



Silkstone Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 106602
LEA Barnsley
Inspection number 277593
Inspection dates 20 February 2006 to 21 February 2006
Reporting inspector Mr Terry McDermott CfBT Lead Inspector

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	High Street
School category	Community		Silkstone
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Barnsley, South Yorkshire S75 4LR
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01226 790333
Number on roll	194	Fax number	01226 790333
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr A Coe
Date of previous inspection	28 November 2000	Headteacher	Mr S Barber

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This average sized school serves the village of Silkstone to the west of Barnsley. This is an area of some social advantage, and the number of pupils eligible for free school meals is much less than average. All pupils speak English as their first language. Attendance is above average. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is about one third of the national average. A new headteacher has been in post since September 2005.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school with some outstanding features. It gives good value for money.

Under the enthusiastic leadership of a new headteacher, it accurately evaluates its own

strengths and areas for improvement. Inspectors largely agree with the school's view of

its effectiveness although they found pupils' development and well-being and the care,

guidance and support provided for them to be even better than the school judges.

Achievement is good. Pupils start school with above average standards. They make good progress overall and, as a result, they leave at the end of Year 6 with standards that are exceptionally high.

Pupils show outstanding regard for one another. They are mature, sensitive and sensible. The school takes excellent care of them. Older pupils undertake 'buddy' roles to support the younger ones. Pupils really enjoy their life at school. Relationships between all adults and pupils are good. Behaviour is excellent both in lessons and during break times. Standards in the Foundation Stage are above average, learning is good, and pupils make good progress.

Teaching is consistently good and on occasions outstanding. Pupils find lessons interesting. They have a clear desire to learn and they make good progress but they do

not always know what they need to do next to get better.

The new headteacher has reinvigorated an already successful school and the staff are fully engaged with a drive to raise achievement still higher. Previously high standards have been maintained. There is good capacity for further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

Raise attainment and improve achievement further by clearly and consistently:

- telling pupils what they are going to learn in every lesson so that they are clear about what they are to achieve and can check this at the end of the lesson
- ensuring that marking in books informs pupils about what they need to do next to improve.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils start Reception year with above average levels of attainment. Because provision in the Foundation Stage is good, pupils make good progress through Reception and into Years 1 and 2. As a result of this good progress, standards have been significantly above average overall at the end of Key Stage 1 for the past five years although there has been a gradual fall in standards since 2003. This is explained by the prior attainment of pupils in Year 2 during this time. Particular characteristics of the 2005 group of Year 2 pupils account for standards in writing being lower than usual that year.

Good progress in Years 3 to 6 means that standards have been exceptionally high at the end of Year 6 in recent years. Standards have risen sharply in the past three years, especially in English and mathematics. The extra support arranged for Years 3 to 6 by the active and very skilful deputy headteacher has made a strong contribution to the school's continued success in raising standards. No group of pupils underachieves.

The information contained in the well established system for checking pupils' progress allows the school to set challenging targets for pupils in Year 6. It consistently meets these targets and often exceeds them. High standards in English and mathematics indicate that pupils have the skills to equip them for future economic well-being.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The school makes outstanding provision for pupils' personal development and well-being. As a result, pupils are friendly, helpful and very polite; their behaviour is exemplary in lessons and around the school; and they take responsibility for ensuring that others, such as new or younger pupils, are looked after and happy.

Pupils' social and moral development are outstanding. Pupils state emphatically that they have never experienced bullying. The school is a very harmonious community where pupils play and work in very supportive and helpful ways. Their spiritual and cultural development are good. School assemblies provide good opportunities for reflection. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of ethnic diversity is good because work in art and music reflects the influences of many cultures and because of a wide range of visits and visitors to the school.

Attendance is above average. Pupils say they like school. When asked what was special about the school, one pupil replied, 'It's a brilliant place to be'. This comment is typical of pupils' views about their school.

The school encourages pupils to adopt healthy lifestyles. Large numbers engage in an extensive variety of sports and games. Pupils talk confidently and knowingly about healthy diets, the importance of exercise and general safety.

