



Armthorpe Southfield Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 106723
LEA Doncaster
Inspection number 277612
Inspection dates 24 April 2006 to 25 April 2006
Reporting inspector Mrs Jane Hughes CfBT Lead Inspector

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Tranmoor Lane
School category	Community		Armthorpe
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Doncaster, South Yorkshire DN3 3BN
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01302 831 824
Number on roll	180	Fax number	01302 300 626
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr M Lynes
Date of previous inspection	20 November 2000	Headteacher	Mrs G Geraghty

Age group 4 to 11	Inspection dates 24 April 2006 - 25 April 2006	Inspection number 277612
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average school in a former mining village. Approximately a third of pupils enter or leave at times other than the usual. The newly built Foundation Stage Unit opened in October 2005 and now provides part time sessions for 26 nursery age children in addition to the previous full time Reception intake. The proportion of children known to be eligible for free school meals is lower than average. A broadly average proportion of children have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. None has a statement of special educational need. A very small proportion of children come from minority ethnic groups.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school that provides excellent value for money. The school evaluates its overall effectiveness as good but inspectors find this judgement too modest. This view also applies to all other aspects of its work. An outstanding school when last inspected, its pursuit of the highest quality education for children has never wavered. Tenacious leaders have successfully addressed the minor issues raised previously. Children achieve extremely well overall due to first class teaching, the rich and varied curriculum and a keen focus on moulding effective learners. Provision for children in the new Foundation Stage Unit is outstanding. Children of all ages enjoy school as reflected in their above average attendance. They display highly commendable attitudes to learning and their behaviour is first class. This is particularly impressive in view of the challenges presented by a high proportion of children joining the school throughout the school year. The school offers the highest levels of care with an increasing emphasis on children's emotional as well as physical well-being. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve as well as others. In 2005, test results showed a smaller than expected proportion of higher attaining children reached the highest levels. The school has addressed this with characteristic vigour and success. All adults, including governors, set very high expectations and show relentless determination to help each child to embrace challenge as they become successful learners. All adults are 'leaders for learning' here as they work relentlessly towards the common goal of empowering children to become self-confident, life-long learners. There is undoubted capacity for further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- The school has well planned strategies to raise standards and accelerate children's achievement. It should continue to follow its particular focus on improving the achievement of higher attaining children.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Children's achievement is outstanding. They start school with broadly average skills although this varies considerably each year. They make good progress through the Foundation Stage and most attain the level of skills expected of them by Year 1. In 2005, results in the national tests at the end of Year 2 were just above the national average; in Year 6, they were significantly so. This represents very good achievement, particularly as about one third of children did not start their education here. For various reasons beyond the school's control, similar numbers of junior children left before the end of Year 6. This has a marked and continuing impact on test results which do not always reflect, therefore, the excellent gains children make during their time in school. Children joining the school at different times bring particular challenges and staff respond extremely well to their needs. The school is justifiably proud of the impressive support Higher Level Teaching Assistants and other classroom assistants offer children

with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. They make as much progress as other children. Rigorous analysis of test results correctly identified higher attaining children as requiring additional focus. Classroom practice underlines this ongoing commitment. Current performance in Years 2 and 6 shows children are on track to meet and exceed the very challenging targets set.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Children's personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding. Their behaviour is exemplary and attendance levels are above average. Children clearly enjoy all aspects of learning and show impressive knowledge of what they are learning and why. Teachers set the bar high and these children do not disappoint. They are eager to learn and concentrate well. They work well independently and volunteer mature contributions to discussions. They know teachers expect the best from them and they are equally rigorous as they work with learning partners. When asked if there is any unacceptable behaviour in school children replied, 'Oooh no! Everyone's much too friendly for that here!' The real family atmosphere extends outside the classroom to the dinner hall and playgrounds. Children delight in the pagodas and fountain that enliven the outdoor environment and relax in the sensory room. They treat everything with respect and show excellent commitment to the school community. For example, children practised diligently their contributions to a class assembly to bring them up to scratch. They have an increasing awareness of healthy lifestyles and a good understanding of safe practices. School councillors proudly carry out their duties and older children run the healthy tuck shop with an eagle eye.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Teaching here is shaped by teachers' very high expectations which require children to behave very well, concentrate hard and work to the best of their ability. Teachers know children well. They monitor children's performance assiduously and squeeze every last drop of learning out of each lesson. They use assessment extremely well to match work to children's individual needs. The school rightly identified the teaching of the highest attainers as an area for improvement and teachers have been successful in modifying their planning and practice to challenge this group further. Other groups, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, are taught with similar expertise. As a result, children enjoy their learning and achieve very well. A significant feature of this impressive teaching is how well adults enable children to consider how they learn and not just what they learn. Stimulating relationships between adults and children are used effectively to demand the best from children. Learning successfully builds on what the children have learned before. Adults manage children's behaviour with great skill

