



Springvale Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 106587
LEA Barnsley
Inspection number 277590
Inspection dates 30 November 2005 to 1 December 2005
Reporting inspector Mr George Crowther CfBT Lead Inspector

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Sheffield Road
School category	Community		Penistone
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		Sheffield, South Yorkshire S36 6HJ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01226 763133
Number on roll	238	Fax number	-
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs M Harrison
Date of previous inspection	22 November 1999	Headteacher	Mrs H Smith

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average-sized primary school. Its social context is average to that of most schools. Children's attainment when they start school is similar to, but slightly below, that expected for their age. The proportion of children eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average. A few children are from minority ethnic heritages, but none is at the early stages of learning English. The school has an Artsmark Gold Award recognising good practice in the creative arts, and a Healthy Schools Award. Many recent staff changes have disrupted the school's development. A new building is planned for 2007.

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 that is working successfully through a period of considerable staff change. Although there are inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and learning, and hence children's progress, the leadership of the school has the commitment and means to bring about improvement.

Children are making good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes, even though both teachers are relatively new. In the rest of the school, progress is satisfactory. It is good in some classes because the teaching is good. In the majority of lessons, children's progress in writing is barely satisfactory, with weaknesses in teaching and the curriculum. These have been identified correctly by the school and action is being taken. Improved results in the 2005 Year 6 national tests are a key step forward. On the whole, children of all abilities and backgrounds make similar progress, though more able children are not always challenged sufficiently.

Children's personal development is good. By Year 6, they have a mature approach to their work and carry out significant responsibilities sensibly. Children generally have positive attitudes to learning and their behaviour is good, reflecting good standards of care and guidance. Attendance is good.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory, but the quality varies too much between classes. The curriculum is satisfactory. It is well planned, with strengths in the creative arts and good opportunities beyond lessons. Foundation Stage provision is good.

Leadership and management are satisfactory, with good features. The headteacher's strong leadership is guiding the school successfully through a period of great change. She recognises current inconsistencies in teaching and learning and is tackling them, supported well by senior staff. The school's evaluation of its own work is satisfactory. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality and consistency of teaching and learning.
- Raise standards in writing, as planned, by providing children with more, challenging opportunities to write independently and using their writing to identify targets for improvement.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Children's achievement is satisfactory. Good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes means that, by the time children join Year 1, standards are average. Throughout the rest of the school, progress varies between classes from good to satisfactory, depending on the quality of teaching. Progress is particularly good in Year 6. The 2005 Year 2 test results were below average because the class contained a higher than usual proportion of children with learning difficulties. Current standards are average. The

2005 Year 6 test results were above average and better than the school predicted. The school exceeded its challenging targets. Current standards in Year 6 are average. Measures of children's progress from Year 3 to Year 6, based on national test results, show it is about the same as for most schools.

Progress in writing is barely satisfactory. In most classes, children have too few opportunities to write independently, tasks are insufficiently challenging for the more able, and teachers' marking is not helping children to improve their work. The school has identified these weaknesses and is tackling them.

Since the last inspection, a weakness in children's progress in information and communication technology has been dealt with successfully. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress. The work they do in lessons is usually well-matched to their needs. More able children are not always challenged sufficiently.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Children's personal development is good. The school helps the children to grow in confidence and enjoy their learning. Children say 'We like school because the teachers make the work exciting', which explains why they are usually keen to learn. In most lessons, children have very positive attitudes to their work, but these falter when the teaching lacks pace and challenge. Children are polite, friendly and they behave well. Relationships between children and with teachers are good. One child said 'I like school because no-one feels left out.' Attendance is good.

Children develop a good appreciation of their own well-being. They know how to make healthy choices in the food they eat and the exercise they take. They explain that drinking lots of water helps their brains to be alert. Children feel safe at school and they know how to stay safe out of school. They enjoy expressing their opinions, especially through the Class and School Councils. They like the way staff listen to and act upon their ideas. Special responsibilities for the older children, such as being a prefect or answering the telephone at lunchtime, give them an understanding of contributing to the community. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, but the quality varies too much between classes. Lessons are planned carefully. Teachers' positive management of children is a strong feature of most lessons. Where teaching is good, lessons are lively and interesting, and the children work enthusiastically, as seen when children in Year 1 were checking that sentences made sense. Tasks are challenging for children of all abilities. The good pace of the learning keeps the children on task, for example when

children in Year 6 were improving their writing. Where teaching is satisfactory, but has weaknesses, whole-class sessions last too long and the pace of learning suffers. It is often the boys who lose interest first. Tasks do not provide enough challenge for some children, particularly the more able. The good skills of teaching assistants are not used well enough.