The school council is active and taken very seriously. Pupils contribute to the wider community by helping to raise funds for local charities and environmental good causes.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Some outstanding lessons were seen. All staff have high expectations for pupils' behaviour and achievement. Consequently, pupils want to do well and work very hard. The pace of learning is fast, particularly in the outstanding lessons. Pupils enjoy lessons and make good progress both in activities which involve the whole class and when working independently. Teachers are skilled at making lessons lively and interesting through introducing a variety of well resourced activities. The emphasis on engaging pupils in discussion and effective questioning enable even the youngest pupils to communicate confidently and express their ideas well.

Teachers make good use of information gathered from assessment to ensure that work set is well matched to the needs of individual pupils. This means that high attaining pupils are challenged well and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities also take a full and active part in lessons. However, there is some variation in the quality of marking and teachers do not consistently remind pupils of what they are to learn from the lesson. Pupils could make even better progress if they were clearer about what they are trying to achieve and how they might go about improving their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good overall with some excellent enrichment activities. This helps pupils enjoy school and achieve well. Work in lessons is complemented by an outstanding array of lunchtime and after school clubs. Pupils have many opportunities to participate in high quality musical activities and to engage in sport. The school makes good use of museums and other educational facilities in the locality. There is a good emphasis on promoting safe and healthy lifestyles. Systems to monitor and support pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are exemplary. The school is fully aware of those pupils who

have additional gifts and talents and implements effective strategies to support them. Good links with a local secondary school help pupils in Year 6 to make a smooth transition to the next stage of education.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school is an extremely caring community where all pupils are valued and flourish. Pupils feel safe, happy and secure at school. Parents praise the school highly; for example, one described it as 'a lovely caring and well disciplined school'. Child protection requirements and health and safety procedures are securely established and are well understood by staff. Excellent systems are in place to ensure that children

make a confident start when they join the Reception class. These include pairing the children with older pupils who look after them in the playground. The exemplary procedures to identify vulnerable pupils and strong links with parents and outside agencies ensure that these pupils, like others, are well supported. Staff are skilled at providing pupils with just the right level of guidance to help them to become independent learners. Pupils are closely involved in setting and evaluating their learning targets.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The recently appointed headteacher motivates staff very well, bringing out the best in them and in pupils. As one senior member of staff said, 'He is allowing us to blossom'. The headteacher has quickly ascertained the strengths of the school and has pinpointed areas for further development. Since his arrival, he has introduced a good range of strategies aimed at raising standards still further. He has built a wide based leadership team with a clear focus on continuing to raise achievement for all pupils. Recently introduced procedures for developing the monitoring of teaching have the support of all staff. Information on how well pupils are making progress is up to date and valid. It is used effectively to help teachers in planning lessons.

The school runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis and provides a fully inclusive, calm and pleasant learning environment for pupils. The school is justifiably proud of the high regard in which it is held by parents, and it involves them very well in their children's learning. The experienced and effective governing body is committed to its role as a 'critical friend' and takes its responsibilities seriously.

The headteacher's clear focus on improvement, the active and skilled involvement of senior staff, and the sophisticated analysis of the progress which pupils make, together with the school's good track record in helping pupils to achieve well, indicate that it has the capacity to improve further.

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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?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	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?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	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?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	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?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	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

Thank you for looking after us when we visited your school. We appreciated the welcome you gave to us and the time many of you gave to talk with us, and to let us know your views. I liked having dinner with you, and particularly liked your singing (and the magic!) in assemblies.

These are our main findings from the inspection

- Silkstone is a very welcoming school. You told us that the adults in school look after you and keep you safe. We found that the school really wants you to stay healthy and is doing all it can to help you to achieve healthy lifestyles in what you eat, and how you exercise.
- Your behaviour is extremely good, and you listen very well to the views of others. We found that you looked after each other exceptionally well, respected the adults who help you, and also looked after the environment around you.
- We asked your parents and carers for their views of your school. They nearly all said how much they appreciate and value the work that all the staff do for you.
- You told us you like lessons because they are exciting and interesting. We think they are too. We think that you work hard, make good progress, and reach high standards, but we also think that the teachers could help you to do even better.
- So we have asked Mr Barber to make sure that the teachers tell you clearly what you are going to learn at the start of every lesson, and we have also asked that they write in all your books, telling you what you need to do to reach the next level of learning.

Thank you once again for helping us on our visit. Please keep working hard and doing your best, and good luck to you all for the future.