



Carcroft Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 106757
LEA Doncaster
Inspection number 277625
Inspection dates 19 September 2005 to 20 September 2005
Reporting inspector Mrs Anna Dawson CfBT Lead Inspector

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Owston Road
School category	Community		Carcroft
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		Doncaster, South Yorkshire DN6 8DR
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01302 722353
Number on roll	240	Fax number	01302 337358
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Ms S Wray
Date of previous inspection	10 April 2000	Headteacher	Mr Simon Hickton

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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 situated in an area of considerable social and economic deprivation to the north of Doncaster. At 40%, there are a high percentage of pupils entitled to a free school meal. The school has received an Excellence in Cities government grant to support its provision. There are very few pupils from minority ethnic groups and all pupils speak English as a first language. The majority of children start in the nursery with poor language and social skills that are well below those normally expected for children of this age. Some 31% of pupils have learning difficulties, which is well above average, and a few of these pupils have physical disabilities. Pupil mobility is high. The school is being refurbished to accommodate provision for 0 to 5-year olds as part of the Adwick Children's Centre. Parents support the school well and are appreciative of the education their children receive.

There has been a change of headship since the last inspection. The headteacher has currently been in post for two years.

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. The school provides good value for money. Inspectors agree with the school's evaluation of its performance in all aspects of its work. Teaching and learning overall are good. The staff have created a happy, orderly community in which every child matters and is cared for and helped to flourish. Consequently, pupils enjoy school and are well behaved and keen to learn. The children in the Foundation Stage are extremely well provided for. Given their poor skills on entry to the nursery, children make very good progress in all areas of learning. By the time they reach the end of their reception year most are working towards the nationally expected targets that are set for them. Throughout the school, pupils make particularly good progress in science where standards are average. Standards are not quite as high in English and mathematics. The school has recognised that writing and problem-solving skills in mathematics for some average and higher attaining pupils could be better improved. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress. Pupils' personal development is good. Leadership and management are good overall. The leadership of the headteacher is outstanding. He has put extremely good systems in place to check how well the school is doing and improve the professional development of the staff. Consequently, the strategies set for improvement are accurate and appropriate. The senior leadership team work effectively with the headteacher and the staff towards the targets identified for improvement. The school has resolved the issues from the last inspection. Since then it has continued to improve the quality of the teaching and learning, curricular provision, relationships with parents and the learning environment. Standards are rising. The school is well placed to make further improvements.

What the school should do to improve further

The school development plan already recognises the following areas where improvement is needed:

- Continue to raise the attainment of average and higher attaining pupils in the development of their writing skills and problem-solving skills in mathematics.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The school judges pupils' standards and achievement as good and the inspectors agree. Children get a very good start to their education in the Foundation Stage. The majority of children enter the nursery with language and social skills that are well below average. By the end of reception they have made very good progress and most are working towards the national learning goals expected of children of this age. In Years 1 and 2, pupils continue to make good progress in their basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics and most attain the expected standards by the end of Year 2. In Years 3 to 6, progress continues to be good overall and accelerates in Years 5 and 6 as pupils approach the national tests. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make

equally good progress. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds make similar progress to other pupils. Standards in science match the national average and are slightly higher than in English or mathematics. Standards in English and mathematics are currently a focus for improvement. Pupils' writing is the weaker aspect of English and, in mathematics, pupils' problem-solving skills are not as well developed as they could be. As a result of action taken, standards are rising this year and although they are better than those in the last two years, there is still room for further improvement. Targets set for standards in English, mathematics and science are realistic, challenging and, for the most part, achieved.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development is good and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is also good. They are encouraged to understand the moral choices that are part of living in society by their participation in writing class rules and, through the School Council, by contributing to the school's behaviour policy. Their social development is promoted through the good relationships between pupils and adults and positive initiatives, such as when older pupils support younger ones at lunchtime. The re-organised lunchtime supervisory system has a strong emphasis on developing pupils' social skills through purposeful play. Pupils' cultural development is addressed within religious education and through the arts, for example, a recent Indian dance project.

Pupils have a positive attitude to learning, enjoy attending school and want to do well. They appreciate the commitment of staff to their well-being. Pupils' behaviour is good in lessons and when moving about school.

Pupils are taught well to be aware of health and safety issues. Pupils say they feel safe in school and have the confidence in staff to care for and help them. Pupils contribute to their local community in several ways, for example, working with homes for the elderly, participation in the conversion of a piece of waste ground to a community garden and fund raising for several good causes. Pupils' understanding of the world of work is developing well, exemplified by participation in a technology challenge and links with a national supermarket.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The school believes teaching to be good and this overall judgement was confirmed during the inspection. In the Foundation Stage, however, teaching is exceptionally good and is characterised by strong planning for developing skills, a rich curriculum and a strong focus on the development of language and social skills. Throughout the school, teachers have a good knowledge of the subjects they teach. Lesson planning is detailed and thorough and teachers use a range of methods to make learning fun.

