



Arbourthorne Community Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 133994
LEA Sheffield
Inspection number 282416
Inspection dates 16 November 2005 to 17 November 2005
Reporting inspector Ms Joan McKenna CfBT Lead Inspector

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

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|------------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|------------------|
| Type of school | Primary | School address | Eastern Avenue |
| School category | Community | | Sheffield |
| Age range of pupils | 3 to 11 | | S2 2GQ |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed | Telephone number | 0114 239 8163 |
| Number on roll | 434 | Fax number | 0114 264 2716 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body | Chair of governors | Mrs A Twomey |
| Date of previous inspection | Not applicable | Headteacher | Mrs Sheila Haigh |

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

The school opened in January 2003 following the amalgamation of a nursery, infant and junior school. This resulted in a larger than average school. It moved into a new building in February 2005. It serves a deprived area where almost half of the pupils are entitled to free school meals. Most pupils are of white British heritage. A tenth are from minority ethnic groups, with around a fifth of these being at early stages of speaking English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is higher than usually found. The school has primary and nursery Integrated Resource Units, which have 12 and 3 pupils on roll respectively, all with complex and significant learning difficulties.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school, but it is improving at a fast rate and has many very good features. The challenges of amalgamating two schools, both with a history of difficulties, and the move into a new building have been successfully dealt with. The community values the new school. Relationships with parents and their involvement in the life of the school are outstanding. The school provides well for all pupils and gives sound value for money. Arrangements for care and support are of very high quality and they promote good personal development of pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and from minority ethnic backgrounds. There is a broad curriculum with very positive enrichment opportunities. The Foundation Stage is of good quality. Teaching is good overall. However, the standards reached by pupils are not yet high enough. They enter the school well below expectations for their age. Although the results by the end of Year 6 in national tests in 2005 were higher than the year before, they are still lower than they should be. This is because the improvements made to the provision have not had time to impact sufficiently on pupils' standards. The school did not take this into account enough when judging its own effectiveness as good. There are encouraging signs of progress, however, and currently pupils' achievement is satisfactory. The school is well led and managed, with senior leadership, especially that of the headteacher, particularly effective. This, coupled with the developments over the past two years, results in a strong capacity for further improvement. There is a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas requiring further development and a determination to ensure improvements are made.

What the school should do to improve further

- Take further action to raise standards, especially in literacy and numeracy.
- Improve systems for checking pupils' progress and ensure that the information gained is analysed and used to promote further improvements.
- Ensure that teaching is of a consistently high quality across the school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

The standards reached by pupils are low, but there has been recent improvement and currently their achievement is satisfactory. Children enter the school well below expectations for their age. Their communication skills are particularly weak, and many do not have good social skills. They make good progress in their learning throughout the Foundation Stage, but nevertheless, many still do not attain the goals set for pupils of that age. At the end of Year 2 assessments show standards in reading, writing and mathematics are still low, and there is not yet a consistent trend of improvement. However, the rate of progress builds throughout Key Stage 2 and is now showing in improved results at the end of Year 6 in English, mathematics and science, albeit they are still low in relation to the national figures. Data from the school and pupils' current

work indicate that achievement is satisfactory. This is the case for all groups of pupils. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive good support and this helps them to make similar progress to their peers. Although recent improvements are encouraging, there has not been sufficient time for the impact of developments over the past two years to be fully realised, and raising standards remains a key priority for the school.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The school places great emphasis on pupil's personal development. It wants them to love coming to school and to take a pride in their achievements. Success shows in the good behaviour and attitudes of most pupils, and the way they enjoy taking on responsibilities and helping one another. They are delighted to receive praise and rewards for trying hard, as seen in the celebration assembly and the proud wearing of 'Rainbow Badges'. Good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development stem from the wide range of opportunities pupils have as part of the whole life of the school. For example, Year 4 pupils worked with enormous enthusiasm in groups to plan, perform and improve dance sequences based on the movement of the sea.

Pupils' understanding of how to keep themselves safe and healthy is very good. They make a good contribution to the community and to their future economic well-being by taking part in the school council, performing plays for children in other local schools, and by charitable fund-raising. The school is right to recognise this aspect of pupils' development is outstanding. However, a significant minority of pupils throughout the school do not yet display the social skills and confidence appropriate to their ages. In addition, attendance and punctuality are satisfactory, even though the school works hard to improve them.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good overall. Lessons are usually lively and interesting. This prompts a good response from most pupils, but some find it difficult to pay attention and concentrate on their work. Teachers' management of pupils, based on excellent relationships, is a strong feature of most lessons. They have high expectations and are quick to praise good work and behaviour. Where classroom management has weaknesses, pupils quickly stray off task and learning time is lost. Occasionally, the work is too hard or too easy for some pupils. The best teaching is full of pace and challenge, and results in the children making rapid progress, as seen in an effective Year 6 science lesson. Teaching assistants support the learning of individuals and small groups well, which boosts all pupils' progress. Innovative approaches to homework involve parents effectively in their children's learning.

