

# Mexborough Highwoods Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	106748
<b>Local Authority</b>	Doncaster
<b>Inspection number</b>	356018
<b>Inspection dates</b>	25–26 January 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Nigel Cromey-Hawke

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	171
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Peter Gleadhall
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Diane Dunn
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	8 July 2008
<b>School address</b>	Highwoods Road Mexborough South Yorkshire S64 9ES
<b>Telephone number</b>	01709 583273
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<b>Email address</b>	admin@highwoods.doncaster.sch.uk

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 10 lessons, observing seven teachers and seven classes. They also held meetings with members of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at a wide range of documentation, including development planning, safeguarding arrangements, self-evaluation records, policies and performance data. They carried out an extensive scrutiny of pupils' work. Questionnaires from 62 parents and carers, 83 pupils and 18 staff were scrutinised.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Whether the progress made by pupils is sufficiently good to merit the school's own evaluation of good achievement.
- How robustly the school has addressed attendance since the last inspection.
- How well focused the staff are in driving the school forward.

## Information about the school

The vast majority of pupils in this smaller-than-average primary school are White British. A few speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average but the proportion with a statement of special educational needs is below average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for a free school meal is well above average. The school has Healthy Schools status, Investors in People award, and Basic Skills Quality Mark. The school operates its own breakfast- and after-school clubs. There have been substantial changes in staffing over the last year and for the last two years the headteacher has been seconded part-time to support another local school. An independently-managed pre-school facility on the school site is subject to a separate inspection and report.

**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?**

**3**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**3**

## Main findings

This is a satisfactory school. It has some good features and makes an important contribution to the personal development of many of its pupils. The vast majority of parents and carers are highly supportive of its work.

Recent challenges regarding staffing are being overcome and the school is moving forward under the leadership of the headteacher. New ways of working are being introduced but some are not yet properly embedded across the school and their impact not yet fully proven. In the Early Years Foundation Stage children generally enter with basic skills below those typical for their age. They make a good start to their learning as a result of the good teaching, curriculum and leadership and management there. School data and inspection evidence show that pupils' progress through the rest of the school is satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those for whom English is an additional language make good progress. By the end of Year 6 pupils' attainment is broadly average. The quality of teaching is satisfactory but variable. Some lessons lack pace and challenge, some activities do not match pupils' needs and pupils' speaking and listening skills are underdeveloped. Target-setting in some classes is also too general for all pupils to have a clear picture of what they need to do to improve specific aspects of their work. The satisfactory curriculum has strengths in the arts, sport and in promoting pupils' good awareness of healthy living. There is an effective programme for personal and social education that promotes pupils' personal development well. Limited understanding of, and contact with the wider world means that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is, however, satisfactory rather than good.

Pupils enjoy their time in school, their behaviour is good and their attendance improving, due to the good care, guidance and support they receive in school. Self-evaluation is satisfactory. The school has a clear understanding of its strengths and weaknesses and appropriate, if sometimes generalised, plans in place to bring about improvement. New systems for the assessment and tracking of pupils' learning are not yet fully developed. As a result, the school's capacity for sustained improvement is satisfactory.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve attainment and achievement by ensuring that the quality of learning and progress is good or better in all lessons, by:
  - providing a better match of activities to all pupils' needs, especially the more able

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- developing pupils' speaking and listening skills, so that they are able to learn more effectively from adults and each other in lessons
  - providing more pace and challenge within lessons
  - extending the good practice in the use of individual learning targets within Year 6 to other classes, so that all pupils have a clear picture of what they need to do to improve specific aspects of their work.
- Broaden pupils' understanding of the different cultures in the modern world.
  - Further develop assessment practices across the school so that leaders and managers have a clearer picture of pupils' ongoing progress and use this information to more effectively inform development planning.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****3**

In lessons, most pupils acquire knowledge, develop understanding and learn and practise their skills satisfactorily. They are keen to succeed, mostly apply themselves well in lessons, work at a good pace and enjoy their learning, when provided with appropriate tasks and guidance. Pupils' attainment by the time they leave Year 6 is average and has improved from low levels in 2008. Weaknesses in mathematics and writing are being tackled, but standards in some year groups in these areas remain below average, especially at the higher levels. Learning and progress towards the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 is often good. Pupils' progress is satisfactory overall, however, due to wide inconsistencies in the quality of teaching across the rest of the school. Achievement across the school is therefore satisfactory.

