen. Weaker aspects include slow pace when teachers spend too long giving instructions, hence limiting the time available for pupils to engage in learning, and in some classes, pupils not having enough time read or develop their early reading skills. A general lack of modern technology restricts pupils’ ability to carry out independent research.
- Pupils’ behaviour is good and learning in lessons is not disturbed. They take very good care of each other and their environment. They say that bullying is rare and they get on well with pupils of different cultures, ethnic groups, ages or gender. Pupils work independently and readily take on personal responsibilities.
- Management is very strong and leads to dedicated staff and high morale. Their efforts are recognised by parents and carers with comments such as: ‘I don’t look upon it as just a school and teachers. I look at it as a place of safety, a calm place, a place of trust and best of all, a place of friends.’ Inspectors concur with this sentiment.
- School self-evaluation is accurate. Leaders know which aspects they need to improve, and have already initiated well founded actions to drive improvement forward.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment overall, but particularly in English, by:
 - ensuring that all pupils have enough time in lessons to develop their reading skills
 - spending less time giving extended instructions in some lessons, maximising the time available for pupils to engage in learning
 - giving pupils more opportunities to use modern technology to carry out individual research and investigation of the wider world beyond the immediate locality of the school.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

The very large majority of children join the school with skills and understanding which are exceptionally low in relation to their age. This is markedly so in their personal and social development, and in all areas of communication. Staff in the Early Years Foundation Stage classes make the most of the good resources both indoors and outside, and get children off to a good start in learning sounds and letters in reading. They make good progress and quickly learn to cooperate and work and play together. This gives a good foundation for the excellent relationships between pupils and staff built thereafter throughout the school.

Pupils make good progress throughout the school and an increasing number make outstanding progress to overcome many early gaps in their skills. Pupils' attainment in reading is well below average at the end of Key Stage 1, because basic reading skills are not always taught often enough in Years 1 and 2 to fully address very wide early gaps in learning. Occasionally, in lessons, not enough time is given to developing pupils' reading skills. However, this gap is narrowing with effective management that has introduced systematic extra reading with skilful teaching assistants. Pupils now make more use of their knowledge of letters and sounds to tackle new words. They read regularly to adults and this is enhancing their confidence in reading aloud. Attainment in reading at the end of Year 6 is below average for all pupils, including for those who speak English as an additional language. The school is closing the gap with more pupils reaching the level expected for their age but there is still a way to go to ensure that all reach this level. Attainment at the end of Year 6 is below average overall but the trend is upwards and pupils make better progress than is found nationally, irrespective of their starting points.

Learning in lessons is good. Pupils are keen to learn and they sustain their concentration well on interesting tasks. This allows them to produce extended pieces of independent work. They take pride in doing as well as they can. This is clearly reflected in pupils' books which show increases in skills in work that is also consistently well presented. Teachers' high expectations are moving pupils on at a fast rate and pupils are eager to improve their performance. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, including pupils from the IRU, are supported excellently and most are integrated fully into the life of the school. Most parents and carers who responded to the Ofsted questionnaire felt that their children made good progress and the inspection endorses this view.

Quality of teaching

Good teaching is found in all parts of the school. Classrooms are vibrant and inspire pupils' curiosity about the world around them. Teachers effectively promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and all lessons are characterised by the excellent relationships between adults and pupils. The school's eight core values (Aim high; Self belief; Respect; Care; Thoughtfulness; Teamwork; Voice; Determination) run as a constant thread through all activities. Consequently, respect for each other and for the environment pervades all the school's work. The significant proportion of outstanding lessons shows excellent planning and thorough subject knowledge. In these lessons, teachers make sure that the learning needs of all pupils are fully met. Most lessons move forward smartly, with teachers and other adults moving around the different groups in the class making sure that pupils are on the right track. Probing questions, always asking 'Why is that?' challenge pupils to explain their thinking. Some, but not all, lessons have a buzz of contained excitement and sustained concentration about them as pupils carry out their own research or investigations. Others have a contrasting air of deep contemplation and thoughtfulness about them. This was shown to remarkable effect in an outstanding Year 5 lesson, when pupils considered and shared the strengths and achievements of their peers verbally. The reflection and sensitivity displayed by the whole group, but particularly by the boys, created an emotional backdrop for highly creative follow up writing. Teachers plan the curriculum effectively, ensuring that attention is given to promoting skills across the curriculum and checking that tasks build on prior learning. Occasionally, the pace of learning slows when all pupils receive the same explanation or task. Under these circumstances, more able pupils finish quickly and their progress is not as good as it might be. In a small number of lessons, teachers give extended instructions and hence do not maximise the time available for pupils to engage in learning. Teaching assistants are deployed effectively and play a vital role in supporting different groups of pupils. This ensures that most pupils make the same good progress over time, particularly disabled pupils, those with special educational needs, or those whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable. Scrutiny of pupils' books shows that marking is regular and usually gives clear advice on how to improve.

