



Rawmarsh Thorogate Junior and Infant School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 106910
LEA Rotherham
Inspection number 277659
Inspection dates 24 January 2006 to 25 January 2006
Reporting inspector Mr Stephen Hardwick HMI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Thorogate
School category	Community		Rawmarsh
Age range of pupils	5 to 11		Rotherham, South Yorkshire S62 7HS
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01709 710033
Number on roll	198	Fax number	01709 523819
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr C Hepworth
Date of previous inspection	29 November 1999	Headteacher	Mrs S Darby

Age group 5 to 11	Inspection dates 24 January 2006 - 25 January 2006	Inspection number 277659
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools and an additional inspector.

Description of the school

Thorogate Junior and Infant School serves part of Rawmarsh, a small township in the north of Rotherham. It is of average size, and almost all the pupils are white British. The percentage eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils who have additional learning difficulties and/or disabilities is also below average. However, the school additionally caters for up to 12 pupils who have statements of special educational need for emotional and behavioural difficulties (EBD); these pupils are drawn from across Rotherham and spend part of each week at Thorogate and part in their local school.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Thorogate provides its pupils with a satisfactory education, but one with many strengths. The school judges each aspect of its work and its overall effectiveness to be good. In most respects this is the case, but the pupils in Key Stage 2 have made insufficient progress, particularly in mathematics, to capitalise on the good start they make in the Foundation Stage and the high standards they reach in Key Stage 1. Nonetheless, standards in Key Stage 2 have risen and are above average. The quality of teaching reflects the pupils' progress: it is good overall but better and more consistent in the younger classes. The pupils for their part enjoy lessons, work hard and behave well. Good provision is made for the pupils with additional learning difficulties or disabilities, including those who attend part time within the special unit.

The headteacher provides effective leadership and management. The school's plans are well judged and based on appropriate priorities, and there is a comprehensive programme for monitoring progress. The staff and governors recognise the school's strengths and weaknesses and there is a shared will to move forward.

The school has tackled the issues from its inspection in 1999. The co-ordinators contribute strongly to management through following individual action plans. Standards are higher throughout the school but there is still a gap in the performance of the two key stages. Nonetheless, the school's capacity to improve is strong, as manifest in the sharp rise in standards in English, in the action being taken and in assessments that indicate that test results in mathematics at Year 6 should rise. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

The school's plans recognise its priorities. These are to:

- raise standards in Key Stage 2, especially in mathematics
- raise the quality of teaching at Key Stage 2.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

The pupils join the Reception class with average levels of attainment, having received nursery education at a variety of providers. They make good progress in the Reception class and Key Stage 1. The pupils reach or exceed the nationally set Early Learning Goals when they enter Year 1; and the school's results in the national tests for Year 2 pupils have risen steadily since 2002, and have been above average. In 2005 they were particularly high: almost all the pupils reached the basic standard expected for their age, and significant proportions of them reached the higher level, especially in mathematics.

The pupils' scores in the national tests at Key Stage 2 have shown greater variation. They were above average in English and science in 2005, in the percentage of pupils

gaining the basic Level 4 and in those gaining the higher Level 5. The English results showed a marked improvement when compared with those for 2004. However, the results in mathematics were not as strong, though they matched the national average. This weakness in mathematics was also reflected in the school's own assessment of the pupils' progress in Years 4 and 5 during the last school year. The school is tackling standards in mathematics effectively. The school's own assessments, the quality of teaching and the work of the Year 5 and 6 pupils suggest that the proportion reaching Level 4 should rise.

Based on their test results at the end of Key Stage 1, the pupils who took the national tests in Year 6 in 2005 made progress that was just below average in English and science, but well below average in mathematics.

The school judges the pupils' achievement and standards to be good. While this is true for the younger pupils this is not the case at Key Stage 2, where the rate of progress has not been consistently sustained.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils speak warmly about their enjoyment of school. They say they feel safe and secure and that staff will always listen when they need help. They report that there is no bullying, and that the occasional instance of poor behaviour is very well managed. Attendance and behaviour are both very good and pupils' attitudes towards each other and to adults are always positive.

Provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Moral and social skills are promoted well within the curriculum and through the school's inclusive ethos. A valuable link has been formed with a Leicester school with predominantly Asian-heritage pupils, which has helped pupils' understanding of different cultures.

The pupils know how to be healthy and to stay safe. The school has achieved external accreditation as a healthy school and also holds the Sports Activemark Gold award and the Football Association Charter Mark. Pupils are able to reflect on their learning and to discuss their feelings and values. They learn to work collaboratively and independently, and some can explain what they need to do to improve, particularly in English. These skills should hold the pupils in good stead for the future and, through visits, they learn about the world beyond school.

The school council provides pupils with a good model of democracy in action, including pupil elections and manifestos. Through the council's work, pupils make good contributions to the running of the school and to the community, for example with fund-raising activities.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching mirrors the pupils' progress: it is good overall but there is variation. It is good or better in the Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1 and the EBD unit; and satisfactory or good in Key Stage 2. The teaching in the oldest two classes is effectively addressing the pupils' relatively weak performance in mathematics.