There is a good focus on teaching basic skills. Teachers are raising standards in English and the school is seeking to further improve the quality of pupils' writing by developing it further in all subjects. A weakness in mathematics is being addressed by a strategy combining a focus on calculation with increased opportunities for mental and investigative mathematics.

The teachers have a very good understanding of where pupils are up to in their learning and what they need to do next to improve their work. There are extremely good systems for recording, sharing and analysing that knowledge to improve the quality of their lessons. The school welcomes and includes all pupils with a range of needs in its life and work. Teaching of pupils with educational learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good. Teaching assistants make a good contribution to the learning of the individual pupils they support and to classes as a whole.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The inspectors agree with the school's evaluation that it provides a good curriculum that meets statutory requirements. It strongly promotes pupils' learning of basic literacy and numeracy skills and makes good provision for pupils' personal development. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well provided for. Parents are particularly pleased with the way the school caters well for all learning needs. The curriculum is enhanced effectively by a range of well-attended sporting and music activities in and beyond the normal school day. These activities help the pupils to extend their learning skills and contribute to their enjoyment of school. Pupils speak with enthusiasm about their lessons, especially learning new languages such as French or Spanish. One pupil said that 'learning is fun'. 'Brain Gym' and the development of pupils' thinking skills helps the pupils to be more involved in their learning. Pupils benefit from the specialist teaching of local high school teachers, for example, in foreign languages and physical education, which enriches pupils' learning experiences.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care, guidance and support for pupils are good. One of the pupils remarked, 'the teachers help you all the time, they just love you to bits'. There was no indication of bullying during the inspection and evidence from pupils and parents suggests that this is not an issue in school. Parents appreciate the care given to pupils; one parent remarked that the headteacher 'clamps down on bullying big time'. Procedures for child protection are good. Over the past few years, the school has worked hard to improve the level of attendance and it is now slightly above the national figures.

Staff have a good knowledge of where pupils are up to with their learning and help them improve. The school's positive approach to behaviour management is effective in raising pupils' confidence and self-esteem. Staff seek to make learning fun and pupils enjoy being in school. The school has gained a Healthy School Award and does much to encourage pupils to adopt a healthy lifestyle, incorporating a healthy diet and exercise. The breakfast club provides a good start to the day for pupils who attend.

A range of opportunities, such as an annual 'Fit is Fun' day and 'Freddie Fit' sessions are on offer to help pupils keep fit and appreciate the benefits of exercise. The school is currently redesigning its accommodation to create the space to offer two hours of physical activities for all pupils each week. Relationships with parents have improved significantly over the last two years and this has helped pupils' learning. There are very good relationships with other schools in the neighbourhood. The Foundation Stage provides pupils with a good start to their learning. By the time they leave school at age 11 they are well prepared for their next school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The inspectors agree with the school's judgement that leadership and management are good overall. The headteacher provides outstanding leadership. Within two years he has gained the confidence of the staff, the school community and has made considerable progress in improving the learning environment and the quality of education that the school provides. Parents are very supportive of the positive changes made by the headteacher and say they are now welcomed into school and feel involved in school life. There are high expectations for the pupils to succeed and overcome any barriers to learning. This drives the headteacher and staff to constantly review and evaluate the quality of provision.

The quality of self-evaluation is very effective. The priorities identified for school improvement are well-founded and based securely on a rigorous evaluation of the school's work. These are linked well to the professional development of the staff. This process is strong and underpins the progress made in the development of the school. The senior leadership team work effectively in partnership with the headteacher. They analyse pupils' progress and performance data extremely well. This guides their planning to bring about further improvements. The monitoring of teaching provides an accurate assessment of the quality of teaching and learning. The school is responsive to the needs of the community and involves pupils, governors and parents in its work. Parents appreciate the learning courses provided for them and say they help them to be more involved with their children's learning.

The governing body fulfils its statutory responsibilities. Governors take a keen interest in the school and work well with the headteacher. Financial planning is very good. The governors and headteacher have worked hard to resolve a potentially deficit budget. Successful bids have been made to purchase additional learning resources and improve the level of staffing.

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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?	2	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?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	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?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	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?	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?	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?	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	1	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	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

As you know, two school inspectors visited your school recently to find out if the school is giving you the education you should receive.

First of all, thank you very much for welcoming us to your school so well. We enjoyed talking to you about your work and finding out about the things you like doing.

I am pleased to say that the school has many strengths and some outstanding features. A great deal has been done to improve your school within the last two years, especially by Mr Hickton. He has received the support of the governors, your parents and especially the teachers. Thanks to their efforts, your positive attitudes, good behaviour and hard work you learn well and enjoy school.

We have asked your teachers to continue to improve lessons. We think they can help you to do even better in English and mathematics, especially the quality of your writing and problem solving skills in mathematics.

Thank you for helping us with the inspection of the school. We hope that you will carry on enjoying lessons and continue to help your teachers to make Carcroft Primary School an exciting and happy place to learn.