



Halfway Infant School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 107038
LEA Sheffield
Inspection number 277689
Inspection dates 27 September 2005 to 28 September 2005
Reporting inspector Mr Roger Gill CfBT Lead Inspector

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Station Road
School category	Community		Halfway
Age range of pupils	3 to 7		Sheffield, South Yorkshire S20 3GU
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0114 2482360
Number on roll	156	Fax number	0114 2482360
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Paul Blakeney
Date of previous inspection	1 November 1999	Headteacher	Mr M Lee

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is smaller than average; an adjacent nursery has recently been amalgamated with it. It is in an area with a socio-economic profile similar to the national average. The proportions of children entitled to free school meals and with learning difficulties and disabilities are similar to that found in most schools. Most children are of White British heritage. A small number of children are from other ethnic backgrounds, and all speak English fluently. Children enter with skills and knowledge typical for their age. There has been a high turnover of staff over the past two years due to retirement.

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 many outstanding features, which is exactly how the school sees itself. A strong family ethos and a productive partnership with parents help children learn effectively. Children enjoy school immensely and feel safe and well looked after. They make good progress in the Foundation Stage and achieve standards that are above average for their age. This good achievement is maintained until the end of Year 2, where standards are significantly above average in reading, writing and mathematics. Higher attaining children do not always reach their full potential in writing or science. Children explain, with passion, why they achieve well; they love school and particularly enjoy English and mathematics.

The headteacher, the deputy, all staff and governors lead well with a common belief in providing high quality education. The benefit of any initiative is very carefully judged for its success in improving children's learning. This is an outstanding feature of the school's generally good way of measuring its own success. Good teaching results in children making good progress, partly because the care for individuals is first class. A system for assessing and tracking children's progress and using the information to set targets is not yet in place and this means that the school cannot yet be certain that children are making maximum progress.

The school never rests on its laurels despite its good improvement since the last inspection. Given the capable leadership and commitment of the staff, the school provides good value for money and is well placed to improve even further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Devise a system of assessing and tracking children's progress throughout the school, which includes targets for success;
- Raise standards even further in writing and science by making children more aware of how they can reach the higher levels.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children start school, in the nursery, with knowledge and skills typical for their age. They reach above average standards by the end of the reception class, and this represents good progress. Sometimes progress is even better such as in a mathematics lesson in which some alert children quickly grasped that a paper semi-circle, when rolled, could make a cone shape. Children continue to achieve well and by the end of Year 2 standards are significantly above average. Standards were not so high in 2005 because there were many more children with learning difficulties and disabilities: thirty nine per cent of children in Year 2 needed extra help. There is no significant difference between the achievement of different groups, but higher attaining children could do even better in writing and science. Achievement in other subjects is good, for example

in information and communication technology and art, because all subjects are considered to be important in promoting high standards and all round progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Children's personal qualities are good. They say, "We love the school and learning is fun". Children behave well and have positive attitudes in all that they do. They exercise responsibility well, for example when acting as play leaders or when older children welcome newcomers into school; they show maturity in these tasks. A buzz of excitement accompanies learning, which fosters very good concentration and motivation.

Children work effectively in groups and understand how co-operation is important in the world of work. They take pleasure in each other's achievements, often clapping individuals with glee and respect. It is common to see parents learning beside their children in the nursery and throughout the school, which results in a mutual feeling of well-being.

Children like coming to school; attendance is above the national average. Personal development is influenced well by the good provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, cultural and spiritual development is stimulated by the exciting art around school and the pride that children feel about being chosen as artist of the week. The play acting of Christian and Muslim weddings helps children acquire a good multi-cultural understanding. Children feel safe and know what constitutes a healthy lifestyle. For example, a child in the reception class chose low fat crisps for a Teddy Bears' Picnic.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good overall and in each year group some is outstanding. In the best lessons children squeal with delight at the way that teachers make learning fun, for example, in the dressing up as characters from *The Little Red Hen* in Year 1. Lively participation, in all classes, is built upon the firm foundation of detailed plans for learning.

