



Birk Hill Infant School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 112543
LEA DERBYSHIRE LEA
Inspection number 278954
Inspection dates 8 June 2006 to 9 June 2006
Reporting inspector Mr. Keith Edwards LI

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

Type of school	Infant	School address	Chestnut Avenue
School category	Community		S21 4BE
Age range of pupils	3 to 7		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01246 433 205
Number on roll	158	Fax number	01246 435 504
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr. Ian Ringstead
Date of previous inspection	1 November 1999	Headteacher	Mrs. Sue Birch

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school serves the former mining community of Eckington. Almost all of the children live locally. There are 109 girls and boys on roll with a further 49 children attending the Nursery on a part-time basis. Children enter the Nursery with skills, knowledge and understanding that is typical for their age. Almost all of the children are of White British backgrounds and come from homes where English is the first language. The range of socio-economic circumstances is broad. The proportion of children entitled to a free school meal and the proportion with learning difficulties or disabilities, including those with statements, is below most schools.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The school judges itself to be good and the inspectors agree. It has particular strengths in the way that it guides and cares for the children, particularly those who are finding it difficult to learn. The Nursery provides a very good start for the children's learning and provides the basis for the excellent links with their families. The views of the parents are welcomed. Children in the Nursery and Reception classes do well and most either achieve or exceed the targets that are set for them. This is because the teaching is good and the children respond well to the interesting range of activities provided. Overall the children make good progress as they move through the school and this is reflected in their success in the national tests for reading, writing and mathematics. They perform well because the school makes very good use of its assessment information when planning lessons and organising the grouping arrangements for literacy and numeracy. The school takes outstanding care of the children. This is particularly evident in the case of children with learning difficulties, who flourish as a result of the excellent guidance and support they receive. The children behave well and really enjoy their schooling. Although, their personal development is good overall, pupils' attendance is only satisfactory. The headteacher is a good leader who has formed an effective management team that is helping the school to improve year-on-year. The school has made good progress since the last inspection and is in a strong position to continue its improvement. The governors make an effective contribution to the work of the school and are very sensitive in their support for those children with learning and behavioural difficulties. The school now provides good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve attendance by continuing to work with the families and the local authority.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The children achieve good standards in reading, writing and mathematics. This is reflected in the school's results in the 2005 national assessments for children in Year 2, which were above the national average. In these tests, almost all of the children, including those with learning difficulties, achieved the expected level (Level 2) and a significant proportion achieved the higher Level 3, particularly in reading and mathematics. Boys and girls did equally well. The school anticipates that this achievement will be repeated in the current assessments. Evidence from the children's work in their books strongly supports this view. Standards in the Reception classes are above average, particularly in the children's personal development. Much of this success is due to the quality of teaching which interests and motivates the children. The school is very effective in ensuring that much of the work is very well matched to the children's individual learning needs and this supports their progress. Furthermore