The lessons are well planned, prepared and organised. They are based on well-judged learning objectives that are routinely shared with the pupils and then used to gauge whether what was intended has been achieved. Care is taken to provide topics and materials that interest the pupils, and the teachers give clear explanations. Additional adults are well used to support particular groups of pupils. The better lessons benefit from a high level of challenge, with the teachers making regular checks on the pupils' understanding. In the lessons that are satisfactory overall, the main weakness is an over-emphasis on instruction from the teacher at the expense of allowing the pupils time to practise and consolidate what they are being taught.

The pupils are willing learners. They are attentive, concentrate, organise their equipment, know the routines and readily collaborate in pairs or groups.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school provides a rich and diverse curriculum that is based, as far as possible, on first-hand experience. It meets pupils' needs well, especially those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Statutory requirements are met. Physical education is a particular strength, with good use of the resources available at the local secondary school. A coherent and developing programme of personal, social and health education helps pupils to understand their own feelings and to relate well to each other. The curriculum is enhanced by many additional activities which pupils value highly and help to run. These include residential trips as well as a good range of lunchtime and after-school clubs.

Provision in the Foundation Stage and in the EBD unit is good. Pupils attending the unit follow programmes that are very well matched to their needs. These support their often weak literacy skills well and are carefully planned. In the Foundation Stage there is an appropriate balance between formal learning and opportunities for pupils to choose from a well-judged range activities.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The pupils are very well cared for. Staff show great concern for the welfare of each pupil and are particularly supportive of individuals who have problems. High standards

of behaviour are set and maintained through appropriate rewards and sanctions, which are understood by the pupils.

Arrangements for child protection and risk assessments are rigorous. The school building is clean and well maintained; resources have been used sensibly to improve the accommodation and it provides a good learning environment.

The pupils' progress in English and mathematics is carefully tracked. Targets are set and regularly reviewed and they are shared with parents. The pupils are encouraged to think for themselves and teachers are beginning to help them to evaluate their own work. There is very good practice in some classes which has the potential to enable pupils to learn more effectively.

Pupils attending the EBD unit receive good, individual attention. Most present considerable challenges, often being reluctant to learn or demonstrating poor behaviour, but the unit's inclusive approach enables them to make good progress. Pupils and staff in the unit are very well integrated into the school's mainstream provision and a high proportion of the unit's pupils are successfully re-integrated into their mainstream school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher provides good leadership and management. There is a common sense of purpose in the school, a strong ethos for learning, and an inclusive approach that supports the pupils' well-being and their similar opportunities to succeed. The headteacher is well supported by the acting deputy headteacher and the teachers, both through their classroom work and in their roles as co-ordinators.

The governing body fulfils its responsibilities and maintains close contact with the school, for instance through visiting lessons. While governors are well aware of the school's shortcomings, they depend on the headteacher for reports on its progress.

The school's plan for improvement is well conceived and based on appropriate priorities. It is underpinned by detailed separate action plans for each subject. Resources are deployed accordingly and there is a comprehensive programme for monitoring and checking that actions are proving effective. The school has a generally accurate picture of its strengths and weaknesses. The teachers are all drawn into this work, providing a growing pool of management expertise and, alongside the views of parents and governors, they contribute to an annual review of the school's position.

The school has made satisfactory progress since it was inspected in 1999. The co-ordinators now play a full part in the school's work, and standards have risen, though there is still a gap in the relative performance at Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. The school's better results in English demonstrate the capacity to improve, and much effort is now being directed at quickening the pupils' progress in mathematics. This has involved increased assessment, targets for pupils, the strategic deployment of teachers and booster work. The need for improvement is well recognised by the teachers, who are working hard to succeed.

There are strong links with the community, particularly with the secondary school in relation to its specialist sports status, and parents are very appreciative of what is provided for their children. This was particularly apparent in a high quality session run by the headteacher to show parents of pupils in the Reception class how they can help with reading.

The school provides 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	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?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	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	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	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?	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	2	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	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

Thank you for your help when we inspected your school in January. You should feel proud of the way you behaved, tried in lessons and spoke about your school.

Mrs Darby, the teachers and other staff work very hard to ensure you enjoy school and succeed. Thorogate School is welcoming and very clean, and there are attractive displays of your best work. You told us you feel safe and can turn to adults if you need help. Through the school council, you have a say in what happens: we were particularly impressed by the games you help to organise at playtime. There are many extra activities arranged for you, such as the visits to Scarborough or the Isle of Wight for Years 5 and 6, and the sports links with Rawmarsh High School.

A great deal is done to help you when you start school. We saw some of Mrs Parry's class learning to read, by playing board games with their parents. Your results in the tests in Year 2 are very high. You read and write well and are confident with numbers. Most of you reach the level that is expected for 11-year-olds by the time you reach Year 6, but your results are not as good as they might be, especially in mathematics.

We have asked Mrs Darby and the teachers to continue with the plans they have to improve your work in mathematics and to make sure that you learn well in all the lessons in the Key Stage 2 classes.

We wish you all well for the future.