Parent and carers who responded to the Ofsted questionnaire were unanimous in their view that their children are taught well and inspectors agree.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils' behaviour is good in lessons, around the building and in the play areas. Misbehaviour is rare, usually the result of overly boisterous enthusiasm, and quickly dealt with. Pupils' very good manners and politeness give the school a very distinctive, tranquil atmosphere. They move around showing a strong sense of responsibility for each other, for their school and for the environment. Pupils skip happily into school knowing that they are safe, and can confidently explain why this is so. Parents and carers confirm this view. Attendance is broadly average and rising, as the school's persistent work in the community underlining the importance of education becomes increasingly more effective. The school's records show, and the pupils' own views underline, that over time behaviour has got better and incidents of poor or unsafe behaviour are now rare. Pupils confirm that there is no inappropriate behaviour in lessons to interrupt their learning. They say that bullying of any sort is rare, and are quick to point out how to use the internet safely. The school has all the necessary arrangements in place for ensuring the safeguarding of pupils. Pupils and their families are proud to be members of the community of Arbourthorne School, which they

leave as thoughtful, caring and very considerate young citizens. Parents, carers and other friends of the school wholeheartedly expressed the same view.

Leadership and management

The headteacher is a significant influence on the work of the school. Her commitment is relentless to developing the whole school as an integral part of the community it serves so well. The school's self-evaluation is accurate and results in leaders' clarity of vision and ambition for the school. Staff show an unswerving drive to strongly improve achievement. They are highly committed and rightly feel part of a successful team. Areas identified as requiring improvement at the last inspection have been addressed successfully, especially in relation to progress in mathematics. Subject leaders are effective and create plans that respond swiftly to areas requiring attention. The actions of school leadership are reaping rewards as outcomes for pupils improve rapidly and teaching improves further, as evidenced in the significant proportion of outstanding lessons seen during the inspection. The high expectations of senior leaders and the governing body have resulted in very effective leadership in recent years with increasing numbers of pupils overcoming significant great barriers to their learning to reach the levels expected for their age. The impact of management over time on pupils' personal attributes of tolerance, respect, integrity and reliability is exceptional. As a result, the school has an excellent capacity to improve.

Governance is good. Members of the governing body are active and knowledgeable. They are very determined to carry out their responsibilities for ensuring the general safety and safeguarding of pupils and are successful in so doing. They hold the school rigorously to account for its performance. They give very good attention to the welfare of pupils and staff as can be seen in effective safeguarding procedures. These are regularly updated and rigorously applied. Consequently, the safety and safeguarding of pupils routinely pervades the school's life. This is reflected in the very positive views of pupils about their school and in the almost unanimously positive responses expressed by parents and carers.

Leaders and governors successfully promote equality of opportunity for all. The school's accurate system for tracking the progress pupils make ensures that no particular individual or group of pupils underachieves. There is no evidence of any sort of discrimination in this inclusive and very happy place.

The curriculum is outstanding and promotes pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural development exceptionally well. It is carefully balanced to ensure maximum interest across creative, physical and academic subjects. Successes in developing pupils' personal and social skills, in drawing in the community and providing a very secure and inspirational environment for learning are now beginning to have a similar impact on pupils' academic progress.

The excellent partnership with its community, other local schools, community groups and a wide range of external professionals extends pupils' experiences and widens their horizons. Many visits to museums, theatres, churches, temples and mosques and other places of historical interest bring learning to life. They enable every pupil, including those whose medical and other circumstances have made them vulnerable, to access and benefit from all that the school has to offer. The two breakfast clubs and the wide range of after school activities provided by the school ensure that every pupil has the opportunity to access activities well beyond the school day.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



27 January 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Arbourthorne Community Primary School, Sheffield S2 2GQ

Thank you for being so friendly and helpful to us when we inspected your school recently. We were really impressed with your good behaviour, your good manners, and the confident and polite way you speak with and listen to each other and with the adults in school. It was lovely to see the way you all get on so well together and with your obvious respect for each other, the school and your environment.

Arbourthorne is a good school and is improving rapidly. It is helping all of you to make good progress. It makes excellent provision to help you develop personally as young people. Teaching is good and some of the lessons we saw were outstanding. In the best lessons, the work kept you busy all the time, and often involved you working things out for yourselves using practical examples. However, this was not always the case and sometimes you had to wait too long for the teacher to finish explaining the work you were going to do. Therefore, we have asked the staff to make sure that they set you off on learning tasks as quickly as possible. We have also asked that the work set in lessons, particularly in English, gives you more chance to use modern technology in order to find things out for yourselves. We also want you to make sure that you all get as much practice as possible in learning to read. All of these will help you all to learn at a consistently good or even better pace.

We enjoyed meeting you and would like to wish you all good luck for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Terry McDermott
Lead inspector

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