Teachers assess children's learning in lessons, which helps them to decide what needs to be taught next. The use of targets to help children focus on the next step in learning is developing, but is inconsistent. The best marking of children's work identifies points for development but there are too few examples of this. More formal assessments keep a track of children's attainment over time but this information is not used enough to identify groups who may not be doing as well as they should. Assessment is used well to monitor the progress of children with learning difficulties.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory, but not as good as the school's evaluation, owing to inconsistencies in the provision for writing. It does have a number of strengths. It largely meets children's needs and interests, helping them to build their skills and knowledge step by step. Teachers in the Foundation Stage successfully provide a curriculum that is exciting and challenging.

All teachers are making good links between different subject areas, as when children in Year 6 wrote about being evacuated during World War 2. Good progress has been made in improving provision for reading and mathematics and, as a result, standards are rising. The curriculum for the arts is strong. The Creative Partnership, through which subjects such as dance and drama have a strong focus, is having a significant impact on children's confidence and, ultimately, their learning.

The curriculum is enriched effectively by many opportunities to take part in educational visits to places of interest. Workshops led by visiting artists have led to some high-quality work. A wide range of extra-curricular opportunities, including sport, music, creative arts and cookery, is one of the children's favourite things about school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school takes good care of all its pupils. Children say they trust the staff and know who to turn to if they need help. The family service at lunchtime and the older children acting as 'buddies' show how the children are taught to care for each other. Children say they feel safe in school. The rare instances of bullying are dealt with swiftly and effectively.

Arrangements for preparing children for the next step in their education are good, as seen when Nursery and Reception-aged children joined their next classes and were quickly at home. Child protection and health and safety procedures are clear and followed well. Good links with outside agencies ensure a range of support for the children. Effective strategies are in place for the early identification of children who

may need additional support. Parents and carers feel welcome in the school and are encouraged to be involved in their children's education. The school works closely with families and parenting classes are well supported.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher is a strong leader. Her passion for the school and its children is recognised and appreciated by everyone. During a period of many staff changes, which have disrupted the development of the school, the headteacher has maintained strengths, such as the rich arts' curriculum. She is now in the process of rebuilding a cohesive staff team. Literacy and numeracy are managed effectively by experienced co-ordinators and standards are already rising in reading and mathematics. At present, most other subjects lack strong leadership. The school has shown, however, its capacity to continue to improve.

The school carries out effective checks on the quality of its work. It has identified weaknesses in the quality of learning in some classes and underachievement in writing. At present, however, action to tackle these weaknesses is at an early stage because many teachers are new to the school. The current school improvement plan identifies correct priorities but there are too many and the key priorities are not given sufficient prominence. As a result, staff and governors are not crystal clear about the most important areas for improvement.

The school meets the needs of children from all backgrounds and of all abilities, though more able children are not challenged sufficiently in some classes. Governors', parents' and children's views are sought regularly and taken into account. Governance is satisfactory. Governors are very supportive and keen to help the school move forward, but they are not sufficiently well informed about what the school does well and what needs to be improved. As a result, they are not in a position to ask searching questions of senior managers. Financial management is good and resources are efficiently deployed ensuring satisfactory value for money.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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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	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

We visited your school last week to find out if it is giving you the education you should receive. Thank you for making us feel so welcome and for being so helpful when we asked you questions. We enjoyed talking with you, looking at your work and finding out about the things you like doing.

We think there are lots of good things about your school, but we discovered two ways in which we think your learning could be even better. The things we particularly like are:

- everyone is friendly and helpful and so your school is a very happy place to be
- most of the time, you are keen on your lessons and you work hard
- you said your teachers make lessons exciting, and we saw some exciting lessons too
- we like the interesting art work you do, particularly the large photos
- when you are given jobs to do, you carry them out very sensibly
- the school cares for everyone and makes sure you are safe
- you enjoy the good range of clubs and activities outside lessons
- we enjoyed looking at your interesting work attractively displayed around the school.

We would like you to work with your teachers to improve the way you learn.

- In some lessons, you do not get as much done as you could. We have asked your teachers to make the work even more challenging and to make sure you work quickly. You will have to help.

- We want you to improve the quality of your writing by spending more time on it and trying really hard to make it interesting.

Thank you for helping us so much with the inspection of your school. Please share this letter with the other children. We both hope you will carry on enjoying learning and helping your teachers to make Springvale Primary School a good place to be.