Teachers make careful notes on children's progress and use this information well to plan their lessons, but they have not made a complete record of children's attainment, with targets, to track progress over time. Those with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress because they are well supported by teachers and knowledgeable teaching assistants. Many boys show a real interest in their work because the school makes it a priority to make work enjoyable, especially writing. One boy struggled to find the words but was convinced that he, 'Liked all that writing stuff.'

Occasionally, more could be expected of higher attaining children. For example, writing in Year 2 is purposeful such as in a fictional letter from a soldier to Florence Nightingale, but it could be better. Children are not informed often enough about how to improve their sentence formation and punctuation. Similarly, in science children investigate ideas, but this active style of learning is not reinforced enough in all science lessons.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and fulfils all requirements. It is planned carefully, from the Foundation Stage to Year 2, to ensure that learning in English and mathematics is reinforced and extended through all subjects. Children enjoy all that they are given to do; many even speak enthusiastically about homework. Parents confirm that the school provides a good range of opportunities including things to do outside lessons, for example country dancing. Children enjoy the chance to solve problems and investigate ideas and the school knows that more of these need to be planned for, such as in science, to promote the development of greater understanding. Visitors such as paramedics, fire fighters and the police enrich the curriculum, as do visits out of school and extra-curricular activities. Planning to promote children's health and safety is good.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Children receive good care, guidance and support and there are some exemplary features. The concern shown towards children is superb. The many ways in which children are made to feel secure and well cared for help them enjoy school and achieve well. Children are justified in having an overwhelming confidence in their teachers. They are certain that any problems they have will be resolved.

The school guides children in the right direction in health and safety. Pupils said that, "The school keeps us safe and healthy; we eat fruit and drink lots of water". There are good arrangements for child protection and the school liaises well with other agencies. The partnership with parents is very good and they rightly speak highly of the care for their children.

The majority of children, including those who have learning difficulties and disabilities, receive good support in their learning, but there is still more to do in providing detailed guidance, particularly to those who are capable of the higher levels and in fully recording children's progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management

Leadership and management are good. The school possesses an accurate view of its strengths and areas requiring development, and a good capacity for further

improvement. The recent turnover of staff and the amalgamation have presented challenges that have been relished in this forward thinking school. Leadership has a positive impact in all areas of school life, both academic and pastoral. By the end of Year 2, children have a maturity beyond their years. They can, for example, discuss families and their links with the community in a very adult way owing to some outstanding teaching that is inspired by the school's mission.

The headteacher and the deputy headteacher orchestrate the management of the school with a sense of fine tuning. They work closely with capable governors who know the school well and fulfil all their responsibilities. Everyone, including subject leaders, exhibits commitment of the highest order and plays their part well. The school monitors its own practice well and knows that it cannot check children's progress fully without a comprehensive record of attainment and targets. Nevertheless, this is an inclusive school in which all groups of children thrive.

The school consults well and acts positively on any issues raised. Parents rate the school highly and welcome greater links with the nursery. Staff implement initiatives quickly and positively because the school is outstanding at judging the impact of its improvement on children's learning and deciding what still needs to be accomplished. Moreover, the school is managed in an effective way that appeals to children's imaginations. For example, there is a successful initiative to make learning even more productive in lessons. To this end, children love the way that teachers talk to them about learning using puppet characters like, Percy Vere and Rosie Resourceful to exemplify their point.

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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	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	2	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	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	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 your help when we inspected your school. We thoroughly enjoyed our visit because everyone was so helpful and friendly. We would like to share with you what we thought about your school.

These are the things we thought were good.

- Your school is like one big family - you all care so well for each other.
- We agree with you that lessons are fun.
- Reading, writing and number work are favourites of yours and we think you do very well in them.
- We thought that it is very exciting that you have joined up with the nursery.

We know everyone wants to do even better and we have suggested a couple of things that we think will help.

- We think it would be a good idea for your teachers to keep a record of where you are up to in your learning and what targets they have for you in reading, writing and mathematics.
- We also think it would help if your teachers told you the special things that you need to work on to do even better in writing and science.

Best wishes and try not to forget how Percy Vere and Rosie Resourceful go about their learning.