Pupils say they feel safe and very well looked after. Behaviour is good around the school and often very good in the best lessons. The school places a high priority on developing pupils' understanding of healthy living, reflecting its awards. Pupils make a good contribution to the daily running of the school through the active school council, as eco-monitors and playground buddies. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory, with strengths in their moral and artistic development. Pupils' awareness of the diversity of the modern world and their wider cultural understanding is underdeveloped. Previously low attendance has been substantially improved and is now average. Persistent absenteeism has also been much reduced. The promotion of skills in information and communication technology (ICT) is developing well. As a result, pupils are prepared satisfactorily for the next stage in their education.

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*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

## How effective is the provision?

Although satisfactory overall, there is some good teaching across the school, especially in the later years of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. However, there is also a small amount that is inadequate, which the school is tackling robustly. In the best lessons, good planning, informed by assessment data, ensures that varied and often practical activities are provided that meet the needs of pupils. Good pace and challenge provided by the teacher stimulates pupils' interests. Teaching assistants and other adult helpers are used well in these lessons, as well as in a good range of booster sessions, to support pupils' learning well. The majority of lessons lack this rigour, however. In these lessons, activities are not as well matched to the needs of all pupils, especially the more able, and some lessons lack pace and challenge. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are also underdeveloped in some lessons and, as a result, they do not learn as effectively as they could from each other or from adults in the classroom. The use of individual learning targets is well established within Year 6 and effectively helps pupils to move forward in their learning. The more generalised targets used in other classes are, however, less effective in this respect. As a result, some pupils do not have a clear picture of what they need to do to improve specific aspects of their work.

The curriculum has many strengths, such as the well-established specialist music and sports provision, and the good range of extra-curricular activities. Many of these are made possible through the school's good partnership working with other local schools.

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'Philosophy for Children' is also helping to promote pupils' personal development and learning skills. Other aspects of the curriculum, such as writing, have been reviewed. There is an increasing focus upon international cultures but opportunities for pupils to learn about life in other parts of Britain are only just being developed. There is a good programme of visits and visitors to the school. The school recognises that much of its curriculum innovation is in the early stages of implementation and its consistent use across the school and its impact have yet to be evidenced.

The care, guidance and support provided by the school are good. It impacts well upon pupils' personal development and increasingly upon their learning. The parent support adviser plays a central part in communicating with families and the school has vigorously challenged absenteeism, with increasing success. The school provides an extensive range of adult and family learning opportunities to help them support their children's development. Transition arrangements into and out of the school are good. The school can point to cases where its care has helped vulnerable pupils to overcome significant barriers to learning, especially through the support of the learning mentor. The breakfast- and after-school clubs are well attended and highly-valued by parents and carers. The impact of the school's provision is seen in the warm, harmonious atmosphere of the school and positive relationships between pupils and adults.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher, staff and governing body are driving improvement forward satisfactorily. Staffing is being stabilised and there is a drive to bring about greater consistency in the quality of teaching and learning. The leadership and management of subject teaching is currently satisfactory and improving well. Some staff in the school are either newly in post or temporary, with the result that practices are variable and the drive for improvement is not yet consistent across the school. New systems for assessing and tracking pupils' attainment and progress are being introduced. They are not yet fully developed and leaders and managers do not currently have a sufficiently detailed picture of the on-going progress of all pupils. As a result, some aspects of development planning are not as well informed as they could be. The school nevertheless knows its strengths and weaknesses well and its self-evaluation is broadly accurate. Staff extend their own professional development by assisting the headteacher in the school she is supporting.