and children are engrossed in activities. Lessons enthuse and stimulate children because teachers have high expectations and wring the last ounce of knowledge from them. Marking is consistently good and helps children to judge their own progress against individual targets.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is outstanding. It goes far beyond statutory requirements by offering creativity and diversity much valued by children and parents. Teachers are very successful in making effective links between subjects such as language, mathematics and information and communications technology (ICT), and children enjoy this style of learning. Excellent creative and sporting partnerships support the school's mission to develop children into global learners. They learn Spanish and look far beyond the immediate area in some lessons. Parents comment, 'The school aims to develop children as rounded people' and the curriculum firmly places this ambition at its centre as it meets the needs and aspirations of all, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Adults offer daily opportunities to learn important life skills such as living a healthy lifestyle and an increasing awareness of risks. There is a varied selection of extra-curricular opportunities for all age groups. Sports and music activities spark children's interest and many participate eagerly.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Outstanding care, guidance and support for children are at the heart of this school. Adults nurture children and carefully monitor their personal development and academic progress. Children know their own targets and how to improve their performance. Vulnerable children and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are quickly identified and very well supported. Many benefit from the behaviour improvement programme. Robust child protection procedures safeguard children and adults. Children say their opinions are valued; they feel safe and know that adults will help them when necessary. Health and safety routines are rigorous. Governors are diligent in their monitoring and all school staff, including lunchtime supervisors, kitchen staff and caretaking personnel make strong contributions to the high quality care. Parents strongly agree. A typical comment is, 'staff look after the children like their own'. Children move easily from one phase of their education to the next because of the excellent induction and transfer arrangements.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Leadership and management are outstanding throughout the school. The headteacher and her deputy set fine examples of a constant desire for improvement and this filters through the whole school. All adults work with unflagging determination to enable children to produce their very best. Driven senior and subject leaders evaluate their

already high quality work in an effort to improve still further. Good practice spreads within and beyond the school among local partners. Meticulous analysis of performance identifies the correct development priorities such as the current focus on the achievement of higher attaining children. Everyone strives to make each moment a learning moment. Adults transfer skills across age groups with consummate ease. For example, successful elements of a particular approach in Year 6 are broken down and used equally well in the Reception and nursery classes. This is a powerful skill that benefits all. The school canvasses the views of parents and children and acts on them. Most parents feel they are true partners in their children's education.

The conscientious governing body fulfils its statutory requirements very well. Governors are very knowledgeable about the school's undoubted strengths and where their efforts are best placed to ensure continued improvement. They rightly describe their school as 'happy, purposeful, very effective and friendly... we get sucked along with it!'

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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?	1	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	1	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	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?	1	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1	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	1	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	1	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1	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?	1	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	1	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	1	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	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 making us so welcome in your school during our recent visit. We were delighted to meet you and have the opportunity to speak to so many of you.

We think your school is absolutely great! The formal, Ofsted, word for this is 'outstanding' and you will find that word used again and again if you read our report.

Here are just a few of the many excellent things we liked about your school:

- the way all the adults in your school take such very good care of you
- the outstanding progress you all make in your learning
- the soothing sensory suite and the fantastic new Foundation Stage Unit
- you all work so hard in lessons, try your best and behave beautifully
- your teachers prepare exciting lessons and turn you into great little learners
- Mrs Geraghty provides the whole school with an impressive example of a successful leader - firm, fair, friendly and forever challenging.

In a school that is already doing as well as yours, there is little to improve. It's more a case of continuing to do as well - a challenge in itself - so we have asked your headteacher and all the adults to do just one thing to make it even better:

- to continue to help the higher attaining children to make even better progress.

So congratulations to everyone! Carry on working really hard and enjoying every minute.