the children work hard and the close working partnership with the parents, nurtured in the Foundation Stage, is a key factor.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The children's personal development and well-being are good. The children benefit from a climate that enables them to grow in confidence and to take responsibility. This is particularly evident in the school council where the children confidently discuss their view of the school. The staff provide excellent role models in terms of their high quality relationships. The children have good self-esteem because they feel valued and respected. Their behaviour is good and they have positive attitudes towards their work and strive hard to achieve their best. The children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. School assemblies strongly support the children's understanding of right and wrong and help to broaden their understanding of the wider world and different cultural traditions. The children respond well to the school's reward systems that encourage hard work and kindness to others. The children understand the importance of eating healthy food and taking regular exercise. They are making good progress in learning work place skills such as working well in groups, acquiring a good grounding in literacy, numeracy and computer skills and they know how to keep safe. This is a particular strength of the school. Although the children thoroughly enjoy their time in school and punctuality is good, there is scope for improving attendance levels which are barely satisfactory. This is in spite of the good relationships with parents and the school's incentive schemes to bring about improvements.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching, learning and assessment are all good. Teachers use accurate assessments to plan tasks that are well matched to children's needs, and this is an improvement since the last inspection. In the Nursery and Reception classes, there is a good balance between activities led by adults and those that are initiated by children. Activities are very well organised, and enable children to learn using all their senses. Staff work well as a team across the school; they have consistent approaches and high expectations of good work and behaviour. Children know what is expected of them and the teaching contributes very well to the children's personal development. Good learning habits and routines are established well in the early years. Children are involved well in their learning; teachers make sure that they know what they are learning about, and children are beginning to assess how well they have done in lessons. Children are well managed, and the pace of most lessons is slick. As a result, children make good progress. Home learning is a strong feature that contributes well to the good progress that children make; parents appreciate the opportunities that children have to extend learning at home.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. It meets requirements and is particularly successful in meeting children's individual needs. Planning has improved since the last inspection; plans cover a period of six terms so children in mixed age classes do not miss topics or repeat work unnecessarily. The grouping of children by ability for teaching literacy and numeracy is successful. Teaching assistants and student teachers are very well deployed to create small groups, and this has been effective in accelerating the progress of lower attaining children in mathematics. The school has made innovative use of its staff and resources to support the children's personal development. The curriculum is rich in additional experiences, such as lunchtime clubs, after school activities, visits, visitors and residential experiences. All of these contribute strongly to the children's enjoyment in coming to school. Staff have begun to take account of children's particular interests in shaping the curriculum. There is scope for strengthening this process further to develop a curriculum that is both exciting and unique to the school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

This aspect of the school's work is outstanding. Excellent induction arrangements to the Nursery involve the parents well and help children to settle quickly. The children confirm that they feel safe in school, and they feel well supported. The school is most inclusive. Staff 'go the extra mile' by working exceptionally well with a wide range of professionals from external agencies to make sure that vulnerable children have all the support that they need. As a result, these children make the same good progress as others. Child protection procedures are reviewed regularly and fully meet legal requirements. Guidance about how to behave and how to improve work is good; there is a wealth of opportunities for children to shine and for their achievements to be celebrated. Children know their individual targets, and feedback given to them in lessons and marking helps them to progress well. Staff care for the children very well, and the arrangements for safeguarding them are good. A good transition programme enables children to look forward with confidence to the move to junior school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher has a very good knowledge of the school's strengths and of those areas requiring further development; the school's self-evaluation judgements closely reflected the practice seen during the inspection. The school takes good account of parents' views. The headteacher has built a team that has shown great resolve in guiding the school to a position of real strength and has a clear agenda for further refinement of the school's practice. There has been good progress since the last inspection and the school has good capacity for further improvement. This is particularly evident in the improvement in standards and in the provision for information technology, which is another

developing strength of the school. The pupils' academic performance is now stronger, whilst the school has maintained its caring ethos. Children of all abilities and backgrounds are happy in school and share its values. This is reflected in their relationships both with their peers and with the adults and strongly supports their learning. Governors are committed to the school and support it well. Their awareness of their responsibility to hold it to account has grown with their confidence. The school now provides good 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?	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	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	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?	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

Mrs Aldridge and I really enjoyed our visit to your school. We were particularly pleased to meet your school council, see all of your classes, take part in assemblies and talk to so many of you. What a lovely school you have and it seems to be getting better and better; I can really understand why you enjoy it so much. Your teachers are doing a splendid job and make your lessons interesting and fun. I noticed that the standard of your work, especially your reading and mathematics, is improving all the time. All of the staff make a very good job of looking after you and plan many exciting things to make your school interesting. In fact, there are many things that make your school special. Here are some of them: - Mrs Birch is a really good headteacher who wants you all to enjoy school and to do well. - You clearly try to do your best to learn in lessons and are making good progress. Well done! - Everybody understands the school rules and you behave well. - Everybody tries to be friendly, thoughtful and helpful. - You seem to know so much about how to be healthy. But, of course, as in all schools, there are still things that can be done to make your school even better. In the case of Birk Hill, I was concerned about your attendance because it is not as good as it should be. With a school as good as yours, you should try to attend every day as far as possible. I would like to wish you all the very best for the future.