Safeguarding procedures are good, reflecting the levels of care within the school. There is good practice especially in the recording and monitoring of support for vulnerable pupils. The promotion of equal opportunities is satisfactory, reflecting the variability in the quality

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of teaching, but gaps in pupils' performance are being reduced. Discrimination is extremely rare and when encountered is dealt with well. Engagement with parents and carers is good, especially through the extensive range of newsletters and booklets that keep them informed about the school's work. The school works closely with its neighbouring schools, often leading them in development activities. Through Project Doncaster pupils are beginning to get a better understanding of the different aspects of their local area but community cohesion overall is satisfactory, with underdeveloped links to the wider world. The governing body knows the strengths and areas for development in the school, and is increasingly supporting and challenging the drive for improvement.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

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

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter the Reception class with basic skills that are below, and sometimes well below those typical for their age. They settle well and enjoy their time in the Early Years Foundation Stage because of the good care they receive. There is a strong focus upon developing children's social, mathematical and language skills. Children's learning is well recorded and data is used to inform the next steps in their learning. Parents and carers are well informed about their children's progress and teachers have a good understanding of their interests and needs. Children make good progress as a result of the good teaching in an environment that caters well for their needs. On a few occasions children spend too long sitting on the carpet listening to teachers' explanations. The outdoor area is well used to extend children's experiences of the natural world. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those who are learning English as an additional language, make good progress because of the support they receive. Teachers plan a good range of activities, with a good balance between those they direct and the ones that children choose for themselves. As a result, by the time they leave, children's behaviour is excellent and they are able to play and work together very well, having reached broadly



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expected levels across all areas of learning. Leadership and management are good. Staff training is up-to-date and welfare requirements are fully met. There are good plans in place for driving further improvement.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

## Views of parents and carers

The very large majority of parents and carers who returned the questionnaires are very happy with all aspects of the school. They consider it provides a safe and caring environment for their children and that it is well led and managed.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Mexborough Highwoods 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 inspection team received 62 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 171 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	38	61	23	37	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	39	63	22	35	0	0	1	2
My school informs me about my child's progress	33	53	26	42	2	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	34	55	26	42	2	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	38	61	23	37	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	34	55	26	42	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	36	58	26	42	0	0	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)	37	60	22	35	1	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	35	56	26	42	1	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	36	58	21	34	3	5	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	33	53	24	39	2	3	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	35	56	23	37	2	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	38	61	22	35	2	3	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 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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

## 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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



27 January 2010

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Mexborough Highwoods Primary School, Mexborough, S64 9ES**

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave me and the team when we inspected your school recently. You were very friendly and polite, and enthusiastic about what you do.

Mexborough Highwoods is a satisfactory school. It has some good features. The headteacher, other staff and the governing body are helping it to improve. You get a good start to your learning in the Reception class and make good progress there as a result of the good teaching, care and leadership and management there. Your progress within the rest of the school is varied but overall is satisfactory. The vast majority of you leave the school with average standards in English and mathematics.. Teaching is satisfactory overall but does vary from class to class. The range of subjects that you study is being developed . The school looks after you well, with good care, guidance and support being provided by the many adults who assist the teaching staff in the school. Your behaviour is good. Well done! Your attendance is improving. You have a good sense of what it means to lead a healthy lifestyle, helped by the wide-range of sporting and other activities provided by the school. We have asked the school to consider the following things that will help make it improve:

- make sure that all your lessons are at least good
- help you to better understand the different cultures in wider world
- assess the progress you make in your learning more regularly and use this information more effectively to help the school to improve.

You can help by telling your teachers how best you learn and if you have any problems, and by attending regularly. I wish you the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Dr Nigel Cromey-Hawke

Lead inspector

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