Teachers assess pupils' learning effectively in lessons, which helps them to decide what needs to be taught next. Half-termly learning targets encourage pupils to assess their own skills and help them to know what they need to do to improve. More formal assessments keep a track of children's attainment over time and identify those who may not be doing as well as they should. At present, however, assessment systems are not fully tried and tested.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good with outstanding provision for the Arts that enriches pupils' experience very well. The curriculum is planned carefully and covers all expected areas, which helps pupils to build their skills and knowledge steadily. Although there is a strong emphasis on the basic skills of literacy and numeracy, growing links between subjects make the curriculum exciting and relevant. Pupils performed their version of Macbeth at a number of venues, which widened their horizons and involved the collaboration of many members of the school community. Art work, often led by visiting experts, is of high quality. Projects such as paintings inspired by African art enhance pupils' understanding of cultural diversity. Activities outside lessons, including 'Enrichment Friday', are very good in range and quality and much enjoyed by pupils. The good personal, social and health education programme is vital in supporting pupils' broader learning. The new building provides a very attractive environment for learning. The curriculum successfully meets the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Pupils with particular gifts and talents have been identified and the school is beginning to provide suitable programmes of work.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care provided for pupils is of very high quality. Staff know the pupils very well and are constantly concerned for their welfare. Child protection arrangements are in place and the school takes health and safety very seriously. The school's very strong partnerships with parents, outside agencies and the community have a very positive influence on children's well-being. Pupils joining the school settle happily and receive extra help if needed. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is very well organised. Many pupils benefit from the help given by the well-trained and deployed curriculum and behaviour support staff. Support and guidance for pupils' academic work is good, but not as strong as the school indicated. Targets for learning and teachers' marking of work support pupils' achievement well, but systems to track their progress and the analysis and use of resulting information are not yet sharp enough to ensure each pupil makes the best progress possible.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher has been very effective in successfully establishing the new school and ensuring its credibility with parents and the broader community. A strength has been the way she has involved key groups connected with the school in shaping its aims and vision for the future, and this has resulted in a high level of partnership. Leadership and management are good overall. The headteacher provides a clear sense of direction, and staff share her determination to ensure success for the pupils. Morale is high. There is an innovative culture, with staff keen to keep learning themselves. Key leaders, particularly the headteacher and deputy, carry out their responsibilities well, although some aspects of management such as the monitoring of lessons by subject leaders and the analysis of test and assessment results are not carried out systematically. Nevertheless, checking the effectiveness of practice is seen as important and results in strengths and areas requiring development being well known. The school rated itself more highly than is merited in some areas because it did not take into account that recent developments, while very positive, have not yet had time to impact fully on pupils' achievements. Governors are well informed about the school and are actively involved. They make a good contribution to its effectiveness. The school is improving at a fast rate, and there is strong capacity for further improvement.

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Inspection judgements

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|--|-----------------------|--------------|
| <i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i> | School Overall | 16-19 |
|--|-----------------------|--------------|

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? | 1 | NA |
| The quality and standards in foundation stage | 2 | NA |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation | 3 | NA |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements | Yes | NA |
| Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection | NA | NA |

Achievement and standards

| | | |
|--|---|----|
| How well do learners achieve? | 3 | NA |
| The standards ¹ reached by learners | 4 | 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 | 3 | 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 | 3 | 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 | 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 being so friendly and making us feel welcome when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed talking to you and watching you learn very much.

What we liked most about your school

- You like school, and your parents like it too.
- Your teachers and other adults care for you very well and make sure that you feel safe and happy.
- Most of you behave well and play nicely with each other.
- You enjoy your work and try hard to do what your teachers ask. This helps you learn.
- The school arranges interesting activities and trips for you to enjoy, like the plays you perform and the artists you work with.
- Mrs Haigh and other adults in the school are working hard to make school even better for you.

What we have asked the school to do now:

- try to help you do even better in your work, especially in literacy and numeracy
- check how well you are doing carefully, so teachers can make sure you are all learning as fast as you can
- make more of your lessons as good as the ones that help you learn best.

We hope that you continue to be happy at school.